

Apostle

Although there will not be another general apostasy from the truth, we must each guard against personal apostasy. You can safeguard yourself against personal apostasy by keeping your covenants, obeying the commandments, following Church leaders, partaking of the sacrament, and constantly strengthening your testimony through daily scripture study, prayer, and service.

Additional references: Isaiah 24:5; Amos 8:11–12; Matthew 24:4–14; Acts 20:28–30; 2 Timothy 3:1–5, 14–15; 4:3–4; 1 Nephi 13:24–29; Mormon 1:13–14; D&C 1:15–17; Joseph Smith—History 1:17–19

See also Church Administration; Priesthood; Restoration of the Gospel

Apostle (*See* Church Administration; Prophets)

Area Authority Seventy (*See* Church Administration)

Articles of Faith

The Articles of Faith outline 13 basic points of belief among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Prophet Joseph Smith first wrote them in a letter to John Wentworth, a newspaper editor, in response to Mr. Wentworth's request to know what members of the Church believed. They were subsequently published in Church periodicals. They are now regarded as scripture and included in the Pearl of Great Price.

Atonement of Jesus Christ

The word *atone* means to reconcile, or to restore to harmony. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be reconciled to our Heavenly Father (see Romans 5:10–11; 2 Nephi 25:23; Jacob 4:11). We can ultimately dwell in His presence forever, having been “made perfect through Jesus” (see D&C 76:62, 69).

Jesus Christ “was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem [His] people” (Ether 3:14). In the premortal spirit world, Heavenly Father presented the eternal plan of salvation, which required an infinite and eternal Atonement. The premortal Jesus, then known as Jehovah, humbly declared that He would do the will of the Father in fulfilling the plan (see Moses 4:2). Thus He was foreordained to carry out the Atonement—to come to the earth, suffer the penalty for our sins, die on the cross, and be resurrected. He became “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8; see also 1 Peter 1:19–20; Moses 7:47).

The Atonement is the supreme expression of our Heavenly Father’s love for us (see John 3:16). It is also the greatest expression of the Savior’s love for the Father and for us (see John 14:28–31; 15:9–13; 1 John 3:16; D&C 34:3; 138:1–4).

Our Need for the Atonement

As descendants of Adam and Eve, all people inherit the effects of the Fall. We all experience spiritual death, being separated from the presence of God, and we are all subject to temporal death, which is the death of the physical body (see Alma 42:6–9; D&C 29:41–42).

In our fallen state, we are subject to opposition and temptation. When we give in to temptation, we distance ourselves from God and come short of His glory (see Romans 3:23).

Eternal justice demands that the effects of the Fall remain and that we be punished for our own wrongdoings. Without the Atonement, spiritual and temporal death would place an impassable barrier between us and God. Because we cannot save ourselves from the Fall or from our own sins, we would be forever separated from our Heavenly Father, for “no unclean thing can dwell . . . in his presence” (Moses 6:57).

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The only way for us to be saved is for someone else to rescue us. We need someone who can satisfy the demands of justice—standing in our place to assume the burden of the Fall and to pay the price for our sins. Jesus Christ has always been the only one capable of making such a sacrifice.

Jesus Christ, Our Only Hope

From before the Creation of the earth, the Savior has been our only hope for “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23).

Only He had the power to lay down His life and take it up again. From His mortal mother, Mary, He inherited the ability to die. From His immortal Father, He inherited the power to overcome death. He declared, “As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5:26).

Only He could redeem us from our sins. God the Father gave Him this power (see Helaman 5:11). The Savior was able to receive this power and carry out the Atonement because He kept Himself free from sin: “He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them” (D&C 20:22). Having lived a perfect, sinless life, He was free from the demands of justice. Because He had the power of redemption and because He had no debt to justice, he could pay the debt for those who repent. He can say:

“Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;

“Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life” (D&C 45:4–5).

Truly, “there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:17).

The Atoning Sacrifice

Jesus's atoning sacrifice took place in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross at Calvary. In Gethsemane He submitted to the will of the Father and began to take upon Himself the sins of all people. He has revealed some of what He experienced as He paid the price for our sins:

"I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

"Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men" (D&C 19:16–19; see also Luke 22:44; Mosiah 3:7).

The Savior continued to suffer for our sins when He allowed Himself to be crucified—"lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world" (1 Nephi 11:33).

On the cross, He allowed Himself to die. His body was then laid in a tomb until He was resurrected and became "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Through His death and Resurrection, He overcame physical death for us all. He later said:

"I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

"And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

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“And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world” (3 Nephi 27:13–16).

Universal Redemption from the Fall

Through the Atonement, Jesus Christ redeems all people from the effects of the Fall. All people who have ever lived on the earth and who ever will live on the earth will be resurrected and brought back into the presence of God to be judged (see 2 Nephi 2:5–10; Helaman 14:15–17). Through the Savior’s gift of mercy and redeeming grace, we will all receive the gift of immortality and live forever in glorified, resurrected bodies.

Salvation from Our Sins

Although we are redeemed unconditionally from the universal effects of the Fall, we are accountable for our own sins. But we can be forgiven and cleansed from the stain of sin if we “apply the atoning blood of Christ” (Mosiah 4:2). We must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent, be baptized for the remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Alma counseled:

“Ye must repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness” (Alma 7:14).

The Gift of Eternal Life

The Savior has declared that eternal life is “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7). To gain eternal life is to be

made worthy to dwell in God's presence, inheriting a place in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. This gift is available only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Mormon said: "What is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise" (Moroni 7:41).

To receive this gift, we must meet certain conditions. We must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and endure faithfully to the end. We must receive the ordinances of salvation: baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (for men), and the temple endowment and marriage sealing. By receiving these ordinances and keeping the associated covenants, we come unto Christ and ultimately receive the gift of eternal life (see Articles of Faith 1:3).

In His infinite justice and mercy, the Lord also gives eternal life to "all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry" and to "all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability" (D&C 137:7, 10).

The Savior invites us all to receive eternal life: "He sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you. Yea, he saith: Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely" (Alma 5:33-34).

Finding Peace and Healing through the Atonement

The blessings of the Savior's Atonement extend throughout eternity, but they also come in this life. As you come unto Christ, you will know the joy of being clean before the Lord. You will be able to echo the words of Alma, who, after much sin and rebellion, experienced the painful but healing process of repentance. After he had been forgiven, he testified:

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“I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

“And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!

“. . . There could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. . . . On the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy” (Alma 36:19–21).

In addition to offering redemption from the pain of sin, the Savior offers peace in times of trial. As part of His Atonement, Jesus took upon Himself the pains, sicknesses, and infirmities of all people (see Alma 7:11–12). He understands your suffering because He has experienced it. With this perfect understanding, He knows how to help you. You can cast “all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Through your faith and righteousness and through His atoning sacrifice, all the inequities, injuries, and pains of this life can be fully compensated for and made right. Blessings denied in this life will be given in the eternities. And although He may not relieve all your suffering now, He will bless you with comfort and understanding and with strength to “bear up [your] burdens with ease” (Mosiah 24:15).

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,” the Savior said, “and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). On another occasion He again promised His peace, saying, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). These are the promises of the Atonement, in this life and throughout eternity.

Additional references: Isaiah 49:13–16; 53; Matthew 26–28; Mark 14–16; Luke 22–24; John 10:14–15; 11:25–26; 14:6; 15:13; 19–20; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; Hebrews 4:14–16; 1 John 1:7; 1 Nephi 10:6; 2 Nephi 2:1–10; 9; 25:23–26; Jacob 4:12; Mosiah 3:1–19; Alma 22:14; 34:5–18; 42; Helaman 5:9–12; 14:13–19; 3 Nephi 9:14–22; 27:13–22; Mormon 9:10–14; Ether 12:27, 41; Moroni 8:5–26; 10:32–33; D&C 18:10–12; 19:15–24; 20:17–34; 45:3–5; 76:40–43; Moses 1:39

See also Baptism; Death, Physical; Death, Spiritual; Eternal Life; Faith; Fall; Forgiveness; God the Father; Gospel; Justice; Kingdoms of Glory; Mercy; Ordinances; Plan of Salvation; Repentance; Resurrection; Salvation

Baptism

The Book of Mormon tells of a group of people who learned the gospel and were baptized at a place called Mormon. From the time of their baptism, they regarded Mormon as a place of beauty because while they were there, they “came to the knowledge of their Redeemer” (Mosiah 18:30). Strengthened by their testimonies and their baptismal covenant, they remained faithful to the Lord, even in times of intense trial (see Mosiah 23–24).

Like the people in this Book of Mormon account, you can rejoice as you remember your baptismal covenant and the Lord’s promises to you. You can find strength in the ordinance of baptism, whether you were baptized recently or many years ago.

Entering the Path to Eternal Life

Baptism is the first saving ordinance of the gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4). Through baptism and confirmation by priesthood authority, you became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When you were baptized, you showed your willingness to follow the Savior’s example. He too was baptized, even though He was without sin. As He explained to John the Baptist, He needed to be baptized in order to “fulfil all righteousness” (see Matthew 3:13–17).

All who seek eternal life must follow the example of the Savior by being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. The prophet Nephi said that the Savior showed us “the gate by which [we] should enter. For the gate by which [we] should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of [our] sins by fire and by the Holy