

An Ancient Example

Dr. James E. Talmage writes: "The Lord's meaning was clear, that in the resurrected state there can be no question among the seven brothers as to whose wife for eternity the woman shall be, since all except the first had married her for the duration of mortal life only. . . . In the resurrection, there will be no marrying nor giving in marriage; for all questions of marital status must be settled before that time, under the authority of the Holy Priesthood, which holds the power to seal in marriage for both time and eternity." (*Jesus the Christ*, p. 548.)

Undoubtedly, the first husband married the woman for eternity by a ceremony which was not limited by time. She became a widow at his demise until she should also die and join her husband. Now, she married brother number two, "until death do you part," and it definitely parted them even before posterity, and he went into the spirit world through the veil and with no wife, for their contract also had been terminated by death. And brothers number three and four and five and six and finally number seven in turn—all married her in temporary marriage, in which ceremonies were the limitations, "so long as you both shall live." And death terminated what happiness they had had and their promise of future bliss.

How sad! How gloomy!

I knew of one young couple whose promising marriage was ended by a car crash one hour after the ceremony which included those perilous words, "till death do you part."

Civil marriage is an earthly contract, completed in the death of either party. Eternal celestial marriage is a sacred covenant between man and woman, consecrated in the holy temple by servants of God who hold authoritative keys. It bridges death; it includes both time and eternity.

Paul's Testimony

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19.)

And we could paraphrase it to say:

"If in this life only our marriages are firm, our marital bliss real, and our family life happy, we are of all men most miserable."

Paul continues, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. . . ." (*Ibid.*, 15:40-42.)

Paul understood, as undoubtedly did many of the Saints, but millions of Christians today do not understand these vital truths which have been veiled in parabolic language. Heaven is not a single place nor one single condition. It is as diverse as men's behavior patterns are different, for men will be judged "according to their deeds done in the flesh."

Modern Revelation

In our modern revelation, the Lord said: "Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

"For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant. . . ." (D&C 132:3-4.)

Though relatively few people in this world understand it, the new and everlasting covenant is the marriage ordinance in the holy temple by the properly constituted leaders who hold the genuine, authoritative keys. This glorious blessing is available to men and women on this earth. The deep underlying purpose is clarified by the Redeemer himself:

"And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God." (*Ibid.*, 132:6.)

Paul spoke of telestial, terrestrial, and celestial areas, and people are assigned in accordance with their righteousness and their compliance with