

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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ident Grant's own reservations about American entrance into the conflict and his growing personal pacifism.

Members came to love President Grant's expansive ways. Until mounting burdens and declining health intervened, his office door was open to General Authorities, stake and local leaders, and even to members troubled with problems. He traveled widely throughout America and in 1937 heralded the Church's European centennial by touring the missions of Great Britain and western Europe, the second LDS President to venture across the Atlantic Ocean while in office. Seeking to personalize his presidency, he distributed thousands of homiletic books, personally autographing each and sometimes marking passages for emphasis. Recalling his mother's struggles, he freely gave of his personal means, particularly to widows, and established a missionary fund for his increasing progeny.

In 1940, while visiting Southern California, he suffered a series of strokes that slowed his pace and forced him to delegate active administration of the Church, relying primarily on J. Reuben Clark, Jr., his first counselor. President Grant died on May 14, 1945, at Salt Lake City.

During President Grant's administration Church membership doubled. He traveled more than 400,000 miles, filled 1,500 appointments, gave 1,250 sermons, and made 28 major addresses to state, national, civic, and professional groups. His greatest achievements, however, cannot be measured statistically. During almost sixty-five years of Church service, he helped transform the Church from a sequestered, misunderstood, pioneer faith to an accepted, vibrant religion of twentieth-century America.

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No modern, full-scale biography of Heber J. Grant exists. For admiring surveys, see Bryant S. Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant: Highlights in the Life of a Great Leader* (Salt Lake City, 1951); Francis M. Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant: Man of Steel, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City, 1979); and Ronald W. Walker, "Heber J. Grant," in *The Presidents of the Church*, ed. Leonard J. Arrington (Salt Lake City, 1986).

For accounts of various events of Grant's life, see Ronald W. Walker, "Crisis in Zion: Heber J. Grant and the Panic of 1893," *Arizona and the West* 21 (Autumn 1979):257-78, reprinted in *Sunstone* 5 (Jan.-Feb. 1980):26-34; "Heber J. Grant and the Utah Loan and Trust Company," *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981):21-36; "Young Heber J. Grant: Entrepreneur Extraordinary," *The Twentieth Century American*

*West*, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History, (1983):85-119; and "Young Heber J. Grant's Years of Passage," *BYU Studies* 24 (Spring 1984):131-49.

For his role in stabilizing Church finances in the early twentieth century, see Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition* (Urbana, Ill., 1986).

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## GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH

The phrase "great and abominable church," which appears in an apocalyptic vision received by the Book of Mormon prophet NEPHI<sub>1</sub> in the sixth century B.C. (1 Ne. 13:6), refers to the church of the DEVIL and is understood by Latter-day Saints to be equivalent to the "great whore that sitteth upon many waters" described in Revelation 17:1. This "whore of all the earth" is identified by Nephi's brother JACOB as all those who are against God and who fight against ZION, in all periods of time (2 Ne. 10:16). Nephi did not write a detailed account of everything he saw in the VISION, as this responsibility was reserved for JOHN the apostle, who was to receive the same vision; however, Nephi repeatedly refers to its content and teachings, using various images and phrases (1 Ne. 13:4-9, 26-27, 34; 14:1-4, 9-17).

Like John, Nephi and Jacob describe persecutions that evil people will inflict on God's people, particularly in the LAST DAYS. The angel who explained the vision to Nephi emphasized that this great and abominable church would take away from the Bible and "the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord" (1 Ne. 13:26), causing men to "stumble" and giving Satan "great power" over them (1 Ne. 13:29; D&C 86:3; Robinson, "Early Christianity," p. 188). Though many Protestants, following the lead of Martin Luther, have linked this evil force described in Revelation 17 with the Roman Catholic church, the particular focus of these LDS and New Testament scriptures seems rather to be on earlier agents of APOSTASY in the Jewish and Christian traditions (see A. Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 6, pp. 1036-38, Nashville, Tenn., 1977).

When Nephi speaks typologically rather than historically, he identifies all the enemies of the Saints with the church of the devil (1 Ne. 14:9-10; 2 Ne. 10:16). They are those from all nations and

all time periods who desire “to get gain, and . . . power over the flesh, and . . . to become popular in the eyes of the world, . . . who seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity” (1 Ne. 22:23). Other scriptural terms related to the great and abominable church include “Babylon” and the “great harlot” (Rev. 17:5; 1 Ne. 22:13; D&C 1:16). Images of pride, greed, and covenant abandonment are associated with these terms, in sharp contrast to the church of God. The scriptures are consistent in warning people to flee from the church of evil and find refuge in the church of God (Jer. 51:6; Rev. 18:4; 1 Ne. 20:20; D&C 133:14; see also P. Minear, “Babylon,” in *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 1:338, Nashville, Tenn., 1962). The Book of Mormon image of a great and abominable church complements the biblical images of Babylon and the harlot.

The fate of the great and abominable church is described in both ancient and modern scriptures (Jer. 51:37; Rev. 18:21; 1 Ne. 14:15–16; 22:14; D&C 1:16): Though the nations of the earth will gather together against them, “the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the

face of the earth” are promised redemption even if it requires power sent down from heaven, as if by fire (1 Ne. 14:14; 22:17). When Jesus Christ returns, he will claim his own and reject those who have opposed him (Mal. 4:1–3; 2 Thes. 2:6–10; 1 Ne. 22:23–26; see JESUS CHRIST: SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST). As the Savior institutes his millennial reign, great will be the fall of Babylon, the harlot, and the great and abominable church (Rev. 18; 2 Ne. 28:18), for every knee will bow and every tongue confess, with thankfulness, that Jesus is the Christ (Isa. 45:23; Mosiah 27:31).

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