

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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## HEALTH, ATTITUDES TOWARD

In light of modern revelation, Latter-day Saints believe that the **PHYSICAL BODY** and its health and well-being are an essential part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. One purpose of mortality is to acquire and care for a physical body that is united with a **SPIRIT** in a temporary union. The body is the house or tabernacle of each person's unique eternal spirit. At death, the body and the spirit are temporarily separated. One cannot fulfill his or her eternal potential, however, when the spirit and body are apart. In the **RESURRECTION** the spirit and the then-immortal body will become eternally reunited and inseparable.

The physical body is a gift from God. No mortal body is perfect; some persons are born with handicaps or serious disabilities. Nevertheless, in premortal life spirits looked forward with great anticipation to receiving a physical body. Latter-day Saints look upon the body as an essential component in the progress to become perfect, even as the Heavenly Father is perfect.

The health laws or commandments given in the scriptures are to teach mankind how to care for their bodies. Such laws have spiritual consequence. Obedience to health laws can enhance physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Latter-day Saints are counseled not to take harmful and habit-forming things into their bodies. Tobacco, alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea, and drugs are to be avoided. Fruits, vegetables, herbs, grains, and fish are good for the body; meats, however, should be used sparingly (*see* **WORD OF WISDOM**).

In addition, the Lord counseled, "Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; . . . retire to thy bed early, . . . arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124). Modern prophets have stressed that people should keep their bodies healthy.

Other principles, such as love, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and charity, foster a healthy and positive mental perspective. A God-given moral code promotes good health and enduring family life by requiring **CHASTITY** before marriage and total fidelity within marriage.

Without a solid foundation of ethical values, including integrity, responsibility, self-esteem, and self-discipline, children and adults are in danger of being drawn to high-risk behaviors that impair both the body and the spirit. Mortality is a

time for the spirit to constrain and discipline the body's appetites. The choices made on a day-to-day basis determine whether one is incapacitated by addictive substances, suffers from sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS), dies prematurely from degenerative diseases, or suffers traumatic injury.

Thus, Latter-day Saints believe that God has mandated striving to achieve and maintain optimal health. A central purpose of mankind's creation is negated when one trivializes, through wrong choices, the sacredness of one's own body or the body of another. The apostle Paul declared, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

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## HEAVEN

Significant meanings of the word "heaven" are (1) the place where God resides (Matt. 6:9; Alma 18:30); (2) the eternal dwelling place of the righteous in the hereafter (Matt. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:4); and (3) the type of life enjoyed by heavenly beings. A desire for heaven—to eventually live in a better world than the present one—is the basis of a hope that motivates Latter-day Saints (cf. Ether 12:4; D&C 25:10).

Although the specific word "heaven" is regularly used in the day-to-day literature of the Church, it is not as frequently used as it no doubt would be if there were not substitute terms. The revealed nomenclature involving the hereafter in latter-day scripture is precise in detailing the varied conditions that exist in the afterlife. Hence in LDS literature there are many words that refer to life beyond mortality, such as **PARADISE**, the **CELESTIAL KINGDOM**, the **TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM**, the **TELESTIAL KINGDOM**, or the **DEGREES OF GLORY**.

In the future, this earth will be renewed and receive a paradisiacal glory (A of F 10; Isa. 65:17–25; D&C 88:25–26). This change of the earth will

be associated with the millennial reign of the Savior, and the earth will eventually become a “new heaven and a new earth” (D&C 29:23). The earth will ultimately be “like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon” (D&C 130:9). When this occurs, both the Father and the Son will rule over this planet and those who dwell upon it. This earth will be a heaven to its celestial inhabitants. Speaking of conditions of the future life, the Prophet Joseph SMITH explained, “That same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:2).

The doctrinal emphasis on the eternal nature of the family and the implementation of gospel principles into home and family relationships have frequently led leaders of the Church to characterize the faithful family as a foretaste of “heaven here on earth” (Monson, p. 69).

[See also *Afterlife; Kingdom of God: In Heaven.*]

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## HEAVENLY FATHER

See: God the Father

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## HEAVENLY MOTHER

See: Mother in Heaven

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## HEBREWS, EPISTLE TO THE

Many passages in this New Testament letter have particular significance for Latter-day Saints. In general conferences of the Church, the most frequently cited scriptures from the book of Hebrews are those concerning the GODHEAD (Heb. 1:1–3; 12:9; 13:8); the obedient suffering of Jesus (Heb. 2:14–18; 4:15–16; 5:8–9; see also ATONEMENT); the eternal PRIESTHOOD of Jesus Christ (Heb. 7–8);

how one must be called by God in order to hold the priesthood (Heb. 5:1–4); the nature of true faith, which motivates people to righteous action (Heb. 11); going on “unto perfection” (Heb. 6:1); and enduring to the end (Heb. 12:4–11). These themes are essential pillars of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The main point at the center of the epistle is that Jesus Christ is the eternal “high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle” of God (Heb. 8:1–2). This theme is developed throughout the epistle, showing how eternal salvation comes through the greatness, sufficiency, and supremacy of Jesus Christ. The letter was written to devoted converts from Judaism to the early Christian church, who already understood the first principles of the gospel and had received its basic ordinances (Heb. 6:1–4). Step by step, it systematically strives to persuade them “to hold fast to their faith” (Buchanan, p. 266), to keep the covenant, and to realize the incomparable hope and irrevocable promises given to them by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. With its explication of the Atonement in terms of priesthood, oaths, covenants, and temple imagery, this entire epistle resonates and harmonizes with LDS concepts and practices.

Chapter 1 begins by boldly declaring that Jesus is the sole mediator between God and all human beings; he is superior to, and supersedes, both prophets and angels. As a separate and distinct personage in the Godhead, he is the God of creation and the perfect revelation of GODHOOD for all time. He is the express image of his Father, both spiritually and physically; he alone purged the sins of mankind and sits on the right hand of God the Father (Heb. 1:1–3). The Father brought the Savior (who was his “firstbegotten” in the pre-mortal existence) “into the world” (Heb. 1:6; cf. D&C 93:21; 1 Ne. 11:18). As the firstborn, Jesus is the heir of all things (Heb. 1:2), and those who are faithful become joint-heirs with him (see HEIRS).

Chapter 2 holds a strong warning to heed the word of God given through Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:1–4). The next world is in subjugation to Christ alone (Heb. 2:5–10). God made him a little lower than “the gods” (taking the marginal reading of Ps. 8:4–6). Because God is the Father of all, even Christ is subject to him. Christ is second only to the Father, yet he is the spirit brother of mankind (Heb. 2:17). Like his brothers and sisters in mortality, he suf-