

Teachings Concerning Sons of Perdition

D&C 76

30 And we saw a vision of the sufferings of those with whom he made war and overcame, for thus came the voice of the Lord unto us:

31 Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power--

32 They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born;

33 For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity;

34 Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come--

35 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;

38 Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath.

39 For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made.

40 And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us--

41 That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;

42 That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;

43 Who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him.

44 Wherefore, he saves all except them--they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with

the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment--

45 And the end thereof, neither the place thereof, nor their torment, no man knows;

46 Neither was it revealed, neither is, neither will be revealed unto man, except to them who are made partakers thereof;

47 Nevertheless, I, the Lord, show it by vision unto many, but straightway shut it up again;

48 Wherefore, the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof, they understand not, neither any man except those who are ordained unto this condemnation.

49 And we heard the voice, saying: Write the vision, for lo, this is the end of the vision of the sufferings of the ungodly.

D&C 88

22 For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.

23 And he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom cannot abide a terrestrial glory.

24 And he who cannot abide the law of a telestial kingdom cannot abide a telestial glory; therefore he is not meet for a kingdom of glory. Therefore he must abide a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory.

29 Ye who are quickened by a portion of the celestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness.

30 And they who are quickened by a portion of the terrestrial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness.

31 And also they who are quickened by a portion of the telestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness.

32 And they who remain shall also be quickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.

33 For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift.

34 And again, verily I say unto you, that which is

governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same.

35 That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willetth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still.

Joseph Smith

- All sins shall be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.358)
- Say to the brothers Hulet and to all others, that the Lord never authorized them to say that the devil, his angels, or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor ever shall be revealed, save to those who are made partakers thereof: consequently those who teach this doctrine have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. Truly Brother Oliver declared it to be the doctrine of devils. We, therefore, command that this doctrine be taught no more in Zion. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.24)

Brigham Young

Jesus will redeem the last and least of the sons of Adam, except the sons of perdition, who will be held in reserve for another time. They will become angels of the Devil. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.29)

Joseph F. Smith

Then we shall stand before the bar of God to be judged. So says the Bible, so says the Book of Mormon, and so say the revelations which have come direct to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith. And then those who have not been subject and obedient to the celestial law will not be quickened by the celestial glory. And those who have not been subject and obedient to the terrestrial

law will not be quickened by the terrestrial glory. And those who have not been subject and obedient to the telestial law, will not be quickened by a telestial glory; but they will have a kingdom without glory.

The sons of perdition, men who once were in possession of the light and truth, but who turned away from them and denied the Lord, putting him to an open shame, as did the Jews when they crucified him and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children;" men who consent, against light and knowledge, to the shedding of innocent blood, it will be said unto them, "Depart from me, ye cursed." (Matt. 25:41) I never knew you; depart into the second death, even banishment from the presence of God for ever and ever, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, from whence there is no redemption, neither in time nor in eternity. Herein is the difference between the second and the first death wherein man became spiritually dead; for from the first death he may be redeemed by the blood of Christ, through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, but from the second, there is no redemption at all.

We read in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit, and transgressed the commandment, wherein he became subject to the will of the devil because he yielded unto temptation, and because of this transgression he became "spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death, which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say – Depart, ye cursed!" (Doc. and Cov. 29:41.)

But who will receive such punishment? Only those who deserve it, those who commit the unpardonable sin.

Then there is the banishment of the transgressor (not the sons of perdition) into the prison-house, a place of punishment, with no exaltation, no increase, no dominion, no power, whose inhabitants after their redemption may become servants of them that have obeyed the laws of God and kept the faith. That will be the punishment of such as reject the truth, but sin not unto death. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.451)

Joseph Fielding Smith

ALL SAVED EXCEPT SONS OF PERDITION. It is a very pleasing and consoling thing to know that the Lord will save all of his children, excepting the very few who wilfully rebel against him. When his children have paid the penalty of their transgressions, they shall come forth from the clutches of the second death to receive a place somewhere in the great heavenly kingdoms, which are prepared for them with their several glories and

degrees of salvation.

It is the purpose of the Almighty to save all mankind, and all will enter into his kingdoms in some degree of glory, except sons of perdition who sin beyond the power of repentance and redemption, and therefore cannot receive forgiveness of sins. All the rest shall be saved, but not all with the same degree of glory or exaltation. Every man will be judged according to his works, his opportunities for receiving the truth, and the intent of his heart. (*Doctrines of Salvation, 2:20-21*)

DIFFERENCES IN KIND OF RESURRECTED BODIES. In section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we are taught that there is a difference in the kinds of resurrection. Some will be raised with celestial bodies; some with terrestrial bodies, and some with telestial bodies; and yet others will be raised with bodies without any qualification or power of glory, and these will be sons of perdition. (*Doctrines of Salvation, 2:33*)

SONS OF PERDITION WILLFULLY REJECT ATONEMENT. With the Latter-day Saints, this is not so. While it is true we teach that a man must comply with these principles of the gospel in order to receive salvation and exaltation in the kingdom of heaven -- which is proved by many passages of scripture -- nevertheless, we hold out the hope that all may be saved, excepting the sons of perdition, a class that wilfully rejects the atonement of the Savior, for the Lord intends to save all the workmanship of his hands, save these few who will not receive salvation. Our doctrine consigns none others to perdition, but holds forth the hope that all will eventually be saved in some degree of glory. (*Doctrines of Salvation, 2:140*)

TWO CLASSES OF SONS OF PERDITION. The great punishment received by these rebellious spirits is that they are to remain without bodies eternally and are denied the redemption through the atonement of Jesus Christ. They are banished forever from the presence of God because they have lost the power of repentance, for they chose evil by choice after having had the light. While dwelling in the presence of God they knowingly entered into their rebellion. Their mission on earth is to attempt to destroy the souls of men and make them miserable as they themselves are miserable. These spirits are known as sons of perdition.

There is another class of sons of perdition. This class is composed of all those who have known the power of God in this mortal life and then, having full knowledge of the power and purposes of God, rebel against him, putting Jesus Christ to open shame.

The Lord has defined this class as follows: "Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power -- They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born; For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come -- 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.

"These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels -- And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power; Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath."

PUNISHMENT OF SONS OF PERDITION. The extent of this punishment none will ever know except those who partake of it. That it is the most severe punishment that can be meted out to man is apparent. Outer darkness is something which cannot be described, except that we know that it is to be placed beyond the benign and comforting influence of the Spirit of God -- banished entirely from his presence.

This extreme punishment will not be given to any but the sons of perdition. Even the wicked of the earth who never knew the power of God, after they have paid the price of their sinning -- for they must suffer the excruciating torment which sin will bring -- shall at last come forth from the prison house, repentant and willing to bow the knee and acknowledge Christ, to receive some influence of the Spirit of God in the telestial kingdom.

"For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared; And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end."

With the sons of perdition, however, even this blessing is denied. They have wilfully made themselves servants of Satan and servants to him shall they remain forever. They place themselves beyond the power of repentance and beyond the mercies of God. (*Doctrines of Salvation, 2:219-221*)

Spencer W. Kimball

Those who followed Lucifer in his rebellion in the premortal life and those who in mortality sin against the Holy Ghost are sons of perdition. The ex-mortal sons of perdition will be resurrected, as will everyone else; but they will finally suffer the second death, the spiritual death, for “the are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness.” (Hel. 14:18.)

In the days of the restoration there apparently were those who taught that the devil and his angels and the sons of perdition should sometime be restored. The Prophet Joseph Smith would not countenance the teaching of this doctrine, and sanctioned the decision of the bishop that any who taught it should be barred from communion.

In the realms of perdition or the kingdom of darkness, where there is no light, Satan and the unembodied spirits of the pre-existence shall dwell together with those of mortality who retrogress to the level of perdition. These have lost the power of regeneration. They have sunk so low as to have lost the inclinations and ability to repent, consequently the gospel plan is useless to them as an agent of growth and development.

[Quotes D&C 88:24]

[Quotes D&C 76:31-38]

The Prophet Joseph Smith gives us this further picture:

“. . . Those who commit the unpardonable sin are doomed to Gnom to dwell in hell, worlds without end. As they concocted scenes of bloodshed in this world, so they shall rise to that resurrection which is as the lake of fire and brimstone. Some shall rise to the everlasting burnings of God; for God dwells in everlasting burnings and some shall rise to the damnation of their own filthiness, which is as exquisite a torment as the lake of fire and brimstone.”

Speculation as to individual sons of perdition is at best unprofitable. Some have consigned Judas Iscariot to this doom, based on certain scriptural passages. (See John 12:6; 6:70; 17:12; Acts 1:20.) President Joseph F. Smith questions this interpretation:

“To my mind it strongly appears that not one of the disciples possessed sufficient light, knowledge nor wisdom, at the time of the crucifixion, for either exaltation or condemnation; for it was afterward that their minds were opened to understand the scriptures, and that they were endowed with power from on high; without which they were only children in knowledge, in comparison to what they afterwards became under the influence of the Spirit.” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp.125-127)

James E. Talmage

- Far below the lowest of these kingdoms of glory is the fate or state decreed for the souls who have sinned in the full light of knowledge and with conscious guilt, those who having received the testimony of Christ have ruthlessly and wantonly denied it in the interest of temporary gain or gratification, who have fallen so far in transgression as to be known by the awful name “sons of perdition,” for whom no forgiveness is promised. (See Doctrine & Covenants, 76:32-38). [*The Vitality of Mormonism*, p.68]
- The Sons of Perdition – We learn of another class of souls whose sins are such as to place them beyond the present possibility of repentance and salvation. These are called sons of Perdition, children of the fallen angel who was once a Son of the Morning, Lucifer, now Satan, or Perdition. These are they who have violated truth in the light of knowledge; who, having received the testimony of Christ, and having been endowed by the Holy Spirit, then deny the same and defy the power of God, crucifying the Lord afresh and putting Him to an open shame. This, the unpardonable sin, can be committed by those only who have received knowledge and conviction of the truth, against which they then rebel. Their sin is comparable to the treason of Lucifer, by which he sought to usurp the power and glory of his God. Concerning them and their dreadful fate, the Lord has said: “They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born; For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come * * * And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power; * * * they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment -- And the end thereof, neither the place thereof, nor their torment, no man knows; Neither was it revealed, neither is, neither will be revealed unto man, except to them who are made partakers thereof; Nevertheless I, the Lord, show it by vision unto many, but straightway shut it up again; Wherefore, the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof, they understand not, neither any man except those who are ordained unto this

condemnation.”

The doctrines of the Church are explicit in defining the relationship between the mortal probation and the future state, and in teaching individual accountability and the free agency of man. The Church affirms that in view of the responsibility under which every man rests, as the director of his own course, he must be and is free to choose in all things, from the life that leads to the celestial home to the career that is but the introduction to the miseries of perdition. Freedom to worship, or to refuse to worship, is a God-given right, and every soul must abide the result of his choice. (*Articles of Faith*, pp.410-411)

John A. Widstoe

Who Are The Sons Of Perdition? The name Perdition was given to Lucifer, a son of the morning. He refused to accept the plan proposed by God the Father, for the salvation of His spirit children. For this defiant rebellion he was “thrust down from the presence of God and the Son,” and became Satan or the devil who “maketh war with the saints of God.” Those who do likewise, who follow Satan are called sons of perdition. (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 4:1-4). They are they who have known my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power.” (D. & C. 76:31)

However, Lucifer was “an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God.” He had risen high in knowledge, understanding, and power. He was Lucifer, a son of the morning (of light). For his rebellion there was no excuse. He committed the unpardonable sin, in denying that of which he had full and complete knowledge. He became thereby the father of lies (See D. & C. 76:26, 32-48).

It is probable that only personages who have acquired similar full knowledge, who willfully and deliberately deny the truth, when they know it to be the truth, can commit the unpardonable sin and become sons of perdition. They are sons of perdition because, “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 open shame” (D. & C. 76:35). They must have had a fullness of knowledge; a testimony which cannot be destroyed. One must be on a high eminence to fall so low; and few in world’s history have attained such a height. It is doubtful if even Judas, who betrayed Jesus, was sufficiently enlightened to become a son of perdition (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 545). Cain was

called Perdition because of his sin, but it is added “for thou wast also before the world,” implying a reason from out of the pre-existent world, for this heavy punishment (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 5:24).

Moreover, the expression, sons of perdition, is often used in the scriptures to describe disciples of Satan, all who defy God and teach untruth, and who delight in lies, without necessarily committing the unpardonable sin. The many brethren and sisters who have propounded questions about the sons of perdition may rest secure that with their present knowledge they cannot become sons of perdition.

According to Mormon doctrine, the bodies of all who have had a mortal existence upon earth will be resurrected from the grave. The atonement of Jesus Christ knows no exceptions (Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 19:22). Yet, after the resurrection comes the judgment. The acts on earth may forfeit many of the possible gifts following earth existence (Ibid., 3 Nephi 26:4, 5). The spiritual redemption, which is part of the redemption from the grave, will apparently be denied the sons of perdition. That appears to be the meaning of the statements that “he [the Lord] saves all except them”; and that they are, “the only ones on whom the second death shall have power (D. & C. 76:38, 43, 44). They who will be judged to be sons of perdition will arise from the grave with their bodies, but their bodies will be of no use to them, as the “second death” is meted out to them in the final judgment.

The destiny of the sons of perdition is not known. They shall suffer the “second death”; they shall be subject to “everlasting punishment”; they shall “reign with the devil and his angels in eternity.” What this means has not been revealed. The Lord has declared:

“And the end thereof, neither the place thereof, nor their torment, no man knows;

“Neither was it revealed neither is neither will be revealed unto man, except to them who are made partakers thereof; . . .

“Wherefore, the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof, they understand not, neither any man except those who are ordained unto this condemnation” (D. & C. 76:45-46, 48).

It must be a terrible punishment beyond human comprehension, the greatest conceivable, yet a justified punishment. Since the greatest sin is the unpardonable sin, it would appear that they will forfeit all the gains of the ages of pre-existence and the years on earth. It is no wonder that the heavens wept over Lucifer’s rebellion (D. & C. 76:26).

President Brigham Young has suggested that the ultimate punishment of the sons of perdition may be that

they, having their spiritual bodies disorganized, must start over again must begin anew the long journey of existence, repeating the steps that they took in the eternities before the Great Council was held. That would be punishment, indeed! “They will be decomposed, both soul and body, and return to their native element. I do not say that they will be annihilated; but they will be disorganized, and will be as if they had never been; while we live and retain our identity and contend against those principles which tend to death or dissolution” (*Journal of Discourses*, 7:57). “The clay that marred in the potter’s hands was thrown back into the unprepared portion to be prepared over again” (Ibid., 2:124).

Little is known of the sons of perdition and their destiny, yet that little known stands as a warning to all men. To deal carelessly with truth, to deny it when once gained, to defy the laws of truth which are the laws of God must be counted among the greatest sins. Those who deal lightly with truth in their lives, though they may not become sons of perdition, must expect a heavy punishment, which often begins in mortality. (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, pp.212-214)