
DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL TEACHER MANUAL

RELIGION 430 AND 431

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Introduction

Caution: Exercise caution while discussing the doctrine of having our calling and election made sure. Avoid speculation. Use only the sources given here and in the student manual. Do *not* attempt in any way to discuss or answer questions about the second anointing.

■ To begin a discussion of eternal life, read the following anecdote about Elder LeGrand Richards and his wife, Sister Ina Richards:

“On their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary (1944), LeGrand said to Ina, ‘Mommy, what do you think we’ll be doing thirty-five million years from today?’ With typical spunk she answered, ‘Where’d you get such an idea? It makes me tired to think of it.’

“‘Well,’ he said, ‘you believe in eternal life. We’re told that time is measured only to man, and that with God there is no such a thing as time. It’s one eternal round, there’s no beginning and there’s no end. Now, Mother, if you believe that, you and I ought to be pretty well acquainted with each other thirty-five million years from today.’” (Lucile C. Tate, *LeGrand Richards: Beloved Apostle*, pp. 228–29.)

How do your students respond to Elder Richards’s sentiments? Were these sentiments presumptuous? Not at all. Why? Faithfulness and a study of the scriptures establish hope in eternal blessings.

■ Read 2 Timothy 4:7–8, in which Paul exclaims, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Discuss how Paul’s statement relates to Doctrine and Covenants 76:56: “They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory.”

Point out that the crown, which represents the rewards of receiving a fulness of God’s glory, is attainable if we “fight a good fight,” finish the course, and keep the faith. This chapter details the nature of the promise of eternal life as well as the means by which it can be realized.

Ideas for Teaching

A. Our quest for eternal life began in the premortal existence.

■ Read Moses 1:39. As God revealed the vastness of his creations, he taught Moses that His work and glory consist of bringing “to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” Write on the chalkboard

the words *immortality* and *eternal life*. Are they synonymous terms? How do they differ? Point out that *immortality* refers to the inseparable linking of body and spirit that is a result of the resurrection. Whereas the quality of our resurrection is profoundly affected by how we live and what we achieve in mortality, everyone who lives will be resurrected because of the Atonement (see 1 Corinthians 15:22). Point out that on the other hand, *eternal life* describes a quality of life attainable only within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated that “only those who obey the fulness of the gospel law will inherit eternal life. . . . Thus those who gain eternal life receive exaltation; they are sons of God, joint-heirs with Christ, members of the Church of the Firstborn; they overcome all things, have all power, and receive the fulness of the Father. They are gods.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 237.)

Read Titus 1:2–3 to show that eternal life was discussed and promised in the premortal existence.

■ In Romans 11:1–2 Paul outlined God’s relationship with the seed of Abraham. What did Paul mean when he said that God “foreknew” His people? Paul also indicated that some people were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). This statement suggests that many were called in the premortal world and chosen to receive special blessings contingent upon their faithfulness. These special blessings assume at least two dimensions.

First, wrote Elder McConkie, “this election to a chosen lineage is based on pre-existent worthiness and is thus made ‘according to the foreknowledge of God.’ (1 Pet. 1:2.)” Elder McConkie explained that “to bring to pass the salvation of the greatest possible number of his spirit children the Lord, in general, sends the most righteous and worthy spirits to earth through the lineage of Abraham and Jacob. This course is a manifestation of his grace or in other words his love, mercy, and condescension toward his children.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 216.) Thus, those born into the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have through the centuries heard the testimony of prophets, had access to the sacred scriptures and ordinances, and been at the forefront of the work of God upon the earth. (See Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, pp. 7–8; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, p. 5.)

Second, “as part of this election, Abraham and others of the noble and great spirits were chosen before they were born for the particular missions assigned them in this life” (McConkie, *Mormon*