

Mining Ephesians for Explosives

Presented by Mike Ghiglia



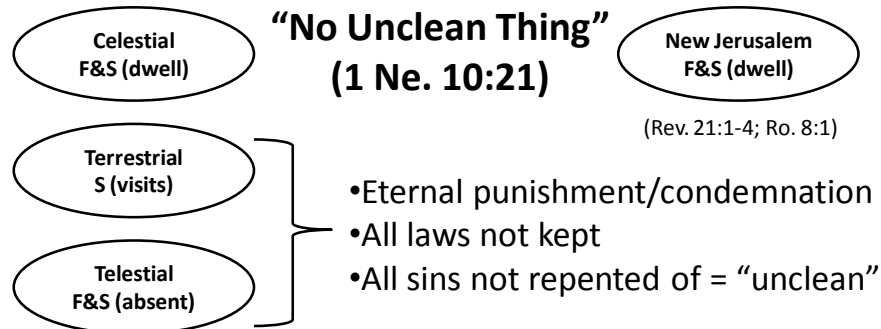
STEP #1: Contrast the LDS & Biblical Gospels Conceptually (the Ladder)

- 1.1 The LDS Gospel—Joseph Fielding Smith, 10th LDS Prophet (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1954, 1:123)

The Savior does not save anybody from his individual sins **only on condition of his repentance**. So the effect of Adam’s transgression was to place all of us in the pit with him. Then the Savior comes along, not subject to that pit, and lowers the ladder. He comes down into the pit and **makes it possible** for us to use the ladder to escape.

- 1.2 The Biblical Gospel— “... he [the Savior] comes down into the pit, places us on His shoulders, and carries us up and out of the pit all by Himself.” This is our faith!

STEP#2: Clarify the LDS & Biblical Gospels Doctrinally (the Kingdoms)



The Father’s Justice and Mercy

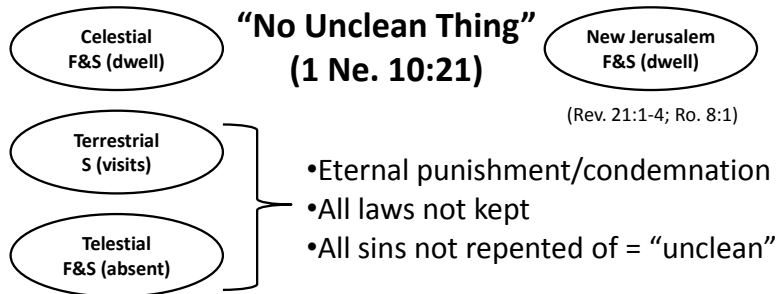
1. The Celestial Kingdom: Preserved through faith in Christ’s work and doing our work (3 Ne. 27:19; D&C 58:43; 82:7)
2. The New Jerusalem: Preserved through faith in Christ’s work alone—all laws kept/all sins punished—(Jn. 6:28-29; Heb. 7:26; Isa. 53:5-6)

STEP#3: Read Ephesians 2:8-9

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

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

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



The Father’s Justice and Mercy

1. The Celestial Kingdom: Preserved through faith in Christ’s work and doing our work (3 Ne. 27:19; D&C 58:43; 82:7)
2. The New Jerusalem: Preserved through faith in Christ’s work alone—all laws kept/all sins punished—(Jn. 6:28-29; Heb. 7:26; Isa. 53:5-6)

- 3.1 Explain why the grace-faith-gift principle unto salvation excludes works and supports the biblical ladder illustration and the single-kingdom gospel (i.e. “the new Jerusalem”).
- 3.2 Explain why Ephesians 2:8-9 appears to conflict with the LDS ladder illustration and three-kingdom gospel.
- 3.3 Our responsibility to LDS is their *comprehension*, NOT their *capitulation* (see Ro. 10:2-4; 1 Cor. 3:7)!

STEP#4: Anticipate the Works-Without-Faith Argument

LDS Argument

- 4.1 “not by works” means only that our works *without faith* in Christ cannot save us; however, our works are a *necessary* addition to our faith to be saved.

Our Response

- 4.2 Validate for victory!
- 4.3 Clarify that the LDS formula for salvation is FAITH + WORKS.

- 4.4 Ask: “What would the apostle Paul have written if the formula for salvation was FAITH (only) and not FAITH + WORKS?” Answer: Exactly what he wrote!
- 4.5 Confirm comprehension and go to STEP #8.

STEP #5: Anticipate the Verse-10 Argument

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

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

LDS Argument

- 5.1 The formula for salvation *is* FAITH + WORKS.

Our Response

- 5.2 Validate for victory!
- 5.3 Explain again why the grace-faith-gift principle unto salvation excludes works.
- 5.4 Explain the difference between doing “good works” *because* we are saved (the biblical gospel) and doing “good works” *to be* saved (the LDS gospel).
- 5.5 Confirm comprehension and go to STEP #8.

STEP #6: Anticipate the Mosaic-Law Argument

LDS Argument

- 6.1 “not by works” means that the Ephesians could not be saved by keeping Mosaic Law (i.e. old covenant law); however, keeping new covenant law was necessary to be saved.

Our Response

- 6.2 Validate for victory!
- 6.3 The apostle Paul uses the term “works” for two reasons. First, Paul is addressing a primarily Gentile audience in Ephesians (see Eph. 2:11; 3:1) where he argues against *salvation by human effort* in general, NOT by keeping Mosaic Law. Second, Paul uses the phrase “works of the law” when arguing against *justification by Mosaic Law* (see Gal. 3:2-5, 10). Gentile Christians in Ephesus were NOT facing the same heresy as the believers in Galatia where Jewish Christians were demanding that Gentiles obey Mosaic Law to be justified before God (see Gal. 3:11; 5:1-4).
- 6.4 Confirm comprehension and go to STEP #8.

STEP #7: Anticipate the General-Salvation Argument

LDS Argument

7.1 Salvation in Ephesians 2:8-9 refers to “general salvation” (i.e. resurrection only or immortality), not “individual salvation” (i.e. celestial glory or eternal life).

Our Response

7.2 Validate for victory!

7.3 Explain that the LDS doctrine of general salvation ensures all mankind will be resurrected (destination undetermined) irrespective of faith. However, Paul writes that we are “saved, through faith,” which instead indicates individual salvation (in the celestial kingdom or the new Jerusalem), and this, “not by works.”

7.4 Confirm comprehension and go to STEP #8.

Step #8: Read Ephesians 2:4-6

Ephesians 2:4-6 (NIV)

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,

8.1 Explain salvation as defined by the apostle Paul—we are (1) made alive with Christ; (2) raised with Christ; and (3) seated with Christ. Note that Paul refers to our salvation as having *already been secured*. This is because Christ has already met the Father’s requirements of perfection for us by His sinless life and atonement.

8.2 Explain that because Christ is now seated with the Father (in the celestial kingdom), and we are *seated with Him*, all believers in Christ will dwell eternally with the Father and the Son because we are *perfectly clean* “in Christ Jesus.”

8.3 Explain that “seated with” (Gr. *synkathizō*; pronounced soong-kath-id’-zo) always has the sense of being *in proximity* with someone.

8.4 Emphasize that ALL who are in Christ by faith will be together forever—there will be no separation from our family and friends as the three LDS kingdoms of glory require. This is the true meaning of salvation being “the gift of God” and “not by works”!

8.5 Confirm comprehension.

STEP #9: Anticipate the “Heavenly-Realms” Argument

LDS Argument

9.1 We are seated with Christ “in the heavenly realms” (v. 6), which means more than one place or kingdom of glory, and NOT the celestial kingdom only.

Our Response

9.2 Validate for victory!

9.3 Explain again the grace-faith-gift principle as it relates to the necessity for only one eternal destiny for ALL who are in Christ by faith.

9.4 Read Ephesians 1:20

Ephesians 1:20 (NIV)

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

9.5 Explain that the Father seated Christ “at his right hand,” which according to LDS doctrine is in the celestial kingdom. (Surely Christ is not seated in multiple kingdoms.) The apostle Paul here simply equates “the heavenly realms” with the dwelling place of God or the celestial kingdom, as it were.

9.6 Confirm comprehension.