

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
Daniel H. Ludlow

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

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the summer of 1831, Joseph Smith led a group from Kirtland to Jackson County to meet the missionaries. Through revelation the Prophet identified a site a half mile from Independence as the temple lot for the New Jerusalem (D&C 57:1–3).

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MAX H PARKIN

LAMANITES

The name Lamanite refers to an Israelite people spoken of in the Book of Mormon, who were descendants of LEHI and Ishmael, both of whom were descendants of JOSEPH OF EGYPT (1 Ne. 5:14). They were part of the prophet Lehi's colony, which was commanded of the Lord to leave Jerusalem and go to a new promised land (in the Western Hemisphere). The Lamanite peoples in the Book of Mormon during the first 600 years of their history are all linked in some way to LAMAN and Lemuel, Lehi's oldest sons. At times the name refers to "the people of Laman"; at other times it can identify unbelievers and ignore ancestral lines, depending on contextual specifics regarding peoples, time, and place.

LAMANITES IN THE BOOK OF MORMON. After the death of the prophet Lehi (c. 582 B.C.), the colony divided into two main groups, Lamanites and NEPHITES, (2 Ne. 5), each taking the name from their leader. These patronyms later evolved into royal titles (Mosiah 24:3; cf. Jacob 1:11). The Book of Mormon, though a Nephite record, focuses on both Lamanites and Nephites, by means of complex contrasts between the two groups. In the text, other peoples are generally subsumed under one of these two main divisions:

Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. But I, Jacob, shall not hereafter distinguish them by these names, but I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi, and those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi, according to the reigns of the kings [Jacob 1:13–14].

In the beginning, political and religious disagreements arose between the Lamanites and the Nephites. Subsequently, an increasing cultural differentiation of the Lamanite people from the Nephites seems to have resulted from their different responses to Lehi's religious teachings. Social change quickly took place along many lines. Consequently, the name Lamanite can refer to descendants of Laman and his party; to an incipient nationality based upon an ideology, with its own lineage history and religious beliefs (Mosiah 10:12–17); or to one or more cultures. The Book of Mormon describes several Lamanite cultures and lifestyles, including hunting-gathering (2 Ne. 5:24), commerce (Mosiah 24:7), sedentary herding, a city-state pattern of governance (Alma 17), and nomadism (Alma 22:28). The politicized nature of early Lamanite society is reflected in the way in which dissenters from Nephite society sought refuge among Lamanites, were accepted, and came to identify themselves with them, much as some Lamanites moved in the opposite direction.

Early in the sixth century of Lamanite history (c. 94–80 B.C.), large-scale Lamanite conversions further divided the Lamanite peoples as many embraced the messianic faith in Jesus Christ taught by Nephite missionaries (Alma 17–26). The Lamanite king Lamoni, a vassal; his father, the suzerain king; and many of their subjects accepted the prophesied Christ and rejected their former lifestyles. They took upon themselves a covenant of pacifism, burying their weapons and renouncing warfare, and moved into Nephite territory for their safety (Alma 27:21–26; 43:11–12). This pattern of Lamanite conversion lasted for at least eighty-four years and through several generations (cf. Alma 24:5–6, 15–19, 20–24; 26:31–34; 44:20; Hel. 5:51; 15:9). This major division of Lamanite society had significant political impact: the identity of some of these converts remained Lamanite, but distinct from those who rejected the religion; others chose to be numbered among the Nephites (3 Ne. 2:12, 14–16); and the unconverted Lamanites were strengthened by numerous dissenters from Nephite subgroups (Alma 43:13), some of whom chose explicitly to retain their former identities (3 Ne. 6:3).

After the destructions that occurred at the time of Christ's crucifixion and the subsequent conversions (3 Ne. 11–28), a new society was established in which ethnic as well as economic differences were overcome, and there were no

“Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ” (4 Ne. 1:17). This situation persisted until almost the end of the second century A.D., when those who rejected the Christian church, regardless of their ancestry, “had revolted from the church and taken upon them the name of Lamanites; therefore there began to be Lamanites again in the land” (4 Ne. 1:20). Divisions increased, so that by A.D. 231 “there arose a people who were called the Nephites, and they were true believers in Christ; and among them there were those who were called by the Lamanites—Jacobites, and Josephites, and Zoramites. . . . and . . . they who rejected the gospel were called Lamanites, and Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites” (4 Ne. 1:36–45).

It had been prophesied that eventually only Lamanite peoples and those who joined them would remain of the original groups (Alma 45:13–14). After the final battles between Lamanites and Nephites, only those who accepted Lamanite rule survived in Book of Mormon lands (Morm. 6:15).

LAMANITES IN EARLY LDS HISTORY. At the beginning of LDS Church history, one reason the Book of Mormon was published was so that it could be taken to the Lamanites (D&C 19:26–27). Within six months of the Church’s organization, missionaries were sent to people thought to have Lamanite ancestry (D&C 28:8; 32:2; *see also* LAMANITE MISSION).

[*See also* Book of Mormon Peoples; Indian Student Placement Services; Native Americans.]

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GORDON C. THOMASSON

LAST DAYS

The term “last days” refers to the current period of time, the preparatory era before the second coming of the Christ. This period is marked by prophetic signs (D&C 45:37–40). “The end of the world” is not the end of the earth, but the end of evil and the triumph of righteousness (JS—H 1:4). At the conclusion of these last days, the Lord Jesus Christ will come again and personally reign upon the renewed “paradisiacal” earth (A of F 10).

During the last days, many marvelous events will occur that are signs that this preparatory period has begun (Isa. 29:14). These include the RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, the preaching of his gospel among all nations, the coming forth of modern scripture, and the gathering of scattered Israel. The restoration of the gospel before the coming of the Lord (Acts 3:19–21) includes the revealing anew of lost truths, priesthood power, temple worship, and the full organization of the Church of Jesus Christ, including apostles and prophets.

Christ prophesied that his gospel would be preached “in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:1, 4). The Savior also foretold to Enoch that in the last days righteousness would come “down out of heaven,” and truth will come “forth out of the earth” to bear testimony of Jesus Christ and of “his resurrection from the dead” (Moses 7:62). The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price have come forth in partial fulfillment of these prophecies. Additional sacred writings are yet to come forth (cf. 2 Ne. 29:13; Ether 4:5–7).

A further sign will be the gathering of Israel. The house of Joseph is to be gathered to the “tops of the mountains” of the Western Hemisphere (Isa. 2:2) and to “stakes” (centers of strength) in many lands (HC 3:390–91). The house of Judah will gather by the millions to Jerusalem and its environs in fulfillment of prophecy (Wilford Woodruff in Ludlow, p. 240; DS 3:257–59). Another gathering will bring the lost tribes of Israel “from the north countries,” to join with the house of Joseph (DS 3:306).

In contrast to these preparatory events, the prophecies state that in the last days gross wickedness will cover the earth (2 Tim. 3:1–7). Ancient and modern prophets have written that the world’s latter-day inhabitants will “defile the earth” (Isa.

LAMB OF GOD

See: Jesus Christ: Names and Titles of