

The Church of Jesus Christ

Zion's Branch

108 S. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050

Statement of Beliefs

What do you believe? It is a question many choose not to answer at all or to answer indirectly. However, it is our desire to put down in plain text those beliefs we hold as truth. This statement represents a summary of our beliefs as a church which we hold as a unified group of people, because as the Apostle Paul said: "I beseech you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

We believe:

1. There is one God in heaven and Jesus Christ is His only begotten son. Through obedience to the commandments of God, we have the opportunity to have the gift of the Holy Spirit, a part of God to dwell within us if we provide a proper temple within our bodies. God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit make up the Godhead and are separate, distinct entities.
2. God is unchangeable and He has been since the beginning and will be throughout all eternity. God is all-powerful and while He is able to do anything, He is limited by His word which He cannot change or break; for if He did, He would cease to be God.
3. Satan has been since the beginning also, and in his desire to be recognized and given honor by God, he said he would return all of mankind to God's presence. Satan would have performed this by taking away our agency or ability to choose, in effect forcing us to choose God rather than allowing us to decide for ourselves. This was in opposition to God's plan for salvation and resulted in Satan being cast from God's presence and given dominion over the earth where he now tempts mankind to follow him rather than God.
4. The scriptures are a record of God's dealings with mankind, containing instruction from God and the gospel, or good news of the plan of salvation. The fullness of the gospel as revealed to mankind are contained within the Inspired Version of the Bible and the Book of Mormon. The covenants God has made with mankind are contained within the Bible while the Book of Mormon testifies to the truths contained therein.
5. God spoke with men as recorded in these books and since He is unchangeable, He continues to reveal His mind and will in modern times. Latter day revelation and prophecy must be in harmony with the fullness of the gospel as contained in the Bible and Book of Mormon. Consequently, we must first understand and practice what is written within these books in order to determine whether modern day revelation is in harmony with what has been revealed in the past. Latter day revelation and prophecy is contained within, but not limited to, the Book of Commandments and portions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

6. These records contain the plan of salvation for mankind whom God created in His own image to serve Him. God gave Adam and Eve a commandment in the beginning and through disobedience to that commandment, they fell from His grace and were thrust out of His presence. God had foreknowledge Adam and Eve would transgress and from the very beginning prepared the plan of salvation to provide for the redemption of mankind through the sacrifice and grace of His Son, Jesus Christ. Our time on earth is a probationary period affording us the opportunity to work out our own salvation according to God's commandments through the choices we make.

7. God covenanted with Abraham, the only faithful servant of his time. God passed this covenant to Abraham's descendents as an agreement that would apply forever. God's covenant with Abraham was that through his descendents all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The descendents of Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob, became known collectively as the House of Israel. The House of Israel comprises twelve separate tribes or lineages (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin). Through disobedience to God's commandments, the House of Israel was scattered and many lost the knowledge of their lineage and the covenants God made with their forefathers.

8. The prophets of Israel foretold of a coming messiah or christ. Their prophecies and the covenant God made with Abraham were fulfilled by Jesus Christ taking upon himself flesh and blood and living upon this earth. Jesus taught the gospel of repentance, grace, and the need to become part of the covenant God made with Abraham. Sinful men crucified Jesus upon the cross for his teachings and through his death, Jesus became the last blood sacrifice and last high priest; atoning for our sins, having made the ultimate and perfect sacrifice. Jesus was resurrected through the power of God and now sits at His right hand as our intercessor, making our needs and requests known to God. Jesus came only to God's chosen people, the House of Israel, but through obedience to the commandments he brought from God the Father, all people can participate in the covenant God made with Abraham.

9. While Jesus was on earth, he gave authority to function -in his stead to his apostles. This authority included the responsibility to teach the following:

- repentance,
- baptism for the remission of sins and to become part of the covenant God made with Abraham,
- laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, administration of the sacrament,
- healing the sick through the power of God, and
- ordination of other men to continue the work of teaching and to maintain the authority to function until Jesus returns.

9. When Jesus left authority with his apostles, he had established his church and it was undefiled by the traditions of men. Through time, men fell away from the teachings of Christ and corrupted and changed his doctrine and ordinances. Men persecuted and killed the apostles and other faithful. The falling away (apostasy) from Christ's church and his doctrine was complete in 570 A.D., at which time authority to function in the stead of Jesus Christ and teach the true points of his doctrine was taken from the earth and the Dark Ages began.

10. The prophets foretold the House of Israel would be restored in the last days as a people having a knowledge of God's covenants with authority to function in the stead of Jesus Christ, just as in the times of the apostles. God kept His promise by revealing the covenants He made with the House of Israel to the prophet Joseph Smith. God restored authority to teach these covenants and perform ordinances of the church to Joseph in 1829. The restoration of authority allowed the subsequent organization of the Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth on April 6, 1830; 1260 years after it was removed, just as prophesied in the Bible. Prophecy was again fulfilled in the latter days concerning the covenant God made with Abraham through the children of Israel coming to the knowledge of the truth of who they are and the source of their blessings.

11. Joseph Smith was a man who was also a prophet of God. Like all men and other prophets, Joseph was subject to error. God knew Joseph's weaknesses and consequently told us He would give us a pattern in all things that we would not be deceived. Therefore, it is up to us to make a righteous judgement concerning the truth of God.

12. During the life of Joseph Smith and after his death, there was not only a falling away from the truth that was restored, but outright perversion of the gospel. However, a few remained faithful, passing the authority to function in the stead of Jesus Christ down to our day. A few in our day will remain faithful and participate in fulfilling the covenant God made with Abraham and the other holy prophets unto the gathering of the lost and dispersed of the House of Israel.

In summary, we believe God has revealed these truths:

- Faith, repentance and baptism by one having authority are absolutes in entering into God's covenant,
- We must endure to the end as doers of the word, not simply hearers,
- We are partakers of God's covenant with Abraham, knowing from whence we come, where we are today, and where we are going,
- We are members of the House of Israel, holding authority to represent Jesus Christ and bring others into the covenant God made with His chosen people.

Finally, we know there are others who desire the opportunity to hear the truth of the gospel so they can make a righteous decision concerning their eternal life. As such, we invite all who have such a desire:

- Who are willing to examine their beliefs,
- Who are willing to repent and change when their beliefs are out of harmony with God's law,
- Who want to partake of the blessings of Israel, and
- Who want to rest with God the Father and live their lives to achieve that goal

Pray For Guidance

Ask God to reveal to them through the power of the Holy Spirit whether the statements presented here are true. Having experienced the goodness of God in our lives, we know He will answer the prayers of those who have a contrite heart and invite you to unite with us in the great work of gathering the lost and dispersed of the House of Israel who are scattered across the four quarters of the earth to the establishment of Zion.

We hope you will contact us with any questions or comments our beliefs have generated.

Sincerely,

The priesthood and members of the Church of Jesus Christ, Zion's Branch