

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure  
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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in the top of the mountains where people from all nations could gather to the House of the Lord to learn his ways (Isa. 2:1–3). To the Latter-day pioneers, President Brigham Young’s words expressed their feelings: “This is the place.”

The seventeen-mile-wide by twenty-five-mile-long Salt Lake Valley is some 4,500 feet above sea level and is surrounded by towering mountain peaks of the Wasatch Range that rise to over 11,000 feet. The valley is part of the Great Basin, where river waters are kept from flowing into the Pacific Ocean by high mountains. Lake Bonneville once lay within the Great Basin, and geologists say that it measured 1,000 feet deep where SALT LAKE CITY is now located. The current Great Salt Lake is the evaporation remnant of that inland sea.

Though the valley floor was very dry and covered with sagebrush when the LDS pioneers arrived in July 1847, it did not take long for them to divert the clear, snow-fed mountain streams onto the parched soil and make a productive farming community. Fur trappers and traders, explorers, and Roman Catholic priests had “passed through,” but the Latter-day Saints were in the valley to stay.

Salt Lake City, in the north end of the valley, became the “big city,” the headquarters of the Church. But as immigrants gathered from far-flung countries to their Zion, numerous smaller towns were established in the valley along the mountain streams.

With the coming of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, Gentiles (non-Mormons) began to move into the valley, diluting the LDS population; but Latter-day Saints continued to be a majority. The railroad helped foster more manufacturing, mining, and commerce, and the valley took on a decided change. By 1870 modern houses were replacing the log and adobe brick cabins, and green trees lined the streets and roads. Farms were fenced and well groomed.

The 1880s saw the introduction of the telephone and electricity to Salt Lake City, and in 1893 the Salt Lake Temple was finished. In the early 1900s money from Utah’s mining industry was being invested in the valley’s first skyscrapers, and a modern capital city emerged with hospitals, colleges, business buildings, libraries, and thousands of homes. Salt Lake City had changed from the all-Mormon village of 1847 to a cosmopolitan city.

By 1990 the population within the formal city boundaries was 165,000, but the greater Salt Lake

Valley population totaled over 715,000. With shopping malls, freeways, and employment opportunities scattered throughout the valley, the population shift away from the city became valleywide on both sides of the Jordan River, which flows north from Utah Lake to the Great Salt Lake. Mountains surrounding the valley have been extremely valuable. Mining in the west side Oquirrh Mountains has brought many jobs to the people of the valley and the world’s largest open-pit copper mine is a major employer. The mountains to the east provide precious drinking water and are used chiefly for recreational purposes, especially for skiing in the winter.

As travelers drive down out of the mountains today, they view a beautiful tree-filled Salt Lake Valley below. The scene stirs feelings of gratitude for the labor of the pioneers, who, in many cases, were their forefathers. The faithful Saints may feel that Isaiah’s words have literally been fulfilled, that “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. . . . They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God” (Isa. 35:1–2).

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## SALVATION

Salvation is the greatest gift of God (D&C 6:13). The root of the word means to be saved, or placed beyond the power of one’s enemies (*TPJS*, pp. 297, 301, 305). It is redemption from the bondage of sin and death, through the ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST. Some degree of salvation will come to all of God’s children except the SONS OF PERDITION. Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). Paul said, “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:40–

42). Paul also explained that “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). The Latter-day Saint concept of salvation derives from the teachings of Jesus Christ and the revelations given to ancient and latter-day prophets. It is evident from such teachings that there are different degrees or levels of salvation in the after-life (*see* DEGREES OF GLORY).

There are various levels of salvation because there are various levels of belief and works among people (D&C 76:99–101). The Prophet Joseph Smith observed, “If God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term ‘Heaven’ as intended for the Saints’ eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one” (*TPJS*, pp. 10–11).

The gospel of Jesus Christ comprises fundamental principles and ORDINANCES that must be followed to obtain a fulness of salvation. The first steps are FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ, REPENTANCE, BAPTISM by immersion for the remission of sins, and the LAYING ON OF HANDS by one who is in authority for the gift of the HOLY GHOST. Additional ordinances are administered in the TEMPLE. And finally, “he only is saved who endureth unto the end” (D&C 53:7).

The most sacred ordinances pertaining to the salvation of both the living and the dead are performed in the temples. These ordinances include the ENDOWMENT, the SEALING of husband and wife to form an eternal MARRIAGE, and the sealing of children to parents to form an eternal family. All the ordinances that are essential for the salvation of the living are likewise essential for the dead, beginning with proxy BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD. These can only be performed in a temple. Baptism is for entrance into the CELESTIAL KINGDOM; the endowment and the sealing ordinances are for EXALTATION in the celestial kingdom. In the mercy of God and his love for his children, the PLAN OF SALVATION provides for everyone to hear and respond to the gospel either in this life or in the SPIRIT WORLD so that all who will may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel (D&C 137:7–9; *see also* SALVATION OF THE DEAD).

Salvation in a Latter-day Saint context includes activity and service in the kingdom of God for all eternity, unhampered by the effects of sin, death, physical pain, sickness, or other impediments to joy. The highest level of salvation is to become like God and involves a family unit. Lesser

degrees of salvation are correspondingly less glorious and have restrictions.

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## SALVATION OF CHILDREN

See: Children: Salvation of Children

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## SALVATION OF THE DEAD

A distinctive doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that the dead as well as the living may receive the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. Every man, woman, and child who has ever lived or who ever will live on this earth will have full opportunity, if not in this life then in the next, to embrace or reject the gospel in its purity and fulness.

When this doctrine was first taught at NAUVOO, ILLINOIS, in 1842 (D&C 127; 128), the Prophet Joseph SMITH said it was the “burden of the scriptures” and that it exhibited “the greatness of divine compassion and benevolence in the extent of the plan of human salvation” (*TPJS*, p. 192). It is in harmony with the Jewish idea that the family is the instrument of holiness and redemption and that the dead may need atonement. It is also a Christian concept in the writings of Paul and Peter (*see* BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD). “[It] justifies the ways of God to man, places the human family upon an equal footing, and harmonizes with every principle of righteousness, justice, and truth” (*TPJS*, p. 223).

The Prophet posed the dilemma resolved by the doctrine: “One dies and is buried having never heard the gospel of reconciliation; to the other the message of salvation is sent, he hears and embraces it and is made the heir of eternal life. Shall the one become the partaker of glory and the other be consigned to hopeless perdition? . . . Such an idea is worse than atheism” (*TPJS*, p. 192).

Five fundamental principles underlie LDS understanding of salvation for the dead:

1. Life is eternal. Birth does not begin life nor does death end it. In each stage of existence there are ever-higher levels of divine enlightenment and blessedness.
2. Repentance is possible in the next life as well as this one. “There is never a time when the spirit