

“the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit [are] withheld” (D&C 70:14).

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## ETERNAL LIFE

The scriptures clearly state that eternal life comes from God through his son Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 14:6; Heb. 5:9; 2 Ne. 31:20–21; Alma 11:40; Ether 3:14; D&C 45:8), and is the “greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7; *see also* EXALTATION; GODHOOD). To Latter-day Saints the phrase “eternal life” refers not only to everlasting life but also and more particularly to the quality of life God lives. Eternal life is available to all people who have lived on earth who accept this gift by their obedience to God’s laws and ordinances.

God’s work, and the source of his glory, is bringing to pass “the immortality and eternal life” of his children (Moses 1:39). In other words, God works to enable his children’s return to his presence so that they may both live with him and live as he lives.

So allied is Christ with the Father that the scriptures sometimes define eternal life as “knowing” them: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3; D&C 132:24).

Knowing Christ in this world comes by receiving him and his law (D&C 132:23–24). Jeremiah spoke for the Lord: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . . . And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour . . . saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me” (Jer. 31:33–34). As stated in the Gospel of John, one begins to know Christ and his will by searching the scriptures, for, as Jesus affirmed, “they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

Having the law written in one’s heart implies an acceptance that prompts action; indeed, the scriptures mention many actions that one must take in order to receive the gift of eternal life. To enter the path leading toward eternal life, one must exercise faith in Christ (John 3:36; 6:47; Moro. 7:41), repent, be baptized for the remission of one’s sins (2 Ne. 31:17–18), and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The scriptures state that once on the path, the believer must strive to keep the

COMMANDMENTS (2 Ne. 31:19–20; Alma 7:15–16)—that is, to do the works of RIGHTEOUSNESS (D&C 59:23), primary among which is charity (1 Cor. 13; Matt. 25:34–36). The believer must also ENDURE TO THE END (2 Ne. 31:20–21; D&C 50:5; cf. Paul’s phrase “patient continuance in well doing,” Rom. 2:7), and make covenants in connection with TEMPLE ORDINANCES (D&C 124:55; 128:12).

While in mortality, individuals may come to a stage of knowing the Father and the Son that allows the Lord to promise them eternal life. This occurrence is described in scripture as receiving the HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE (D&C 88:3–4) and the Second Comforter (John 14:16; D&C 88:2–4; *see also* JESUS CHRIST, SECOND COMFORTER); having the more sure word of prophecy (D&C 131:5); and having one’s CALLING AND ELECTION made sure (2 Pet. 1:10; D&C 131:5).

God invites all people to seek and ask earnestly for eternal life, and reassures all who do so that they will not be given a stone (cf. Matt. 7:7–11). They are promised “revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge,” which brings an understanding of “peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61). Those who will receive eternal life in its fullest come forth in the first RESURRECTION (Mosiah 15:21–25) and inherit the highest degree of glory in the CELESTIAL KINGDOM (D&C 76:50–59; 88:4; 101:65).

The Prophet Joseph Smith was at a loss for words to capture the eternal splendor of God the Father and of his son Jesus Christ, “whose brightness and glory defy all description” (JS—H 1:17). Language can describe the glories of eternal life only inadequately through metaphors of overwhelmingly bright light or fire (Ex. 24:17; Acts 26:13–15; Rev. 21:23; 1 Ne. 1:8–10; D&C 110:1–4; cf. “shine as the brightness of the firmament,” Dan. 12:3); pure truth (John 14:6; Ether 4:12; D&C 84:45–48; 93:36; Moses 7:29–40); glass or crystal (Rev. 4:6; D&C 130:9); and timelessness (Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8; Rev. 10:6; Alma 40:8; D&C 88:110). Paul points out how far eternal life exceeds the descriptive ability of language when he says, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

[*See also* Immortality and Eternal Life.]

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## ETERNAL LIVES, ETERNAL INCREASE

“Eternal lives” is a term that refers to the right and power to beget children after the resurrection, granted to those who are exalted in the highest degree of the CELESTIAL KINGDOM. This is an aspect of ETERNAL PROGRESSION. “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase” (D&C 131:1–4).

This distinctive doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was taught by Joseph SMITH and was especially articulated on May 16–17, 1843, at Ramus, Illinois, where he often visited and preached. Conversing on spiritual topics with a small party of friends, the Prophet Joseph Smith shed light on the concept of eternal increase: “Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory” (*TPJS*, pp. 300–301). Doctrine and Covenants, section 131, is largely concerned with this subject, and was first included in 1876.

A husband and wife who are married in the new and everlasting covenant and sealed by the HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE under the proper PRIESTHOOD authority are promised that they shall inherit “thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers,” and their “glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19). They are likened to gods, having no end. They share in the promises of eternal posterity made to ABRAHAM and SARAH: “Both in the world

and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars” (D&C 132:30).

Brigham YOUNG, in 1862, spoke of eternal lives, stating that the opportunity to become heirs to all things, and to become a “King of kings and Lord of lords, . . . is promised to the faithful, and are but so many stages in that ceaseless progression of eternal lives. . . . There will be no end to the increase of the faithful” (*JD* 10:5). He described such a situation as a pleasing one, creating happiness beyond mortal comprehension. In 1864 he elaborated: “In like manner, every faithful son of God, becomes, as it were, Adam to the race that springs from his loins, when they are embraced in the covenants and blessings of the Holy Priesthood . . . in the progress of eternal lives. . . . We have not yet received our kingdoms, neither will we, until we have finished our work on the earth, passed through the ordeals, are brought up by the power of the resurrection, and are crowned with glory and eternal lives” (*JD* 10:355).

Latter-day Saints believe that all worthy men and women, through righteous living and being sealed by the power of the priesthood, will in ETERNAL LIFE inherit, with ADAM and EVE, Abraham and Sarah, and all the faithful, those same blessings and enjoy a continuation of seeds forever, or eternal increase.

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## ETERNAL PROGRESSION

The principle of eternal progression cannot be precisely defined or comprehended, yet it is fundamental to the LDS worldview. The phrase “eternal progression” first occurs in the discourses of Brigham YOUNG. It embodies many concepts taught by Joseph SMITH, especially in his KING FOLLETT DISCOURSE. It is based on the proposition that “there is no such thing as principle, power, wisdom, knowledge, life, position, or anything that can be imagined, that remains stationary—they must increase or decrease” (Young, *JD* 1:350).

Progression takes many forms. In one sense, eternal progression refers to everything that people learn and experience by their choices as they progress from PREMORTAL LIFE, to MORTALITY, to postmortal spirit life, and to a resurrected state in the presence of God. Personal progression is possible in each of these states, but not the same kind of