
DEDICATIONS

Dedication is the act of devoting or consecrating something to the Lord, or “setting apart” something for a specific purpose in building the KINGDOM OF GOD. It is a PRIESTHOOD function performed through an official and formal act of prayer.

For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, dedications serve at least two clear functions. First, they call down the powers of heaven to establish a sacred space or time in the furthering of the desired purpose. Second, they consecrate the participants, focusing their souls upon the meaning of the dedicated object or act. In this way the secular is brought into sacred relationships, and the blessings of God are invoked so that the powers of heaven and earth are joined to bring about works of righteousness.

LDS church buildings are always dedicated to the Lord, usually after all indebtedness is removed. In the Bible the first recorded dedicatory prayer is that of the Temple of Solomon (1 Kgs. 8:22–53), at which time the glory of the Lord filled the temple, in divine approval. The first temple dedication in this dispensation was on March 27, 1836, when the Prophet Joseph SMITH dedicated the KIRTLAND TEMPLE as “a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 109:8). Since then many LDS temples and thousands of MEETINGHOUSES around the world have been similarly dedicated to the Lord. Church buildings such as schools, VISITORS CENTERS, storehouses, office buildings, and HISTORICAL SITES are also dedicated to the Lord for their intended uses. Schools may be dedicated as institutions of learning and character development, while bishop’s storehouses are dedicated to provide welfare and physical supplies for the needy.

Lands and countries may be dedicated, sometimes more than once, for divinely appointed purposes. On October 24, 1841, Elder Orson Hyde ascended the Mount of Olives and dedicated the land of Palestine for the return of the Jews and the rearing of a temple. It was rededicated on several other occasions. More than thirty-two countries and entire continents have been dedicated for the preaching of the gospel.

Homes of the SAINTS, whether or not they are free of debt, may be dedicated “as sacred edifices where the Holy Spirit can reside, and as sanctuar-

ies where family members can worship, find safety from the world, grow spiritually, and prepare for eternal family relationships” (*General Handbook of Instructions*, 11–2, 1989). On some occasions it has been deemed appropriate to dedicate business places or enterprises to accomplish righteous and divine purposes. It is customary in the Church to dedicate graves as the final resting place for the deceased, asking that the ground be hallowed and protected until the day of resurrection.

Olive OIL is also consecrated by a dedicatory prayer. It is thus set apart by the power of the priesthood for the divinely prescribed purposes of blessing the sick and anointing in the temple (James 5:14; D&C 109:35; 124:39).

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DEGREES OF GLORY

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an optimistic view of the eternal rewards awaiting mankind in the hereafter. Members of the Church believe that there are “many mansions” (John 14:2) and that Christ’s ATONEMENT and RESURRECTION will save all mankind from death, and eventually will reclaim from hell all except the SONS OF PERDITION (D&C 76:43–44). The saved, however, are not placed into a monolithic state called HEAVEN. In the resurrection of the body, they are assigned to different degrees of glory commensurate with the law they have obeyed. There are three kingdoms of glory: the celestial, the terrestrial, and the telestial. The apostle Paul spoke of three glories, differing from one another as the sun, moon, and stars differ in brilliance. He called the first two glories celestial and terrestrial, but the third is not named in the Bible (1 Cor. 15:40–41; cf. D&C 76:70–81, 96–98.) The word “telestial” is an LDS term, first used by the Prophet Joseph SMITH and Sidney RIGDON in reporting a vision they received on February 16, 1832 (D&C 76; *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* defines telestial glory as “the lowest of three Mormon degrees or kingdoms of glory attainable in heaven”; see also CELESTIAL KINGDOM; TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM; TELESTIAL KINGDOM).

At the final JUDGMENT, all except the DEVIL, his ANGELS, and those who become sons of perdition during mortal life will be assigned to one of the three kingdoms of glory. The devil and his fol-