

We Believe

Here are brief answers to a few questions that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are frequently asked.

What do Latter-day Saints believe about Jesus Christ? Was He literally resurrected from the dead? Will He come again to earth in glory? Is His grace necessary for a person to be saved?

These are a few of the questions people often pose when they encounter the Church or its members for the first time. In responding to questions, members should be prepared first and foremost to listen to the direction of the Holy Ghost. But the brief answers that follow may furnish material to consider as we try to formulate answers.

Do you believe in the historical Jesus Christ who lived and taught in the Holy Land, as recorded in the Bible?

Yes. We believe Jesus was born of Mary, preached in the Holy Land during a ministry of about three years, died on the cross, and was resurrected from the dead, just as prophets had foretold for centuries before His coming (see, for example, Genesis 49:10; Psalm 2:6–7; 22:16–18; 118:22; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2). We believe that He suffered and atoned for the sins of all mankind, making repentance and forgiveness possible (see Isaiah 53:4–6). We believe that He overcame death and that through His power, every man and woman may be resurrected with physical bodies (see Romans 6:5; 8:11). We believe that through

obedience to the principles of His gospel, every son and daughter of God who comes to earth may gain salvation and return to live with our Father and His Son in Their kingdom in heaven (see 1 Peter 3:18; Articles of Faith 1:3).



Do you believe that the Lord was literally resurrected from the dead?

Yes. As His Apostles testified in the Bible, Jesus Christ was seen in His resurrected body by hundreds of witnesses (see Luke 24:39; John 20:20; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8). As a resurrected being, He ministered among thousands of His “other sheep” (John 10:16) in the Americas, showing them the wounds in His hands and feet and side and teaching among them for many days (see 3 Nephi 11–28).

Together with His Father, He appeared in 1820 to Joseph Smith Jr. The Lord directed this young prophet to restore His Church

and gospel because they had been changed to contain the philosophies of men after the death of the ancient Apostles. Joseph Smith and one of his associates offered this testimony of Jesus Christ in 1832: “He lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father” (D&C 76:22–23).

Do you believe He will come again to earth in glory?

Yes. As the holy scriptures testify: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25). “He shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people” (D&C 76:63).

Further, we believe that because of His Resurrection, we too will receive our physical bodies again: “After my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:26). “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). “The death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be raised from this temporal death. The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form” (Alma 11:42–43).

Do you believe that His grace is necessary to our salvation?

Absolutely. Without the grace of Jesus Christ, no one could be saved or receive eternal blessings (see Romans 3:23–24). Through His grace, all will be resurrected and all who believe and follow Him may have eternal life (see John 3:15). Moreover, through His grace, our sacred relationships

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with spouses and family can continue through eternity (see Matthew 16:19; 1 Corinthians 11:11; D&C 132:19). These eternal blessings are His gifts to us; there is nothing we could do of ourselves alone that would merit or earn them.

Nevertheless, the scriptures make it clear that we receive the full blessings of His grace through our faith and obedience to His teachings. The Apostle Paul taught that we can’t save ourselves; we need the Lord’s grace: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8–10).

James explains: “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. . . . Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:17, 24).

Thus the Savior could tell the rich young man who had been obedient and desired eternal life that there was yet more to *do*

(see Matthew 19:16–22; Luke 18:18–23). Latter-day Saints believe that the grace of Christ extends in its full abundance to those who believe in Christ and do the works He taught. “We know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do*” (2 Nephi 25:23; emphasis added).

Although our good works cannot cleanse us of sin, they do show the sincerity of our faith in Jesus Christ and our faithfulness to the path He walked.

Do you believe that Joseph Smith is somehow as important as Jesus Christ in helping save people?

No. Joseph Smith was a prophet important to the history of humankind. The work he did under divine direction brought to earth blessings and knowledge that had been given to prophets of God and their followers in Old and New Testament times but that had been lost. Joseph Smith was, like those ancient prophets, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ who taught that salvation and all the blessings of eternity could come only through our Savior: “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”¹ On another occasion the Prophet taught, “When we reflect upon the holiness and perfections of our great Master, who has opened a way whereby we may come unto him, even the sacrifice of himself, our hearts melt within for his condescension.”² ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.
2. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 54–55.



OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

When people who inquire about our belief in Jesus Christ want more information than we can readily give, we might suggest that they:

- Examine the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. The book tells of the Savior’s ministry among people in the Americas following His Resurrection and Ascension, as recorded in the Bible. His teachings to believers in the ancient Americas parallel the teachings given to His disciples during His mortal ministry in the Holy Land. Book of Mormon prophets teach and testify repeatedly of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Talk with Latter-day Saint missionaries, who are called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ but will respect the decision of those who choose not to accept their teachings.

- Visit www.mormon.org. Select “Basic Beliefs” or “Ask a Question.”

- Visit www.lds.org (available in English). Select “About the Church” then “Answers to Questions,” where they can research topics of interest to them. Or at the home page, they can select “Gospel Library” and then “Search Gospel Library” to research a topic in the Church magazines and other Church publications. ■