

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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

Macmillan Publishing Company
New York

Maxwell Macmillan Canada
Toronto

Maxwell Macmillan International
New York Oxford Singapore Sydney



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aware of and appreciating the gifts of life, the earth, and personal agency (e.g., taste, smell, beauty, music). A second is the joy of using these gifts to create opportunities or to develop relationships (e.g., marriage, parenting, charity). A third is the joy of coming to understand how mortality fits into the divine purpose or plan of the Heavenly Father (see PLAN OF SALVATION). This understanding derives from learning of God's plan for his children's salvation and using it as a framework for comprehending and assimilating life's experiences. Another is the joy of accepting Christ as Savior and feeling his acceptance and approval of one's efforts. This joy is accompanied by the power and beauty of Christ's spirit in one's life. In this connection, the Book of Mormon describes a scene wherein "the spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience" (Mosiah 4:3; cf. John 15:10–12).

LDS doctrine teaches that joy is obtained only by RIGHTEOUSNESS (Mosiah 4:3, 20). Consequently, Latter-day Saints view God's COMMANDMENTS as loving counsel from a wise Father—a Father whose goal is human happiness. They believe that lives which conform to God's will and are governed by his standards will create the most joyful response to all of life's circumstances, bringing both a fulfillment in life's accomplishments and a sweet resolve in life's sorrows.

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JUDGMENT

All humankind shall stand before Jesus, "and he shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:32). The verb "separate" reflects the Lord's determination of exact boundaries between good and evil, since he "cannot look upon sin with the least

degree of allowance" (D&C 1:31). The Greek New Testament word for judgment (*krino*) means to separate or to decide, and refers not only to God's decisions but to those made by man as well (Matt. 7:1–2).

AMULEK warned that this life is the time to prepare to meet God (Alma 34:32). MORTALITY requires basic decisions of a moral and spiritual character, in which individuals are free to choose for themselves yet are accountable to God for their choices. In turn, God will render a perfect and just decision to determine blessings or punishments. In the judgment there will be a perfect restoration of joy for righteous living and of misery for evil (Alma 41:3–5). After death is not the time to repent: "Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God; . . . for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life . . . will have power to possess your body in that eternal world" (Alma 34:34).

Judgment applies to "the whole human family" (Morm. 3:20; cf. John 5:25–29; *TPJS*, p. 149). Every soul will come before the bar of God through the power of the ATONEMENT and the RESURRECTION (Jacob 6:9). Indeed, as Christ was lifted up on the cross, he will raise all men before him in judgment (3 Ne. 27:14–15; *TPJS*, p. 62). Christ has been given the responsibility for judgment. He taught, "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). Others have been given some role in judgment, such as the twelve apostles in Palestine and the twelve disciples among the Nephites as described in the Book of Mormon (Morm. 3:18–19). Individuals will also judge themselves either by having a perfect knowledge of their joy and righteousness or by having a perfect knowledge of their guilt and unrighteousness (2 Ne. 9:14, 46). All have the assurance, however, that final judgment is in the hands of Christ (2 Ne. 9:41).

Three sets of records will be used in judgment: the records kept in heaven, the records kept on earth (D&C 128:6–7), and the records embedded in the consciousness of each individual (*MD*, p. 97; cf. Alma 11:43). Individuals are judged according to their works, thoughts, words, and the desires of their hearts (Alma 12:14; D&C 137:9).

There can be no pretense or hypocrisy in the manner in which people accept and live the gospel (2 Ne. 31:13). The Lord will judge members of the

Church as to whether they have sought to deny themselves all ungodliness (Moro. 10:32) and whether they have served others with their whole soul (D&C 4:3). Other criteria for judgment include their concern for the needs of others, both spiritual and physical, and the use they make of the light and talents that they have been given (D&C 82:2–3). To merit God’s approval, everyone must live and serve according to his will (Matt. 7:21–23) and do all things the Lord commands (Abr. 3:26). Yet, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), except Jesus only, all are dependent on the Atonement and on repentance to escape the demands of justice (*see* JUSTICE AND MERCY).

Judgment is an expression of the love of God for his children and is exercised mercifully. Mercy takes into account the variety and differing circumstances of human life. For instance, many of God’s expectations are relative to the opportunity that individuals have had to know the gospel. Nevertheless, “mercy cannot rob justice,” and those who rebel openly against God merit punishment (Alma 42:25; Mosiah 2:38–39; 2 Pet. 2:9). Although the “Lord’s arms of mercy are extended to all” (Alma 5:33), only those who repent have claim on mercy through the Son (Alma 12:33–34). God’s judgment reflects the truth that he is “a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also” (Alma 42:15). Eventually all persons will acknowledge that God’s judgment is just: “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just” (Mosiah 16:1).

The principle of judgment was operative in the premortal estate, is continuously operative during mortal life, and will continue in the spirit world and beyond, through resurrection and final judgment. In the premortal state Satan and “a third part” of God’s children were denied the opportunity of mortality because they rebelled against God (Abr. 3:24–28; D&C 29:36–38). In mortal life nations and peoples have been destroyed or scattered when they have become ripened in iniquity and the judgments of God have thereby come upon them (1 Ne. 17:37).

Judgment during mortality is a continuous process to assess people’s worthiness to participate in the saving ordinances of the gospel and to serve in the Church. This is done by means of interviews with local Church leaders. Priesthood leaders are called upon to judge the deeds of member’s who

transgress God’s commandments to determine their standing in the Church (*see* DISCIPLINARY COUNCILS). Judgment also occurs at death as individuals are received into the SPIRIT WORLD either in happiness or in misery (Alma 40:9–14).

In LDS doctrine, individual destiny after the final judgment is not limited to either HEAVEN or HELL. Although the wicked will be thrust into hell (D&C 76:106); nevertheless, all humankind (except those who deny the Holy Ghost and become SONS OF PERDITION) will be redeemed when Christ perfects his work (D&C 76:107). Thus, nearly everyone who has lived on the earth will eventually inherit a degree of glory, it being that amount of heavenly bliss and glory that they have the capacity and the qualifications to receive.

Concerning those who die without an opportunity to hear the gospel, the Lord revealed to Joseph SMITH that “all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom” (D&C 137:7–8). Little children who die also receive the full blessings of salvation (Moro. 8:11, 22). All mankind will be taught the gospel, either on earth or in the spirit world. All necessary ordinances will be performed on the earth vicariously by living proxies in the TEMPLE for those who did not have the opportunity to receive the gospel while in this life, so that they may accept or reject the gospel in the spirit world and be judged on the same basis as those who receive the gospel on earth and remain faithful (1 Pet. 4:6). Such doctrine is not only just; it is also a merciful expression of the pure love of Christ (*TPJS*, p. 218; Moro. 7:44–47).

[*See also* Baptism for the Dead; Plan of Salvation; Purpose of Earth Life; Salvation of the Dead; Spiritual Death; Temple Ordinances; Voice of Warning.]

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