as also the spirit of the beast; and every other creature which God has created” (D&C 77:2). That spirit bodies resemble physical bodies is demonstrated in the account of the pre mortal Jesus visiting the BROTHER OF JARED many centuries before Jesus’ birth (Ether 3:9–16). On this occasion, the Lord revealed his spirit body and said, “this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; . . . and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh” (3:16).

According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, the spirit (sometimes called the soul) does not die (Alma 42:9; cf. James 2:26). However, a spirit, though immortal, cannot have a fulness of joy without being inseparably connected to a resurrected physical body (D&C 93:33–34; 138:50). For additional references see Job 32:8; Hebrews 12:9; 1 Nephi 11:11; Abraham 3:18–23.

WILSON K. ANDERSEN

SPIRIT OF GOD
See: Light of Christ

SPIRIT PRISON
In Latter-day Saint doctrine the “spirit prison” is both a condition and a place within the postearthly SPIRIT WORLD. One “imprisons” himself or herself through unbelief or through willful disobedience of God. In such circumstances, one’s opportunities in the AFTERLIFE will be limited. Those who willfully rebel against the light and truth of the gospel and do not repent remain in this condition of imprisonment and suffer SPIRITUAL DEATH, which is a condition of hell (Alma 12:16–18; D&C 76:36–37). Furthermore, since a fulness of joy is not possible without the resurrected body, the waiting in the spirit world for the RESURRECTION is a type of imprisonment (D&C 45:17; 93:33–34; 138:16, 17, 50). However, through the ATONEMENT of Jesus Christ all have a promise of resurrection, and thus of eventual release from this type of spirit prison, although the unrepentant will still be imprisoned by their unbelief (see DAMNATION).

Another more far-reaching definition of “spirit prison” is HELL. In this sense, spirit prison is a temporary abode in the spirit world of those who either were untaught and unrighteous, or were disobedient to the gospel while in mortal life (cf. Alma 40:11–14; D&C 138:32).

As part of his redemptive mission, Jesus Christ visited the spirit world during the interlude between his own death and resurrection, and “from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness”—in other words, to the spirits in prison (D&C 138:30; cf. 1 Pet. 3:18–20; 4:6). Thus, the gulf between paradise and hell that is spoken of in Jesus’ parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) was bridged by the Savior’s ministry in the spirit world. This bridging allows interaction among the righteous and wicked spirits to the extent that the faithful present the gospel to “those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets” (D&C 138:32). Latter-day Saints believe that preaching the gospel in the spirit world continues today and will continue until every soul who wishes to do so and repents properly will be released from such imprisonment.

Repentance of imprisoned spirits opens the doors of the prison, enabling them to loose themselves from the spiritual darkness of unbelief, ignorance, and sin. As they accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and cast off their sins, the repentant are able to break the chains of hell and dwell with the righteous in paradise.

[See also Salvation of the Dead.]

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SPIRIT OF PROPHECY
Spirit of prophecy is equated in Revelation 19:10 with “the testimony of Jesus.” For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, having a TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST means receiving personal spiritual assurance through REVELATION by the HOLY GHOST that Jesus is the literal Son of God, the creator of the world, and that through his
Atonement all people will be resurrected and live forever.

According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the spirit of prophecy is vital to the principles of salvation, revelation, and the teaching and ministering of the gospel. Each person must receive a testimony of Christ in order to attain salvation and eternal life with him (TPJS, p. 160). Since the gospel is to be taught to everyone, it follows that all people of every race and gender can experience the spirit of prophecy. Moreover, in the words of Joseph Smith, “God in his superior wisdom, has always given his Saints, wherever he had any on the earth, the same spirit, and that spirit, as John says, is the true spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus” (TPJS, p. 300).

It is through the spirit of prophecy that God’s continuing revelations are brought to the people of the earth, not only through his ordained prophets but also through all those who have received a testimony of Christ. The gospel cannot be taught on the earth without the spirit of prophecy or a testimony of Christ, because it is only through testimony received by revelation that Christ’s teachings are validated in the heart and mind of the person taught. One who preaches the gospel and denies the spirit of prophecy is, according to Joseph Smith, an “imposter” (TPJS, p. 269).

While only one person (the President of the Church) may exercise all the keys of the priesthood of God at one time on the earth and receive revelation for the whole Church, the underlying principle of the spirit of prophecy is that all Saints who receive a testimony of Christ are prophets in the limited sense that they may receive revelation and inspiration for themselves (TPJS, p. 119). This same idea is implicit in Moses’ response to Joshua: “Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” (Num. 11:29).

LOUISE PLUMMER

SPIRITUAL DEATH

Spiritual death is the condition of one who is spiritually cut off, temporarily or permanently, from the presence of God. LDS scriptures speak of two spiritual deaths, and the concept manifests itself in many ways.

The first type of spiritual death is the actual separation from God that automatically comes upon all born into mortality as a consequence of the fall of Adam. All mortals will be redeemed from this death, as well as from physical death, through Christ’s atonement and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:21–23; 2 Ne. 9:10–15; Hel. 14:15–19; D&C 29:41), to be brought back into God’s presence to stand before him.

The second spiritual death will be finalized on the day of judgment for those who have not repented (Rev. 2:11; 20:6–15; Alma 12:16–36). It is the result of a lifetime of choices. For those who ultimately lose the inclination or ability to repent, or commit unpardonable sin, it becomes perdition (2 Pet. 3:7; Alma 34:35; 40:25–26) or “banishment from the presence of God and from his light and truth forever” (DS 2:216–30). This does not extinguish the spirit of man, however, for it is eternal (see Alma 12:18; 42:9). The Savior’s atonement gives all mankind the opportunity to avoid the second spiritual death and gain immortality and eternal life.

The spiritually “dead” may be grouped into several types and categories. For example, Satan and the spirits who joined him during the war in heaven are eternally spiritually dead (D&C 29:36–39; 76:25–29). They are sons of perdition (see 2 Ne. 9:8–9). Mortals who sin “unto death” (D&C 64:7) by denying the Son after the Father has revealed him will join “the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power” (D&C 76:30–38). In yet another sense, all people on earth over the age of accountability are to a certain extent spiritually dead, depending on their present state of repentance and their degree of sensitivity to the light of Christ and to the Holy Ghost.

Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and most other religions believe in some form of life after death, judgment, and ultimate punishment for the unrepentant. For example, the ancient Egyptians believed that the hard-hearted would die a second death by being devoured by the Chaos monster (Keel, pp. 72–73). Major differences between the Mormon concept of spiritual death and those of others center on the atonement of Jesus Christ. The only permanent spiritual death is that which individuals bring upon themselves by refusing to repent of their sins, having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves (D&C 76:35).