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## CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN

The church of the Firstborn is Christ’s heavenly church, and its members are exalted beings who gain an inheritance in the highest heaven of the celestial world and for whom the family continues in eternity.

In the scriptures Jesus Christ is called the Firstborn. He was the first spirit child born of God the Father in the premortal existence and was in the beginning with God (John 1:1–5, 14). Christ also became the Firstborn from the dead, the first person resurrected, “that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18; Acts 26:23; 1 Cor. 15:23; Rev. 1:5). Even as the FIRST PRINCIPLES and ORDINANCES, including baptism in water and the reception of the Holy Ghost, constitute the gate into the earthly Church of Jesus Christ, so higher ordinances of the priesthood constitute the gate into the church of the Firstborn. To secure the blessings that pertain to the church of the Firstborn, one must obey the gospel from the heart, receive all of the ordinances that pertain to the house of the Lord, and be sealed by the HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE in the celestial kingdom of God (D&C 76:67, 71, 94; 77:11; 78:21; 88:1–5; *TPJS*, p. 237).

Revelations to the Prophet Joseph SMITH supplement those of the New Testament to indicate that the church of the Firstborn consists of those who have the inheritance of the Firstborn and become joint-heirs with Christ in receiving all that the Father has (Rom. 8:14–17; D&C 84:33–38; *see* HEIRS OF GOD). The Lord said, “If you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; . . . I . . . am the Firstborn; . . . And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn” (D&C 93:20–22). The church of the Firstborn is the divine patriarchal order in its eternal form. Building the priesthood family order on this earth by receiving sealings in the temple is a preparation and foundation for this blessing in eternity (*see* GOSPEL OF ABRAHAM).

When persons have proved themselves faithful in all things required by the Lord, it is their privilege to receive covenants and obligations that will enable them to be heirs of God as members of the church of the Firstborn. They are “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise” and are those “into whose hands the Father has given all things” (D&C 76:51–55). They will be priests and priestesses, kings and queens, receiving the Father’s glory, having the fulness of knowledge, wisdom, power, and dominion (D&C 76:56–62; cf. 107:19). At the second coming of Jesus Christ, the “general assembly of the church of the firstborn” will descend with him (Heb. 12:22–23; JST Gen. 9:23; D&C 76:54, 63).

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## CHURCH GROWTH

See: Vital Statistics

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## CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, THE

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the official name of the Church established on April 6, 1830, at Fayette, New York, under the