

# Premortal Existence

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Have you ever wondered where you came from? We don't mean your mother's womb, your home town, or your country of origin; rather, your original state of being. Did you exist in a spiritual state of being with God before this life, or did your life simply begin at conception or birth?

Could there have been for all of us a spiritual birth before there was a physical one? Have you ever met someone for the first time and thought you had somehow known them before? Have you ever heard something for the first time and found it eerily familiar? Do these experiences not hint at your having lived before? If so, where did you live, and where did you have your beginning? Was it on this earth or in some place altogether different?

The doctrine of premortal existence is a key element of Christian theology and helps tie together a number of principles that are taught in several advanced doctrines. It is the doctrine of the premortal existence that distinctly answers the many questions that were posed at the opening of this essay regarding "where did I come from?"

## A True and Loving Heavenly Father

The Apostle Paul wrote: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Hebrews 12:9).

In this scripture Paul personalizes the role of Heavenly Father as not just the Creator, but as the Father of our spirits. Since he is our Father, it is completely consistent that we would have been with him before coming to the earth. This personalization is further supported in Acts 17:29 where men and women are referred to as "... the offspring of God..."; in Psalms 82:6 where we are referred to as "... children of the most high..."; and in Deuteronomy 14:1 where we are referred to as "... children of the LORD your God."

## Our Heavenly Father Knew Us before our Birth

From Jeremiah 1:5 we read: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." God as the Father of our spirits knows us—long before we came to this earth. We were with God before being "formed in the belly." As his spirit children, we dwelt with him. Jeremiah was sanctified and called as a prophet before his journey in mortality, before his physical conception. John the Baptist was said by Jesus to "...be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb," (Luke 1:15), signifying a premortal ordination as a prophet. In like manner we are called to our own unique missions, out of a past that is unremembered.

## The War in Heaven—A Premortal Event

From Revelation 12 we read about a war in heaven (verse 7). Satan (the dragon in verse 3) drew away a third of the stars (spirit children of our Heavenly Father) from heaven, and they were cast to the earth for their rebellion. You can read more about this event in the Sword Series™ essays on Satan and the Plan of Salvation. The war in heaven took place in the premortal realm where a third of the stars (spirit children), who were followers of Satan, were subsequently cast to the earth and relinquished their ability to gain a body of flesh and bone. The remaining two-thirds include all those who will ever be born into mortality, we who chose Jesus Christ and were granted the opportunity to come to the earth, receive a body, and live on earth. Choosing Jesus Christ in our premortal existence gave us the opportunity to enter into mortality.

**Mortal Life is a Test**

Every person ever born to the earth is a spirit child of Heavenly Parents, reared in the premortal existence, and endowed with a unique set of talents and capabilities towards a specific purpose in life on earth. Our purpose on earth is but a continuation of our eternal progression which began in the premortal existence, but which required us to come to the earth as we could progress no further in a premortal state.

Life on earth is viewed as a testing ground prior to the eternities, where each of us as God's children are sent by design to experience mortality, progress in knowledge and understanding, and gain a testimony of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As a testing ground, our memory of the premortal existence is "veiled" in order that we may choose good or evil for ourselves without any predisposition or knowledge of our premortal state. Because our Heavenly Father knew of the challenges we would face on earth he has given us the capability to recognize truth when we hear it again on earth (through the Holy Ghost), while providing us a Savior in Jesus Christ to help us gain forgiveness from our sins and overcome physical and spiritual death. In our premortal state we were presented the plan of salvation in its entirety by our Heavenly Father as part of the grand council in Heaven.

**Unexplained Earthly Experiences**

Outside of the theological are our common human experiences. Have you ever met someone you felt you knew, even knew well, though this was your first meeting? We have fanciful ways of explaining this, but always in the background is the doctrine of the premortal existence—a sort of spiritual unified theory of unexplained acquaintances.

**Conclusion**

The importance of the premortal existence permeates a number of other Christian doctrines and is therefore considered foundational Christian theology. For now, the Foundation for Christian Studies offers to you the short answer to the first of the three fundamental questions that should occupy the lives of every human being who lives today, has ever lived, or will yet live—where did I come from? Why am I here? And where am I going?

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