in undeveloped countries to supplement their savings and serve full-time missions. Whether laboring at home or abroad, Latter-day Saints are constantly admonished that the witness and testimony of the gospel are only effective if they reflect genuine and continual discipleship of Jesus Christ. The gospel is to be taught in mildness and meekness, in demonstration of the Spirit, and in love unfeigned (D&C 38:41; 99:2; 121:41).

The command of the Lord to preach the gospel to all nations has a twofold purpose: to bring people to an understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and also to sound the warning voice to leave mankind without excuse (see VOICE OF WARNING).

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PREDESTINATION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rejects the belief in predestination—that God predetermines the salvation or the damnation of every individual. The gospel teaches that genuine human freedom and genuine responsibility—individual AGENT in both thought and action—are crucial in both the development and the outcome of a person's life. Church doctrine rejects the strict dual option providing only heaven or hell as an outcome, since people vary widely in their levels of spiritual attainment. At the same time, Latter-day Saints recognize both the indispensable need for the grace of God manifested through Jesus Christ and the effective spiritual guidance that comes through divine FOREORDINATION.

The LDS position is based in part on the teachings of Paul that God "will render to every man according to his deeds" and that "there is no
respect of persons with God” (Rom. 2:6, 11). These two principles provide a basis for understanding Paul’s use of the term “predestination.” The term apparently connoted “to be ordained beforehand for godly labor.” In the sense that one’s potential or calling has been recognized and declared, this interpretation conforms with the Greek term Paul used, proorizó, and does not denote an irreversible or irresistible predetermination.

Latter-day Saints are to “look unto God in every thought” (D&C 6:36), because no person can save himself. But neither can God redeem anyone without that person’s effort and collaboration. All are free to accept or reject God’s help and powers of redemption. It is clearly taught in scripture that with his help both justification and sanctification will be “just and true” (D&C 20:30). “But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God; therefore let the church take heed, and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also” (D&C 20:32, 33).

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PRE-EARTHLY EXISTENCE

[The term “pre-existence,” or more accurately, “premortal existence,” refers to a period of individual conscious and accountable life before birth into mortality on this earth. It is Latter-day Saint doctrine that living things existed as individual spirit beings and possessed varying degrees of intelligence in an active, conscious spirit state before mortal birth and that the spirit continues to live and function in the mortal body. The revelations teach that premortal spirit bodies have general resemblance to their physical counterparts.

Articles pertaining to the premortal existence are Articles: Animals; Birth; Council in Heaven; Devils; First Estate; Foreordination; God the Father; Intelligences; Jehovah; Jesus Christ: Firstborn in the Spirit; Mother in Heaven; Premortal Life; Soul; Spirit; Spirit Body; War in Heaven.]

PREMARITAL SEX

Throughout the centuries, the Lord has declared very clearly that sexual relations outside of marriage are sin (cf. Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; 22:13–30; 2 Sam. 13:12; Matt. 5:27–30; 19:18; Acts 15:20; 21:25; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:18–20; Alma 39:3–6; D&C 42:22–26). In like manner, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that premarital sex is sin and counsels its members to abstain from it. Recognizing that the “new morality,” which advocates that consenting partners may do whatever their appetites urge them to do, is nothing more than the “old immorality,” the Church rejects the popular view that sex before marriage is not sinful and is justifiable as “normal and natural.” Rather, the Church teaches that sex should be a sacred expression of love between a husband and wife and that both men and women should abstain from sexual activity until their marriage. It teaches that sex before marriage is an expression of lust, not love, and admonishes its members not to participate in it or in any other kinds of activities that excite sexual desires. The Church teaches that those who have participated in premarital sex may repent of their sin, reminding them that true repentance requires that they abstain from sexual relations except with their legal spouse.

[See also Chastity; Marriage; Repentance.]

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