

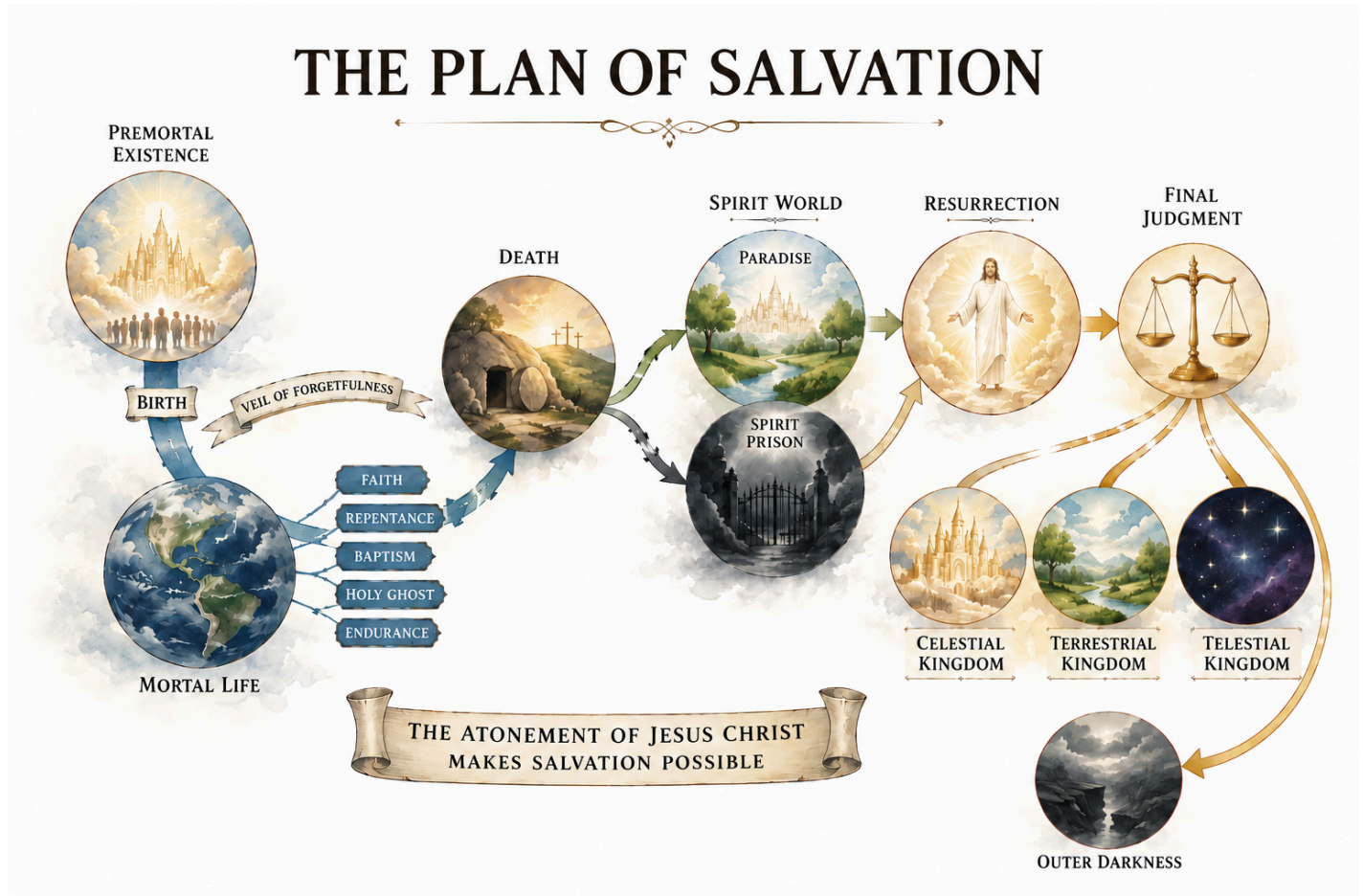
EVANGELISM TRAINING: Responding to Mormonism P.5

5 Things to Say to a Mormon — Adapted from Ron Rhodes

5. _____

Mormon Position —

There are _____, and Destiny _____



- A. _____: A Temporary State Between Death and Resurrection
 - Spirit Paradise: Where the righteous in mortality dwell in peace and preach the gospel to those in spirit prison
 - **BOM Alma 40:12** — And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.
 - **D&C 138:31-33** — And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel. 32 Thus was the gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets. 33 These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands

- Spirit Prison: Where those who have not yet received the gospel get teaching, and those who rejected it suffer temporarily for their sins (*Can be Called Hell*)
 - **Gospel Topics: Spirit Prison** — The Apostle Peter referred to the postmortal spirit world as a prison, which it is for some (see 1 Peter 3:18–20). In the spirit prison are the spirits of those who have not yet received the gospel of Jesus Christ.... If they accept the gospel and the ordinances performed for them in the temples, they may leave the spirit prison and dwell in paradise. Also in the spirit prison are those who rejected the gospel after it was preached to them either on earth or in the spirit prison. These spirits suffer in a condition known as hell... After suffering for their sins, they will be allowed, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, to inherit the lowest degree of glory, which is the Telestial kingdom.
 - People may be taught the gospel and accept ordinances performed vicariously for them to be granted access to paradise
- B. _____: Eternal Destinies after Resurrection and Judgment
 - Telestial Kingdom (Lowest): For those who reject the gospel and live in serious sin, but have suffered through spirit prison
 - **D&C 76:81-85** — And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament. 82 These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus. 83 These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit. 84 These are they who are thrust down to hell. 85 These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished his work.
 - **D&C 76:89** — And thus we saw, in the heavenly vision, the glory of the telestial, which surpasses all understanding;
 - **D&C 76:103** — These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.
 - Terrestrial Kingdom (Middle): For those honorable people who did not receive the gospel in mortality but accepted it in spirit prison — and those who were “not valiant in the testimony of Jesus”
 - **D&C 76:72-75, 79** — Behold, these are they who died without law; 73 And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; 74 Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. 75 These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men... 79 These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.
 - Celestial Kingdom (Highest): For those who receive the gospel, the required ordinances, keep the commandments, repent, and remain faithful — and those who would have received the gospel had they been given the opportunity
 - **D&C 76:51-52** — They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given—52 That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;

- **D&C 137:7-10** — Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying: All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; 8 Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom; 9 For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts. 10 And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven.
- Exaltation (and godhood) is the Highest Degree of the Celestial Kingdom — the celestial kingdom itself has three degrees, and the highest requires temple marriage
 - **D&C 131:1-4** — 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.
- C. _____ : A place of eternal suffering where Satan, his angels, and very few people will go: those who commit the unpardonable sin by knowingly denying Christ after receiving a sure witness of him (*very few people ever*)
 - **D&C 76:35-37** — Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame. 36 These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels— 37 And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power;
 - **Gospel Topics: Salvation from the Second Death** — The second death is the final spiritual death—being cut off from righteousness and denied a place in any kingdom of glory (see Alma 12:32; Doctrine and Covenants 88:24)... Almost every person who has ever lived on the earth is assured salvation from the second death (see Doctrine and Covenants 76:40–45).

Christian Position —

There are _____, Heaven and Hell, _____

- There are Only Two Eternal Destinies When One Dies: _____ or _____
 - **Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46** — “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world....’⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...’⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
 - **Matthew 13:49-50** — So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- All Believers Share the _____ with Christ
 - **John 14:2-3** — In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
 - Every believer is with Christ, not sorted into tiers (many rooms, one house)
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:17** — Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.
 - **Revelation 21:3** — And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:8** — Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
- All Unbelievers Face _____
 - **John 3:36** — Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
 - **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9** — in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,
 - **Revelation 21:8** — But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."
 - **Revelation 22:15** — Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.
 - D&C 76:103 puts "liars, and sorcerers, adulterers, whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie" in the telestial kingdom of glory
 - Revelation puts the same people in the lake of fire, the second death, which D&C 76:37 says only the sons of perdition experience
- Eternal Destiny _____ After Death
 - **Luke 16:26** — And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'
 - **Hebrews 9:27** — And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment

Common Objections & Responses —

#1 — " _____ "

- Luke 23:42-43 — And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, **today you will be with me in paradise.**"
 - **Response:** At death, the believing thief immediately enters paradise with Christ; nothing suggests a postmortem opportunity to change his standing before God
 - In the Bible, paradise is where God is, not a waiting room (Revelation 2:7)
 - Joseph Smith taught the thief went to spirit world not heaven, but Paul uses "paradise" for the third heaven, God's own presence (2 Cor. 12:2-4)

- 1 Peter 3:18-20 — For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ **in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison**, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.
 - **Response:** Complicated passage — but does not refer to LDS spirit prison where there is another opportunity to hear and accept the gospel
 - Two main Christian interpretations —
 - A. Christ preached through Noah to Noah's unbelieving generation
 - B. After his death, Christ proclaimed his victory over evil angels
 - The passage connects specifically to the days of Noah
 - The distinctive LDS elements of spirit prison: postmortem evangelism, acceptance of saving ordinances, and movement into paradise — are not stated in this passage
- 1 Peter 4:6 — For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.
 - **Response:** The gospel was preached to people while they were alive, who have now died
 - Peter is encouraging believers whose loved ones died in the faith (v.5), its not about ordinances or moving out of a prison

#2 — “_____”

- 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 — There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹ **There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.** ⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.
 - **Response:** Paul is contrasting heavenly vs. earthly bodies — not making a case for three degrees of glory / heaven
 - Context: 1 Corinthians 15:35 — But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”
 - The contrast is being made between our future heavenly body and our current earthy body (Celestial = heavenly, Terrestrial = Earthly)
 - Contrasts: perishable vs imperishable, weak vs powerful, natural vs supernatural, mortal vs immortal (vv.40-50)
 - Humans, animals, birds, fish (v.39) vs. sun, moon, stars (v.41) — illustrations to show the difference in splendor between our earthly body and our resurrected body
 - If Paul were listing tiers, verse 39 would give four and “stars differs from star” would give countless
 - “Telestial” appears nowhere in the Bible. Joseph Smith added it to this verse in his own revision (the JST) with no manuscript support

- 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 — I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was **caught up to the third heaven**—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.
 - **Response:** Three “heavens” mentioned in the Bible
 - The sky / atmosphere (Deuteronomy 11:11)
 - The realm of sun, moon, and stars (Genesis 1:14)
 - God’s heavenly dwelling (Isaiah 63:15)
 - Paul refers to this third place in 2 Corinthians 12 and calls it paradise (v.3)

#3 — “_____”

- Matthew 12:31-32 — Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, **but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.** ³² And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but **whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.**
 - **Response:** Matthew 12 teaches that one particular sin will never be forgiven, not that this is the only sin that results in eternal condemnation
 - The unpardonable sin is not what Mormons teach
 - The unpardonable sin is either lifelong rebellion against God (because they never repent and put their trust in Christ) or rejecting Jesus and crediting his work to Satan (limited to first century eye-witnesses)
 - Hell will be for all who don’t put their trust in Christ
 - John 3:16-17 — “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - Acts 16:31 — And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
 - Matthew 7:13-14 — “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Take This With You —

3 Questions for Conversations:

- 1. Where does the Bible teach that someone can accept the gospel or change their eternal destiny after death?
- 2. When Jesus describes the final judgment, why does He consistently present only two ultimate outcomes: eternal life or eternal punishment?
- 3. Revelation 21:8 puts liars and the sexually immoral in the second death, D&C 76:103 puts them in a kingdom of glory. Which one should I trust?

3 Verses to Memorize:

- Luke 16:26 (fixed destiny) | Matthew 25:46 (two locations) | Revelation 21:8 (second death)