

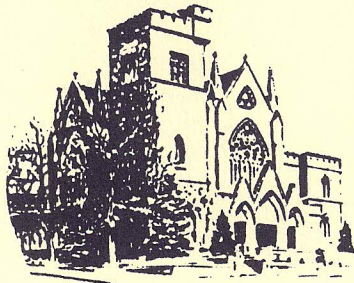
*A LEXICON OF  
LDS  
TERMINOLOGY*



This lexicon of theological terms used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the result of twenty years of ministry among the Mormons and continuing dialogue with LDS Church authorities. It was written to facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Presbyterian Church, USA.

There has rarely, if ever, been meaningful dialogue between the LDS Church and other churches. Such dialogue may have been hindered by the confusion which accompanies the use of theological terms with more than one definition. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints uses many traditional Christian terms in new ways and with different understandings. Through revelation to Joseph Smith, it also uses words not known in any other context. It is my hope that, through this lexicon, when non-Mormons talk to Mormons, they will now understand and appreciate their differences.

Dr. Donald H. Baird,  
Sr. Minister (1984-1995)  
First Presbyterian Church  
South Temple and C Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103



*The First  
Presbyterian Church*

## A LEXICON OF LDS TERMINOLOGY

### I. God

There are many gods. Gods have physical bodies, one or more wives, and an endless progeny of children. Each man holds the potential of being god of his own world. Our world (earth) relates to and worships "Heavenly Father." The "Godhead" consists of three separate gods: Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, his son, and the Holy Ghost.

#### A. Heavenly Father

Heavenly Father has a body of flesh and bones and once was mortal. He is a resurrected human being from another earth system and now lives above the earth.

#### B. Jesus Christ

We are all spirit children of Heavenly Father. Jesus is Heavenly Father's eldest spirit child (see Pre-Mortal-First Estate). He came to earth in spirit as Jehovah in the Old Testament. In this state he organized earth. He came to earth in a body which came from intercourse between Heavenly Father and Mary who was a virgin until that experience. Jesus' death secured immortality (life after death) for all people and opportunity for spiritual advancement. The quality of life achieved in immortality is the individual's responsibility.

### C. Holy Ghost

Holy Ghost is a separate God from Heavenly Father and Jesus, and different from Holy Spirit. Holy Ghost is a spirit person (no flesh and bones), can only be in one place at a time but can influence the world, and is revealer and testifier of truth.

### D. Holy Spirit

Heavenly Father's spirit and extended power. Holy Spirit is Heavenly Father's influence in the world.

### E. Adam

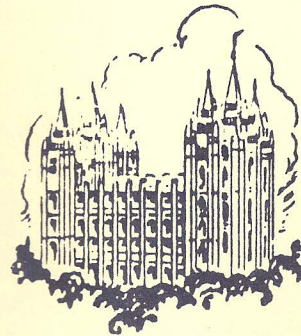
Led righteous angels in victorious battle, casting out Lucifer and his rebels. Spirit name of Adam was Michael the Archangel. For this service Adam was placed on earth as an immortal (no blood) and could not have children. Eve succumbed to the serpent and ate fruit from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam had to choose whether to become mortal (disobeying God and eating of the fruit) or remain immortal (disobeying God by not being fruitful). Adam wisely chose the better of these two sins and introduced mortality for the whole world. This blessing makes it possible for all people to inherit eternal life. Adam fell up.

### F. Lucifer

Younger brother of Jesus who led a rebellion against Heavenly Father. Tempted Eve knowing that her eternal progress depended upon her becoming mortal. Unwittingly helped God accomplish his purposes. For his rebellion Lucifer and his followers will never have mortal bodies.

### G. Creation

A re-forming of eternally existent matter, energy, and spirit. There is no "creation," the making of something from nothing. Taking these eternal elements Jehovah/Jesus formed all worlds (including earth) under the direction of Heavenly Father.



## II. Holy Books

### A. Bible

The Bible, Old and New Testament, is the first revelation from God but only one of many. In itself the Bible does not contain sufficient information for salvation. It is

to be understood only as correctly interpreted by proper LDS authority, as the Bible is believed to have been corrupted through the centuries. The King James Version is the only acceptable and complete English version of the Bible. To understand the King James Version from a Mormon perspective, Joseph Smith revealed the Inspired Version of the Bible (Joseph Smith's own translation).

**B. Scriptures**

Mormon scriptures include the Bible, only the King James Version "in so far as it is correctly translated", Book of Mormon (ancient American history as revealed to Joseph Smith in hidden golden tablets), Doctrine and Covenants primarily Joseph Smith's revelations on a variety of subjects mostly in chronological order from 1823 to 1901, and Pearl of Great Price a selection of revelations, translations and narrations from Joseph Smith.

**C. Gospel/Restored Gospel**

Atonement as realized in LDS practice and doctrines (Tithing, Temple Work, Celestial Marriage, Rites, Authorities, Word of Wisdom, and moral purity). By obedience to the Gospel the male achieves godhood with a female. Latter-day Saints believe that theirs is the restored gospel containing the necessary ordinances for salvation.

**III. Eternal Progression**

There is a Pre-Mortality and a Post-Mortality. Between these two is our earthly existence. Together they constitute Heavenly Father's program through which our eternal destiny will be decided.

**A. Pre-Mortal/First Estate**

God father(s) and God mother(s) beget spirit children. Spirit children are humans without bodies of flesh and bone yet with intelligence, free will, and experience. Spirit children, born to Heavenly Parents advance to earth (the Second Estate) through righteous pre-earth existence.

**B. Mortal/Second Estate**

Human bodies are provided for worthy spirit children by human sexual intercourse. Life on this earth is a testing time that requires all to be separated from Heavenly Father and to prove ability to obey (Gospel) Heavenly Father's commands. Obtaining a human body is essential for spiritual advancement.

**C. Post-Mortal/Third Estate**

**1. First Judgment:** Immediately after physical death all human beings go to either Paradise or Spirit Prison where they are held until Post-Judgment.

a. **Paradise**  
A place righteous Latter-day Saints go immediately following death until Judgment, when they will be invited into the Celestial Kingdom.

b. **Spirit Prison**  
The place where all non-LDS people go immediately following death. LDS missionaries come from paradise and preach the gospel. Those who respond positively progress toward the Celestial Kingdom aided by LDS temple work done on their behalf by LDS people still living on this earth.

c. **Hell**  
That part of the spirit world where wicked spirits go following death to suffer for their sins while awaiting their eventual resurrection. After their resurrection the great majority of these persons will pass into the Telestial Kingdom. Thus, for those who are heirs of some degree of salvation, hell has an end. However, those who have given themselves over wholly to satanic purposes will be cast into outer darkness following their judgment.

**2. Final Judgment:** The time when God assigns all people to their eternal destiny. This occurs at the end of earth history.

**3. Post-Judgment:** Post-Judgment consists of heaven and hell. Heaven is divided into three descending parts: Celestial Kingdom, Terrestrial Kingdom and Telestial Kingdom. These are permanent assignments.

a. **Celestial Kingdom**  
The Celestial Kingdom is populated only by those who have accepted LDS doctrines and ordinances. It is divided into three levels in descending order. The highest is for those who have been obedient to the Gospel and must have been married in an LDS temple. No one goes into the Celestial Kingdom single. Males at this level become gods of their own worlds and are worshipped. The Celestial Kingdom is the only place where Heavenly Father resides and governs. The second level is for Latter-day Saints, who are more active in LDS Church positions, but not involved in temple rituals. The lowest level is for those who have received LDS baptism. Both the second and third levels serve those in the highest level.

b. **Terrestrial Kingdom**  
The Terrestrial Kingdom is only for those who have not heard the Restored

Gospel as taught by the Latter-day Saints or who have been "good and honorable but blinded by the craftiness of men." Jesus will visit the Terrestrial Kingdom to converse, but not Heavenly Father.

c. **Telestial Kingdom**

The Telestial Kingdom is for the "dishonest, liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and whoremongers." It is also for all those who have heard but rejected the Restored Gospel as taught by the Latter-day Saints, including former members of the LDS Church. Neither Jesus nor Heavenly Father will ever visit the Telestial Kingdom.

d. **Outer Darkness/(Second Death)**

Second Death is the place to which Satan, unrighteous spirits, and extreme cases of apostasy such as Cain and Judas are sent following judgment.



#### IV. Temple Works

A. **Baptism for the Dead**

Such a baptism is essential for all "worthy children" to become heirs of salvation in God's Kingdom. Many people have not been given the opportunity to be baptized in their own life-time due to the accident of time or geography.

Therefore to provide the opportunity for eternal life, the LDS Church accepts such responsibility and hopes to perform such a sacrament for "every living soul entitled to receive it." All worthy baptized Mormons twelve years and over may be baptized for deceased non-Mormons. This is done by proxy and necessitates an extensive genealogical library.

B. **Marriage**

Marriages performed in the temples are for the present and forever if the vows are kept. The highest level of the Celestial Kingdom is for only those who have been so "sealed." Baptism is the gate to the Celestial Kingdom. Celestial Marriage is the gate to exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom.

C. **Other Temple Works:**

Other temple works are washings, anointings, endowments, and sealings.



## V. Priesthood

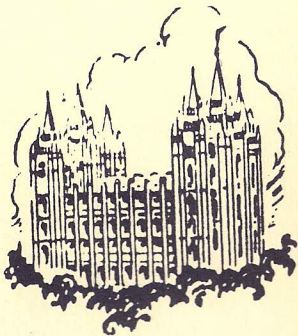
There are two priesthoods: Melchizedek and Aaronic. Both are reserved for male members of the LDS Church and hold the only authority for ordination, baptism, and other essential ordinances.

### A. Aaronic Priesthood

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were conferred the Aaronic Priesthood, May 15, 1829, by John the Baptist. This priesthood is for males twelve years and over. It includes, in ascending order, Deacons (twelve-year-old boys), Teachers (fourteen-year-old boys), and Priests (sixteen-year-old boys).

### B. Melchizedek Priesthood

Peter, James, and John restored the ancient Melchizedek Priesthood in June 1829 upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. This priesthood includes, according to function, the offices of Elder, men eighteen years and over who usually subsequently serve two years as a missionary for LDS Church, Bishop, one in charge of a ward, Seventy, High Priest, Patriarch or Evangelist, and Apostle.



## VI. Church Structure

A. **Temple:** Holy sanctuaries wherein sacred ordinances, rites, and ceremonies are performed which pertain to salvation and required activities to enter into the Kingdom of God. They are "the most sacred places of worship on earth." They each are "a house of the Lord" where God and his Spirit may dwell. Only worthy Mormons are eligible to enter.

B. **General Authority:** The leaders who have highest authority including the First Presidency, Council of the Twelve, First Council of the Seventy, and Presiding Bishopric.

C. **Tabernacle:** A large historic meeting hall. The best known of which is on Temple Square.

D. **Stake:** A geographical collection of wards.

E. **Wards:** The smallest ecclesiastical unit of the LDS Church, equivalent to the local congregation. A developing ward is called a branch.

F. **Bishop:** The presiding ward officer.

G. **Elder:** Ordained men at least eighteen years of age or older, and includes most active male LDS Church members.



## Other Terms

### Atonement

When Adam sinned he brought about temporal death and spiritual death. Temporal death is the separation of the spirit and the physical body. Spiritual death is separation from God. Because Jesus Christ died and rose, the body and spirit are reunited in immortality. Immortality then comes as a free gift but does not refer to where eternity will be spent, i.e., heaven or hell. Eternal life is life spent with God and is achieved only by obeying "the fullness of the Gospel law."

### Baptism

The only recognized baptism must be performed by an authorized member of the priesthood, by immersion of those eight years old or older. Baptism is one of the requirements for the Celestial Kingdom.

### Brother

A common term of greeting to a male member of the LDS Church.

### Christian

Mormons believe that anyone who believes in Jesus or claims to be a Christian is a Christian. This would include Protestants, Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Latter-day Saints, Jehovah Witnesses and any other who would believe something about Jesus.

### Deseret

A Reformed Egyptian word (a language known only by Joseph Smith) from the Book of Mormon meaning "honey bee." It was the original name given to the western territory into which the early Latter-day Saints came.

### Exaltation

The kind of life God lives, the culmination of "eternal progression." The highest level in the Celestial Kingdom which is achieved through the gate of Celestial Marriage and consists of the continuation of the family unit in eternity.

### Gentile

A term often used for those who are not Mormon.

### Grace

All God's acts are acts of Grace. Grace is appropriated by men proportionately as they conform to the standards of personal righteousness.

### Mormon

A nickname for those who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### Salvation

Christ's death brought release from the grave and gives universal immortality. The kingdom (Celestial, Terrestrial, or Telestial) to which one is resurrected depends upon one's spiritual and temporal activities on earth.

### Sister

A common term of greeting to a female member of the LDS Church.

### Word of Wisdom/Code of Health

A list of substances to indulge in or abstain from in order to be protected from the advances of evil (Destroying Angel). Abstain from wine, strong drink, tobacco, meats in the summer time, and all hot drinks. Indulge in all herbs, fruits in season, and wheat products (wheat for man, corn for ox, oats for horses, rye for fowls and swine).