

PLAN OF SALVATION

Throughout time, people have often pondered questions such as “Where did I come from?”, “What is my purpose in life?” and “Where will I go after this life?” For Latter-day Saints, the mortal existence is seen in the context of a great sweep of history, from a pre-earth life where the spirits of all mankind lived with Heavenly Father to a future life in His presence where continued growth, learning and improving will take place. In the scriptures, God’s plan is called the plan of salvation, the plan of redemption, the plan of happiness, and the plan of mercy. The plan is centered on the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

Before we began our lives on Earth, we lived with our Heavenly Father as His spirit children. Although it was a joyful existence, God knew that we could not continue to progress unless we left Him for a time. Life on Earth is regarded as a probationary state in which men and women are tried and tested — and where they gain experiences obtainable nowhere else.

God has blessed us with gifts to help us navigate our lives. One of the most precious gifts He has given everyone is the ability and power to make choices. Our Heavenly Father respects our freedom to choose and will never force us to choose what is right, nor will He stop us from being able to make poor choices. He will however, invite and endeavor to entice us “to do good continually” (Moroni 7:13). Our Heavenly

Father knew that humans would make mistakes, so He provided a Savior, Jesus Christ, who would take upon Himself the sins of the world. While some of the gifts of the Atonement are unconditional (a resurrected body, immortality), men and women are expected to repent of their sins and strive to live more in harmony with the teachings of Christ in order to continue to progress and reach their potential in the next life.

To members of the Church, physical death on Earth is not an end but the beginning of the next step in Heavenly Father’s plan for His children. Nor does death need to be the end of relationships with loved ones. Families can be together forever — not just for this life. Family members who accept the atonement of Jesus Christ and follow His example can be together forever through sacred sealing ordinances performed in God’s holy temples.

Latter-day Saint doctrine teaches that after the resurrection, all will be judged and rewarded for the things done in this life. Those who are worthy to return to the presence of God and Christ become “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17) of all that the Father has. They will return to live with Heavenly Father and with their families. Those who choose not to follow Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will receive a reward according to what they have done in this life, but they will not enjoy the glory of living in the presence of God.

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