



Using the PLAN OF SALVATION to Answer Questions

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We are living in an exciting time. The restored gospel of Jesus Christ is coming “out of obscurity” (D&C 1:30). As a result, more of Heavenly Father’s children who are not of our faith are hearing about “the Mormons.” Some hear things that sound strange and confusing. Others hear things that feel familiar and comforting. Individuals from either group may come to us seeking answers to their questions. Many answers are found in the plan of salvation, which is also known as the “great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8).

The most commonly asked questions are “Where did I come from?” “Why am I here?” and “Where do I go after this life?”

All these questions can be answered by truths found in the plan of salvation. This article shares some of the answers the scriptures and our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, have given regarding these questions.

*Faith in Jesus Christ
Repentance*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT ADAMSON

Where did I come from?

We are eternal beings. We lived with God before this life as His spirit children. “The Apostle Paul [taught] that ‘we are the offspring of God’ [Acts 17:29],” said President Monson. “Since we know that our physical bodies are the offspring of our mortal parents, we must probe for the meaning of Paul’s statement. The Lord has declared that ‘the spirit and the body are the soul of man’ [D&C 88:15]. Thus it is the spirit which is the offspring of God. The writer of Hebrews refers to Him as ‘the Father of spirits’ [Hebrews 12:9].”¹

Why am I here?

Of our life on earth, President Monson said: “How grateful we should be that a wise Creator fashioned an earth and placed us here, with a veil of forgetfulness of our previous existence so that we might experience a time of testing, an opportunity to prove ourselves in order to qualify for all that God has prepared for us to receive.

“Clearly, one primary purpose of our existence upon the earth is to obtain a body of flesh and bones. We have also been given the gift of agency. In a thousand ways we are privileged to choose for ourselves. Here we learn from the hard taskmaster of experience. We discern between good and evil. We differentiate as to the bitter and the sweet. We discover that there are consequences attached to our actions.”²

Where am I going after this life?

Death comes to all members of the human family. But “if a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). “We know that death is not the end,” said President Monson. “This truth has been taught by living prophets throughout the ages. It is also found in our holy scriptures. In the Book of Mormon we read specific and comforting words:

*When we or
others have
questions about
the gospel of Jesus
Christ, do we
know where to
find the answers?*

Baptism

Gift of the Holy Ghost

*Endure
to the
end*



WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PLAN OF SALVATION?

1. The plan of salvation is taught most clearly in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.
2. Words of the living prophets are found on conference.lds.org. You can search for terms such as *plan of salvation, plan of happiness, atonement, exaltation, justice and mercy, repentance, and resurrection*.
3. See “Lesson 2: The Plan of Salvation” in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*.

“Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

“And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow’ [Alma 40:11–12].”³

After we are resurrected, we go to the celestial kingdom with glory like the sun, the terrestrial kingdom with glory like the moon, the telestial kingdom with glory like the stars, or into outer darkness (see D&C 76).

Is there really a God? Is Satan real?

Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and Satan were all part of the great Council in Heaven held before we were born. As part of the plan of salvation, Heavenly Father asked for one to go to earth and atone for our sins. He said: “Whom shall I send? And one [Jesus Christ] answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another [Satan] answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first.

“And the second [Satan] was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him” (Abraham 3:27–28; see also D&C 29:36–37; Moses 4:1–4).

Do we possess the power to resist Satan’s temptations?

The one-third of the spirits who chose to follow Satan after the Council in Heaven were cast out with him. They and Satan remain spirits without physical bodies. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not.”⁴ Hence Satan can tempt us, but we have the power to resist.

*Spirit
World*

DEATH

RESURRECTION



Why does it sometimes seem like Heavenly Father doesn't answer my prayers?

“Prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other. The object of prayer is not to change the will of God” (Bible Dictionary, “Prayer”). Prayer is a tool that helps us decide if we will use our agency to align our will with God’s (see Abraham 3:25). Heavenly Father always answers our prayers, but those answers can come in the form of yes, no, or not yet. Timing is important.

Why do I have challenges when I am striving to live a good life?

Challenges are part of the plan of salvation. They make us stronger, refine us, and purify us as we rely on Jesus Christ and His gospel. Heavenly Father sustains us during our challenges. Our trials will “give [us] experience, and shall be for [our] good” (D&C 122:7).

How can I know what is right and what is wrong?

All of God’s children are born with the Light of Christ, which helps us “know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16). In addition, the Holy Ghost can bear witness to us of truth in our mind and heart with feelings of peace and warmth (see D&C 8:2–3).

Can I be forgiven even if I have committed serious sins?

God knew that all of us would sin as we learned to choose between right and wrong.⁵ All sins, however, have punishment attached to them. Justice demands that the punishment be suffered. In His mercy, Heavenly Father allowed Jesus Christ to perform the Atonement and meet the demands of justice for us all (see Alma 42). In other words, Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane and death on Golgotha paid the price for all our sins if we access Christ’s Atonement by repenting and receiving the ordinances of the gospel. Our sins will be forgiven (see D&C 1:31–32). ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Race of Life,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 91; see also Abraham 3:22–26.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Race of Life,” 91–92; see also Alma 34:32–34.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “The Race of Life,” 93; see also Doctrine and Covenants 76:59–111.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.
5. Little children cannot sin “until they begin to become accountable” (see D&C 29:46–47).