

Mormon Beliefs Articles

Below are six articles about what Mormons believe, taken from the official LDS website (<http://lds.org>). Read through the six articles and on a separate paper summarize what they believe about God, matter, humanity, sin, salvation, Jesus, and the afterlife. This must be typed (Times New Romans, 12 pt., 1-inch margins, single spaced).

God is your loving Heavenly Father

God is your Father in Heaven (Matthew 6:9). We call God Heavenly Father because He is the Father of our spirits and we are created in His image (Genesis 1:27).

God has a body that looks like yours, though His body is immortal, perfected, and has a glory beyond description. He knows you personally and loves you more than you can comprehend. To help you find happiness in this life and guide you to return to live with Him, Heavenly Father provided a plan called the gospel of Jesus Christ, a guide based on the life and teachings of His Son, Jesus Christ.

From the beginning, Heavenly Father has called prophets to testify, record His word, and provide His plan for His children on the earth. The teachings of prophets are found in sacred books called scriptures (Amos 3:7).

Your Heavenly Father knows you and loves you and wants to help you return to Him. Your life on Earth is part of His plan for you to gain a body, learn, grow, and find joy. Sometimes life is hard, lonely, or frightening, but your Heavenly Father is always there. He sorrows when you suffer and rejoices when you do what is right. He wants to communicate with you as you sincerely pray to Him, and He stands ready to give you comfort, peace, and guidance in your life.

Jesus Christ taught that you must know the only true God to have eternal life (John 17:3). As His child, you must know who He is and what He is like to find greater peace and joy, both in this life and in the life to come.

You Lived with God

Your life did not begin at birth, nor will it end at death. You have a spirit body (sometimes called the soul) and a physical body. Heavenly Father created your spirit, and you lived with Him as a spirit before you received your physical body and were born on earth. This period is called pre-earth life or pre-mortal life.

Throughout your pre-earth life, you were taught the principles and commandments that would lead to happiness, with freedom to choose to grow in intelligence and love of the truth, or not. During this pre-earth life, Jesus Christ, then known as Jehovah was chosen as the Savior and you learned that, through Him, you would be able to overcome the effects of any wrong choices.

God's purpose—His work and His glory—is to bring to pass the immortality (resurrection) and eternal life (life with God) of His children. He desires every one of His children to find peace in this life and a fullness of joy in His presence after this life. Heavenly Father knew that you could only progress to a certain point without the experience of mortality. In order to become more like Him, you would need to:

- Receive a physical body. (God our Father is the creator of our spirits, and we are created in His likeness physically).
- Gain experience from overcoming trials and temptations.
- Learn to walk by faith.
- Learn to choose between good and evil. (Your Heavenly Father instituted His plan to help you reach your divine potential).

The Creation

Under the direction of the Father, Jesus Christ created the earth as a place for you to live and gain experience. To progress and become like God, you had to obtain a body and be tested during a time of probation on the earth. While on the earth, you are out of God's physical presence and do not remember your pre-earth life. Therefore, you must walk by faith rather than by sight.

Not only did God create the earth, He also created man physically in His image. And what is the image of God as revealed in the scriptures? In the Old Testament God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). Jacob declared that he had seen God "face to face" (Genesis 32:30). Moses also spoke with God "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 33:11).

In the New Testament, when the resurrected Christ appeared to His Apostles, He told them, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). Later Stephen testified that he saw Jesus "standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).

Modern-day revelation confirms these teachings from the Bible. God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. Joseph revealed that the Father and the Son each have a "body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22). The Major difference is the Father and the Son have glorified, resurrected, immortal bodies.

Agency and the Fall of Adam & Eve

Adam and Eve were the first of God's children to come to Earth. They were created in God's image, with bodies of flesh and bones. God placed them in the Garden of Eden. Here they did not remember their former existence though they were still able to enjoy God's presence and could have lived forever.

As Heavenly Father has blessed all of His children with the freedom to choose, Adam and Eve were given agency to make their own choices on the earth. He commanded them not to eat the forbidden fruit, or the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Obeying this commandment meant they could remain in the garden, but they could not progress by experiencing opposition in mortality. They could not know joy because they could not experience sorrow and pain. Thus, as a part of the plan Satan was allowed to tempt Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit and they chose to do so. As a consequence, they were separated from God's presence physically and spiritually—an event referred to as the Fall. Adam and Eve then became mortal—subject to sin and death—and were unable to return to Heavenly Father without His help. They could now experience disease and all types of suffering. They had moral agency, or the ability to choose between good and evil, which made it possible for them to learn and progress. It also made it possible for them to make wrong choices and to sin. In addition,

they could now have children, so the rest of God’s spirit children could come to Earth, obtain physical bodies, and be proven. All this was in accordance with the plan of God. Only in this way could God’s children progress and become like Him.

Heavenly Father then sent angels and the Holy Ghost? to teach Adam and Eve the plan of salvation?. Central to this plan is the Atonement? of Jesus Christ, which enables God’s children to overcome the effects of the Fall and to obtain eternal life by obedience.

We are not responsible for the Fall of Adam and Eve, but we are responsible for our own sins.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ

Because Heavenly Father loves us, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to voluntarily suffer and pay for your sins, pains, sicknesses, and sorrows. Through His grace? and the mercy of this Atonement?—the most important event in the history of the world—He can help you in your trials and relieve you of the guilt and shame that result from your sins.

As you rely on the Atonement, you will feel the love of God and He will help you endure your trials. You will experience joy, peace, and consolation through the mercy of your loving Heavenly Father.

Though He paid for your sins, Jesus did not eliminate your agency? or personal responsibility; He will not make you clean against your will.

To make His Atonement fully effective in your life, you must:

- Exercise faith in Him.
- Repent.
- Be baptized.
- Receive the Holy Ghost?
- Choose to follow His teachings for the rest of your life.

We can’t fully understand how Jesus suffered for our sins. But we know that in the Garden of Gethsemane, the weight of our sins caused Him to feel such agony that He bled from every pore (Luke 22:39–44) .

Later, as He hung upon the cross, Jesus willingly suffered painful death by one of the cruelest methods ever known.

The Savior tells us, “For behold, I . . . have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer . . . even as I” (Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–17).

You can be forgiven of your sins through the Atonement of Jesus Christ by the process of repentance? (John 3:16; Mosiah 4:6-8).

To sincerely repent, you must:

- Confess the sin to both God and anyone who has been harmed by your sin.
- Ask forgiveness from God and from anyone you have harmed.
- When possible, repair the damage you have done.
- Forsake your sins.
- Strive to keep the commandments.?

True repentance? brings peace and forgiveness. God has promised, “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:42).

Heaven and Eternal Reward

Heaven is the place where God lives and the future home of those who follow Him. Heavenly Father’s hope is for all of His children to return to live with Him, through the plan He provided and by the grace? of the Savior Jesus Christ.

After you are resurrected, you will be judged and rewarded for the things you have done in this life. Your loving Heavenly Father is anxious to reward all of His children according to their obedience to His commandments? and their willingness to follow the Savior.

Those who are worthy to return to the presence of our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ become “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17) of all that the Father has. They will return to live with Heavenly Father and with their families in His eternal glory.

Those who choose not to follow our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will receive a reward according to what they have done in this life, but they will not enjoy the glory of living in the presence of God.

Just as some of life’s sweetest joys can come through family associations, the loss of a beloved family member can be a source of deepest sorrow. But death does not need to be the end of your relationships with cherished loved ones. The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that the “same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there [in eternity], only it will be coupled with eternal glory” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:2).

Family members who accept the Atonement of Jesus Christ and follow His example can be together forever through sacred sealing ordinances performed in God’s holy temples.

After you are judged, you will live in a state of glory. Because everyone’s works and righteous desires vary, heaven includes different kingdoms, or degrees of glory.

- Celestial kingdom?—Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reside in the celestial kingdom. If you live according to the gospel? of Jesus Christ and are cleansed from sin by the Atonement?, you will receive a place in this, the highest kingdom, where you will live in God’s presence and know complete joy.
- Terrestrial kingdom?—People who refuse to accept the gospel? of Jesus Christ but who live honorable lives will receive a place in the terrestrial kingdom.
- Telestial kingdom?—Those who continue in their sins and do not repent until after they have died, will eventually receive a place in the telestial kingdom.