

# Translation (Mormonism)

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In the theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), **translation** refers to being physically changed by God from a mortal human being to an immortal human being. A person that has been translated is referred to as a **translated being**. According to LDS theology, Enoch, Moses, John the Apostle, the Three Nephites, and others were translated.

A translated being is akin to a resurrected person with the exception that a translated being has never died and a translated being has a body with less power than a resurrected being. Ordinary human beings are said to have a *telestial body*. People who are translated are said to have a *terrestrial body*. People who are resurrected are said to have a *celestial body*.<sup>[1]</sup>

## State of a terrestrial body

Those who are translated beings are said to be "changed so that they do not experience pain or death until their resurrection to immortality."<sup>[2]</sup> Both translated and resurrected beings are eternally young and fit, not subject to illness or injury and spend their existences as ministering angels doing things that require physical bodies to perform; for example, where a disembodied spirit can record events as a witness and offer comfort or advice, a physical body is required to perform ordinances such as laying on of hands.

According to Parley P. Pratt, a translated being has a terrestrial body. This terrestrial body would be different than the terrestrial glory of heaven, just as the world in which we live is considered "telestial", yet it is not the telestial glory of heaven. Translated beings with terrestrial bodies can appear or disappear the way the resurrected Jesus did in the 24th chapter of Luke. However, those who have resurrected "celestial" bodies have more power than those with *terrestrial bodies*. A person who has been translated still has to be resurrected after the Second Coming of Christ so he/she can attain a celestial body.<sup>[1]</sup>

## LDS beliefs regarding people who have been translated

Latter-day Saints believe that a select number of individuals have been translated. Some of these individuals have been admitted into heaven to await their formal resurrection, while others have been permitted to remain upon the earth until that time. The following are a list of persons that Latter-day Saints believe were translated; the individuals in bold script are the ones that have presumably been admitted into heaven as a translated being:

- **Enoch**<sup>[3]</sup>
- **People of Enoch's City of Zion**<sup>[4]</sup>
- **Moses**<sup>[5]</sup>
- **Elijah**<sup>[6]</sup>
- John the Apostle<sup>[7]</sup>
- Three Unnamed Nephites<sup>[8]</sup>
- **Alma, son of Alma**<sup>[9]</sup>

Many Latter-day Saints believe that there are also other persons who have been translated, some of whom may also have been taken to heaven; there is some LDS scriptural support for this belief.<sup>[10]</sup>

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## Translation in other Christian groups

Similar beliefs about "translation" were also held by other religious groups and sects at various times and places, such as the Buchanites in 18th century Scotland.

## Annalee Skarin

Annalee Skarin was a woman who had been raised in the LDS Church who claimed to have invented a meditation technique by which anyone could *translate* themselves directly into Heaven. She also claimed in her book to be able to see directly into the Spirit World with what is called in Mormonism the *spiritual eye*.<sup>[11]</sup> She wrote a book about it called *Ye Are Gods*. Originally a devout Mormon, she was excommunicated from the LDS Church shortly after publication of her first book, *Ye Are Gods*, because it was perceived by high-ranking members of the church that the book's contents seriously blasphemed against Mormon belief. Many proponents of New Age thought that Annalee Skarin, along with her husband Reason Skarin, did indeed achieve physical immortality (been *translated*) after her clothes were found in her room in 1952 and she totally disappeared, and he disappeared soon after. However, it was later shown that she had faked her "translation" and gone into hiding with her husband in order to increase sales of her books. She hid out, living away from the Mormon Belt by going to southern Oregon and later living in the far north of California. It was later proven that she physically died of natural causes.<sup>[12][13]</sup>

## References

- [1] Parley P. Pratt *Key to the Science of Theology* (1855)
- [2] *Guide to the Scriptures: Translated Beings* (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/gst/36>)
- [3] Genesis 5:24 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/gen/5/24#24>); Hebrews 11:5 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/heb/11/5#5>); Doctrine and Covenants 107:48-49 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/107/48-49#48>).
- [4] Moses 7:21, 31, 69 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/moses/7/21,31,69#21>); Doctrine and Covenants 38:4 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/38/4#4>); Doctrine and Covenants 45:12 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/45/12#12>).
- [5] Deuteronomy 34:5-6 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/deut/34/5-6#5>); Matthew 17:3 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/matt/17/3#3>); Guide to the Scriptures: Transfiguration (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/gst/34>); Doctrine and Covenants 84:25 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/84/25#25>); Alma 45:19 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/alma/45/19#19>). Latter-day Saints do not believe that Moses "died", as is reported in Deuteronomy; see other references for clarification.
- [6] 2 Kings 2:11 ([http://scriptures.lds.org/en/2\\_kgs/2/11#11](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/2_kgs/2/11#11)); Matthew 17:3 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/matt/17/3#3>); Doctrine and Covenants 110:13 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/110/13#13>); Guide to the Scriptures: Transfiguration (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/gst/34>).
- [7] John 21:20-24 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/john/21/20-24#20>); Matthew 16:28 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/matt/16/28#28>); Doctrine and Covenants 7:1-8 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/7/1-8>). John the Apostle was not taken to heaven alive, but was given power over death that he might live until the Second Coming of Christ, when he will be resurrected.
- [8] 3 Nephi 28:4-9 ([http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3\\_ne/28/4-9#4](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3_ne/28/4-9#4)); 3 Nephi 28:36-40 ([http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3\\_ne/28/36-40#36](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3_ne/28/36-40#36)); 4 Nephi 1:14 ([http://scriptures.lds.org/en/4\\_ne/1/14#14](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/4_ne/1/14#14)); Mormon 8:10-11 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/morm/8/10-11#10>). Like John the Apostle, the Three Nephites were given power over death that they might live until the Second Coming of Christ, when they will be resurrected.
- [9] Alma 45:18-19 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/alma/45/18-19#18>)
- [10] Doctrine and Covenants 49:8 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/49/8#8>); Hebrews 13:2 (<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/heb/13/2#2>); 3 Nephi 1:2-3 ([http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3\\_ne/1/2-3#2](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3_ne/1/2-3#2)).
- [11] Widsote, John *A Rational Theology* 1915
- [12] The Life and Death of Annalee Skarin ([http://roswell.fortunecity.com/divination/304/annalee\\_skarin.html](http://roswell.fortunecity.com/divination/304/annalee_skarin.html))
- [13] The Death Certificate of Annalee Skarin (<http://roswell.fortunecity.com/divination/304/certificate.html>)

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