degrees of salvation are correspondingly less glorious and have restrictions.

ALMA P. BURTON

SALVATION OF CHILDREN

See: Children: Salvation of Children

SALVATION OF THE DEAD

A distinctive doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that the dead as well as the living may receive the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. Every man, woman, and child who has ever lived or who ever will live on this earth will have full opportunity, if not in this life then in the next, to embrace or reject the gospel in its purity and fullness.

When this doctrine was first taught at Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1842 (D&C 127; 128), the Prophet Joseph Smith said it was the “burden of the scriptures” and that it exhibited “the greatness of divine compassion and benevolence in the extent of the plan of human salvation” (TPJS, p. 192). It is in harmony with the Jewish idea that the family is the instrument of holiness and redemption and that the dead may need atonement. It is also a Christian concept in the writings of Paul and Peter (see BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD). “[It] justifies the ways of God to man, places the human family upon an equal footing, and harmonizes with every principle of righteousness, justice, and truth” (TPJS, p. 223).

The Prophet posed the dilemma resolved by the doctrine: “One dies and is buried having never heard the gospel of reconciliation; to the other the message of salvation is sent, he hears and embraces it and is made the heir of eternal life. Shall the one become the partaker of glory and the other be consigned to hopeless perdition? . . . Such an idea is worse than atheism” (TPJS, p. 192).

Five fundamental principles underlie LDS understanding of salvation for the dead:

1. Life is eternal. Birth does not begin life nor does death end it. In each stage of existence there are ever-higher levels of divine enlightenment and blessedness.

2. Repentance is possible in the next life as well as this one. “There is never a time when the spirit
In harmony with these principles, Latter-day Saints identify their ancestors through family history research, build temples, and, in behalf of their progenitors, perform the ordinances that pertain to exaltation: baptism; confirmation; ordination to the priesthood; washing and anointing; endowment; and sealing. Thus, “we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection . . . [we] seal those who dwell on earth to those who dwell in heaven” (TPJS, pp. 337–38). This is the chain that binds the hearts of fathers and mothers.

This replica of a temple baptismal font, in the South Visitors Center on Temple Square, is like those in LDS temples where baptisms by immersion are performed by proxy for the dead. The twelve oxen symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel.

is too old to approach God. All are within the reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin” (TPJS, p. 191).

3. The family bonds extend beyond death. The family bonds that are formed on this earth and consecrated to God by sacred covenants and ordinances are indissoluble and extend into the spirit world. “They without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15; Heb. 11:39–40).

4. Ordinances may be performed for the dead. Through the holy priesthood, held by the prophets in the Church, Jesus Christ has authorized mortals to receive ordinances “of salvation substitutional” [that is, by proxy] and become “instrumental in bringing multitudes of their kindred into the kingdom of God” (TPJS, p. 191).

5. Temple ordinances are not “mere signs.” They are channels of the Spirit of God that enable one to be born of God in the fullest sense and to receive all the covenants and blessings of Jesus Christ. The performing of earthly ordinances by proxy for those who have died is as efficacious and vitalizing as if the deceased person had done them. That person, in turn, is free to accept or reject the ordinances in the spirit world.

The St. George Temple, the first temple dedicated in Utah, was also the first in which endowments were received by proxy for the dead, in 1877. Prior to that time, endowments for the living had been performed in the Nauvoo Temple and in the Endowment House. This temple was dedicated under the direction of Brigham Young, in his advanced age and failing health, shortly before he died. Photograph, 1982; courtesy Floyd Holdman.
to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents. And this sealing work “fulfills the mission of Elijah” (TPJS, p. 330; see also ELIJAH, SPIRIT OF).

When the Twelve Apostles chosen in Joseph Smith’s day were instructed to initiate these ordinances in Nauvoo in 1842, they soon recognized that it was the beginning of an immense work and that to administer all the ordinances of the gospel to the hosts of the dead was no easy task. They asked if there was some other way. The Prophet Joseph replied, “The laws of the Lord are immutable, we must act in perfect compliance with what is revealed to us. We need not expect to do this vast work for the dead in a short time. I expect it will take at least a thousand years” (Millennial Star 37:66). As of 1991 vicarious temple ordinances have been performed for more than 113 million persons. The Prophet Joseph said, “It is no more incredible that God should save the dead, than that he should raise the dead” (TPJS, p. 191).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SAMUEL THE LAMANITE

Samuel the Lamanite was the only Book of Mormon prophet identified as a Lamanite. Apart from his sermon at Zarahemla (Hel. 13–15), no other record of his life or ministry is preserved. Noted chiefly for his prophecies about the birth of Jesus Christ, his prophetic words, which were later examined, commended, and updated by the risen Jesus (3 Ne. 23:9–13), were recorded by persons who accepted him as a true prophet and even faced losing their lives for believing his message (3 Ne. 1:9).

Approximately five years before Jesus’ birth, Samuel began to preach repentance in Zarahemla. After the incensed Nephite inhabitants expelled him, the voice of the Lord directed him to return. Climbing to the top of the city wall, he delivered his message unharmed, even though certain citizens sought his life (Hel. 16:2). Thereafter, he fled and “was never heard of more among the Nephites” (Hel. 16:8).

Samuel prophesied that Jesus would be born in no more than five years’ time, with two heavenly signs indicating his birth. First, “one day and a night and a day” of continual light would occur (Hel. 14:4; cf. Zech. 14:7). Second, among celestial wonders, a new star would arise (Hel. 14:5–6). Then speaking of mankind’s need of the Atonement and Resurrection, he prophesied signs of Jesus’ death: three days of darkness among the Nephites would signal his crucifixion, accompanied by storms and earthquakes (14:14–27).

Samuel framed these prophecies by pronouncing judgments of God upon his hearers. He spoke of a final devastation—four hundred years distant—that would end Nephite civilization because of its rebellion against God. This desolation would come through “the sword and with famine and with pestilence” (13:9; cf. Morm. 1:19). He spoke of curses from God on the land (13:17–20, 23, 30, 35–36), on property (13:18–19, 21, 31), and on the people themselves (13:19, 21, 32, 38). Such afflictions would arise because the Nephites would knowingly reject true prophets while accepting false ones, clamor for wealth, and refuse to acknowledge the blessings of God (13:19–34). Samuel reiterated the judgments of God against the Nephites (15:1–3, 17) and then emphasized the divine promises extended to the Lamanites—including assurances for “the latter times” of “restoration” (15:4–16).

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SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the process of becoming a saint, holy and spiritually clean and pure, by purging all sin from the soul. Latter-day Saint scriptures mention several factors that make sanctification possible.

First is the Atonement of Jesus Christ (D&C 76:41–42; 88:18; Moro. 10:33; Alma 13:11). Christ’s blood sanctifies God’s repentant children by washing them clean in a way that extends beyond the REMISSION OF SINS at BAPTISM. This cleansing is given through GRACE to all who “love and serve God” (D&C 20:31). “For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified” (Moses 6:60; cf. 1 John 5:8).