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GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

The Postmortal Spirit World



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Postmortal Spirit World

Life after Death

Heavenly Father prepared a plan so that we could become like Him. As part of this plan, He sent us to the earth to receive mortal bodies. Eventually our bodies will die, and our spirits will go to the spirit world. The spirit world is a place of waiting, working, learning, and—for the righteous—resting from care and sorrow. Our spirits will live there until we are ready for our resurrection. Then our mortal bodies will once more unite with our spirits, and we will receive immortality and the degree of glory we have prepared for.



Conditions of the Spirit World

Latter-day prophets have said that the spirits of the deceased are not far from us. President Ezra Taft Benson said: “Sometimes the veil between this life and the life beyond becomes very thin. Our loved ones who have passed on are not far from us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 18).

We do not change automatically when we die. Spirits carry with them from earth their attitudes of devotion to God or dislike for righteousness (see Alma 34:34, page 295). We will have the same appetites and desires that we had when we lived on earth.

The prophet Alma in the Book of Mormon taught that the spirit world is divided into two parts:

“The spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.

“And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, . . . shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity. . . .

“ . . . Thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection” (Alma 40:12–14, page 308).

Work in the Spirit World

Although the righteous spirits will rest from earthly care and sorrow, they will also be occupied in doing the work of the Lord. President Joseph F. Smith saw in a



vision that immediately after Jesus Christ was crucified, He visited the righteous in the spirit world. He appointed messengers, gave them power and authority, and commissioned them to “carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men” (D&C 138:30, page 289).

The Church is organized in the spirit world, and the priesthood continues to operate there (see D&C 138:30, page 289). Every person who is righteous will have continued work to do in the spirit world. And those who die without the knowledge of the gospel will have the opportunity to hear it and learn about it in the next life.

Family relationships continue to be important in the next life. Our family members and ancestors who have passed away still love us. President Joseph F. Smith taught the following:

“They [our ancestors and loved ones] know us better than we know them. They have advanced; we are advancing; we are growing as they have grown; we are reaching the goal that they have attained unto. . . . They see us, they are solicitous for our welfare, they love us now more than ever” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1916, 3).

As we continue faithful in keeping the commandments, we will prepare ourselves to enter into the rest of the spirit world and be reunited with our family members.



“For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

1 Peter 4:6, page 1549

LOOK
THEM
UP

Additional Scriptures

- **Luke 16:19–31, page 1307**
(fate of beggar and rich man in the spirit world)
- **D&C 76, pages 136–44**
(the kingdoms of glory that we can receive after resurrection)
- **D&C 137, pages 285–86** (many accept the gospel after they die)
- **D&C 138, pages 286–91**
(revelation about the spirit world)



Personal Experience

I **have always** been interested in where we go when we die. I wanted to know what was waiting for me and searched for new information on this topic. When I saw that this was one of the LDS study lessons, I jumped at the chance to get hold of this information.

What I found was a wealth of knowledge that I had been missing. I still read the conference talks about the postmortal spirit world again and again.

I studied the New Testament record of Christ's ministry and Atonement. The spirit world reaffirms how perfect and wonderful the Atonement and plan of salvation are. It is in the spirit world where as many of Father's children as possible learn the gospel that will take them home. My love for Jesus and the Father is increased because I know that all people will have a chance to change their life through repentance and acceptance of the Atonement of Christ. And I mean *everyone*. The Lord will prevail for all who turn to Him. Knowing how perfect the Father's plan is gives me great comfort. I know now that every circumstance and consideration is given that will enable each of Heavenly Father's children to return to Him.

"I know now that every circumstance and consideration is given that will enable each of Heavenly Father's children to return to Him."

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RESPONSE FORM

What happens to a person's spirit when he or she dies?



What kind of work happens in the spirit world?

How does your knowledge of the spirit world influence your choices now?



Where did Jesus Christ go when He died (see D&C 138, pages 286–91)? How does this knowledge strengthen your testimony of His role as Savior?

Five horizontal lines for writing an answer to the first question.

How can a testimony of life after death bless your life now?

Five horizontal lines for writing an answer to the second question.

What do you need to change so that you can enter a state of rest in the spirit world?

Five horizontal lines for writing an answer to the third question.

Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

Five horizontal lines for writing an answer to the fourth question.

Name _____ Offender # _____