

have a law given; and there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions” (D&C 88:36–38).

The above references apparently pertain to descriptive law—that is, the divine law that operates directly upon or through physical and biological orders (*see* NATURE, LAW OF).

Other laws of God are prescriptive. They address the free will of man, setting forth standards and rules of behavior necessary for salvation and for social harmony. Latter-day Saints embrace such prescriptive commands of God as found in the TEN COMMANDMENTS and the SERMON ON THE MOUNT. Latter-day revelation also confirms that blessings and salvation come through compliance with divine laws: “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21). “And they who are not sanctified through the law which I have given unto you, even the law of Christ, must inherit another kingdom, even that of a terrestrial kingdom, or that of a telestial kingdom” (D&C 88:21).

Of these prescriptive laws or commandments of God, LDS teachings tend to emphasize the following characteristics: (1) the extent of the divine laws revealed to mankind may vary from dispensation to dispensation, according to the needs and conditions of mankind as God decrees; (2) they are given through and interpreted by his prophets; (3) they are relatively concise, but “gentle” or benevolent, given to promote the happiness he has designed for his children (*TPJS*, pp. 256–57); and (4) they are efficacious for mankind as God’s harmony with eternal law was, and is, efficacious for him, and will bring to pass the exaltation of his righteous children.

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LAW OF ADOPTION

The house of Israel in a spiritual and eternal perspective will finally include all who are the true followers of Jesus Christ. Although those of the direct blood lineage of the house of ISRAEL are genealogically the sheep of God’s fold, they must fulfill all the spiritual conditions of discipleship. Those not of the blood of Israel can become Israel through adoption (cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:7, 29; 4:5–7; Matt. 3:9; JST Luke 3:8; Abr. 2:10), through the principles and the ordinances of the gospel: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; repentance of sins; baptism by water and reception of the HOLY GHOST; and enduring to the end.

In a larger sense, everyone must be adopted into the family of God in order to enjoy the fulness of his blessings in the world to come. As the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, Jesus is the only natural HEIR and therefore the only one whose birthright is the kingdom of his Father. If others are to qualify as joint-heirs with Christ in his Father’s kingdom, they must be fully adopted by God.

The adoption process is, in the Prophet Joseph SMITH’s words, “a new creation by the Holy Ghost” (*TPJS*, p. 150). As summarized in the Doctrine and Covenants, individuals who enter into the COVENANT and “magnify their calling” are “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God” (D&C 84:33–34).

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LAW OF MOSES

Distinctive views concerning the law of Moses and its relationship to Christ and to the attainment of individual salvation are set forth in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that this law was given by God to MOSES, that it formed part of a peculiar COVENANT of obedience