

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

Macmillan Publishing Company
New York

Maxwell Macmillan Canada
Toronto

Maxwell Macmillan International
New York Oxford Singapore Sydney



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HELAMAN₃

Helaman₃, son of HELAMAN₂, was the record keeper and chief judge in the land of Zarahemla for the fourteen years prior to his death in 39 B.C. Little is known of his personal affairs. He was given charge of NEPHITE historical records by his uncle, Shiblon, in 53 B.C. (Alma 63:11–13), and the book of Helaman in the BOOK OF MORMON takes its name from him.

After the assassination of the chief judge Pacumeni in 50 B.C., Helaman was elected by the people to this highest national office. A murder plot against him was subsequently uncovered, and the would-be assassin, Kishkumen, was mortally wounded. The murderous band, led by Gadianton, escaped into the wilderness. Of Gadianton, MORMON wrote “In the end of this book [Book of Mormon] ye shall see that this Gadianton did prove the overthrow . . . of the people of Nephi” (Hel. 2:13; *see also* SECRET COMBINATIONS).

During the three-year period 48–46 B.C., a substantial number of people left Zarahemla—because of unspecified dissensions—and “went forth unto the land northward” (Hel. 3:3). So extensive was the migration that only a fraction of its impact could be discussed in Mormon’s record (Hel. 3:14). Despite dissension, emigration, and war, “Helaman did fill the judgment-seat with justice and equity; yea, he did observe to keep the statutes, and the judgments, and the commandments of God; and he did do that which was right in the sight of God continually; and he did walk after the ways of his father, insomuch that he did prosper in the land” (3:20). During his tenure, tens of thousands of people were baptized into the church, even to the astonishment of the high priests and teachers (3:24–25). Through the force of his personality, Helaman maintained peace throughout two-thirds of his political career.

When Helaman died, he left the spiritual responsibilities and the sacred records in the hands of his son, NEPHI₂ (Hel. 3:37; 5:5–14; 16:25).

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HELL

The term “hell” as used in the King James Version of the Bible is the English translation of four words in the original biblical languages: Hebrew *sheol* and Greek *hades*, *geenna* (Heb. *gehenna*), and a noun implied in the verb *tartar*. These terms generally signify the abode of all the dead, whether righteous or disobedient, although *geenna* and *tartarōō* are associated with a place of punishment. The derivation and literal meaning of *sheol* are unknown, but words in Hebrew derived from it bear the idea of “hollowness.”

Latter-day scriptures describe at least three senses of hell: (1) that condition of misery which may attend a person in mortality due to disobedience to divine law; (2) the miserable, but temporary, state of disobedient spirits in the SPIRIT WORLD awaiting the resurrection; (3) the permanent habitation of the SONS OF PERDITION, who suffer the second SPIRITUAL DEATH and remain in hell even after the resurrection.

Persons experiencing the first type of hell can be rescued from suffering through repentance and obedience to the laws and ORDINANCES of the gospel of Jesus Christ because of the ATONEMENT of Jesus Christ. The Savior suffered so that he could deliver everyone from hell (Alma 7:11–13; 33:23). Those who do not repent, however, may experience the pains of hell in this life as well as in the next (D&C 76:104; 1 Ne. 16:2; Alma 40:14). The Prophet Joseph SMITH described the true nature of hell: “A man is his own tormenter and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone” (*TPJS*, p. 357). Thus, hell is both a place, a part of the world of spirits where suffering and sorrow occur, and a state of mind associated with remorseful realization of one’s own sins (Mosiah 2:38; Alma 36:12–16).

A second type, a temporary hell of the post-mortal spirit world, is also spoken of as a SPIRIT PRISON. Here, in preparation for the Resurrection, unrepentant spirits are cleansed through suffering that would have been obviated by the atonement of Christ had they repented during mortality (D&C 19:15–20; Alma 40:13–14). At the last resurrection this hell will give up its captive spirits. Many of these spirits will enter into the TELESTIAL KINGDOM in their resurrected state (2 Ne. 9:10–12;

D&C 76:84–89, 106; Rev. 20:13). References to an everlasting hell for these spirits are interpreted in light of the Doctrine and Covenants, which defines ENDLESS AND ETERNAL as referring not to the length of punishment, but rather referring to God’s punishment because he is “endless” and “eternal” (19:4–13). Individual spirits will be cleansed, will cease to experience the fiery torment of mind, and will be resurrected with their physical bodies.

The Savior’s reference to the “gates of hell” (Hades, or the spirit world; Matt. 16:18) indicates, among other things, that God’s priesthood power will penetrate hell and redeem the repentant spirits there. Many have been, and many more will yet be, delivered from hell through hearing, repenting, and obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit world after the death of the body. LDS doctrine emphasizes that after his mortal death Jesus Christ went to the spirit world and organized the teaching of the gospel there (D&C 138; cf. Luke 23:43; 1 Pet. 3:18–20). The Athanasian Creed and some forms of the “Apostles” Creed state that Christ “descended into hell.” LDS teaching is that Jesus entered the spirit world to extend his redemptive mission to those in hell, upon conditions of their repentance (see SALVATION OF THE DEAD).

A third meaning of “hell” (second spiritual death) refers to the realm of the devil and his angels, including those known as sons of perdition (2 Pet. 2:4; D&C 29:38; 88:113; Rev. 20:14). It is a place for those who cannot be cleansed by the Atonement because they committed the unforgivable and UNPARDONABLE SIN (1 Ne. 15:35; D&C 76:30–49). Only this hell continues to operate *after* the Resurrection and Judgment.

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M. CATHERINE THOMAS

HIGH COUNCIL

A high council is a body of twelve HIGH PRIESTS who are called and set apart in each STAKE to assist and advise the STAKE PRESIDENCY under whom they serve.

Following the organization of the Church, in 1830, the Prophet Joseph SMITH served as the spiritual leader for the growing body of members. However, with the rapid growth in membership and a commitment to LAY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP, it soon became evident that a more extensive governing structure would be required. The FIRST PRESIDENCY was organized in 1832.

At a conference held in KIRTLAND, OHIO, on February 17, 1834, Joseph Smith established a standing stake high council composed of twelve high priests, with himself, Sidney RIGDON, and Frederick G. Williams comprising the First Presidency and also as the presidency of the Kirtland Stake. Later that year, a separate stake presidency and high council were organized in MISSOURI. They operated independent of the Kirtland council, except for cases that went from Missouri to Kirtland on appeal. These initial standing high councils became the prototype for future stake organizations as the Church continued to grow and expand. Following the organization in 1835 of the “traveling high council,” or QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (D&C 107:33–36), stake high councils concerned themselves only with stake matters.

With continued Church growth, additional areas were organized into stakes under the direction of the First Presidency to provide a means of coordinating the spiritual activities of the local WARDS and BRANCHES. In each case, a three-member stake presidency, assisted by a twelve-member high council, was called to preside over the stake. Their authority was limited to the stake in which they functioned.

As in the Quorum (or Council) of the Twelve Apostles, a seniority system exists within a stake high council; as vacancies occur in the council, the stake presidency calls new members, and the oldest in term of service is recognized as the senior member.

Under the direction of the stake presidency, the high council has important executive, legislative, and judicial powers (see D&C 102). Members of the stake high council serve as advisers to the stake presidency on any matter about which the presidency might seek counsel, and they carry out specific assignments. For example, a high councilor may have an assignment to represent the stake presidency, to assist in the training of a new ward BISHOPRIC, to attend a ward’s priesthood executive committee meetings and ward council