

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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

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Second, this life is a period of development and probation, a time to overcome temptation or inclinations toward sin and corruption (Mosiah 3:19; *see* NATURAL MAN). Such inclinations can be given up through REPENTANCE, the ATONEMENT, and AGENCY (Mosiah 5:2). Mortals experience opposites—good and evil, happiness and bitterness, joy and misery—and have the opportunity to live true to the commandments and teachings of God. OPPOSITION is a fundamental feature of mortality, where human actions and choices are made within the possibility of doing wrong, where acceptance of the commandments and teachings of God is done in the face of opposition and temptation. While Latter-day Saints do not believe that perfection is possible in this life, they believe in working toward it in response to the injunction of Jesus Christ to “Be ye therefore perfect” (Matt. 5:48; cf. 3 Ne. 12:48). Through repentance and obedience they try to resist the temptations that beset them.

Inasmuch as mortal existence is a time of learning in order to make the greatest progress, each individual first must accept by faith the validity of God’s commandments and teachings, and then through experience gain a knowledge of their truth. People exercise agency in how they live their lives, even as they respond to the Spirit of Christ, which is given to all born into mortality. Thus all have the ability, when given proper instruction, including associations with those who are examples of the light and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to recognize and understand the laws of God (D&C 84:45–46; Moro. 7:16).

To all who are willing and who make the effort, mortality provides a vast opportunity for learning, for overcoming weaknesses, for repenting of wrongdoing, for correcting mistakes, for increasing in wisdom, and for progressing toward God. EVE recognized this when she declared that were it not for her and ADAM’s transgression, the human race “never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient” (Moses 5:11).

[*See also* Birth; Death and Dying; Evil; Fall of Adam; Joy; Life and Death, Spiritual; Man; Premortal Life; Purpose of Earth Life.]

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MOSES

Few PROPHETS are more revered in ancient and latter-day scripture than Moses, who serves as a model of prophetic leadership not only in the Bible but also in the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price (*see* Luke 16:29–31; 24:27; 2 Ne. 3:9; D&C 28:2; 103:16; 107:91; Moses 1:41). Modern REVELATION confirms and amplifies the biblical accounts of Moses’ intimate association with deity, his role as seer, liberator, lawgiver, and leader of ISRAEL, and his connection with the books of the Pentateuch.

God chose Moses for his earthly mission in PREMORTAL LIFE (*TPJS*, p. 365). JOSEPH OF EGYPT, son of Jacob, prophesied that the Lord would raise up Moses to deliver Jacob’s descendants from Egyptian bondage (2 Ne. 3:9–10; JST Gen. 50:29, 34–35). His preparation for his monumental task began in his youth. Raised in Pharaoh’s court, Moses “was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” and became “mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). After fleeing from Egypt to Midian (Ex. 2:15), he married Zipporah. His father-in-law, Jethro, ordained him to the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD that had come down through generations of prophets (D&C 84:6–17). Known as “priest of Midian” (Ex. 3:1), Jethro descended from Midian, son of ABRAHAM and Keturah (Petersen, pp. 49–50).

Moses not only received instructions directly from God, as the Bible records, but he was also given inspiring revelations concerning God’s many creations (Moses 1:4, 33–35) and the earth and its inhabitants (Moses 1:8, 27–28). An account of these VISIONS was revealed to the Prophet JOSEPH SMITH in June 1830 as part of the JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (JST) and constitutes chapter one of the BOOK OF MOSES in the Pearl of Great Price. For Latter-day Saints, this stands as “the missing introduction not only to Genesis, but to the entire Bible” (Turner, p. 43).

The visions were given to Moses on a high mountain, “the name of which shall not be known among the children of men” (Moses 1:1, 42), after the event at the burning bush and before he led Israel from bondage (Moses 1:17, 26). Hence, they were received separately from the revelations of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 3–4; 19–20). The visions exhibit five themes: the greatness of God in comparison to humans (Moses 1:2–5, 8–11, 35–

38); Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten Son and creator of “worlds without number” (1:32–34); Satan and his opposition to the divine plan (1:12–22); the spiritual stature of Moses (1:6, 25–28, 40–41); and God’s purposes (1:30, 31, 39). Moses was able to endure God’s presence because he was transfigured, meaning that during the visionary experience God’s own glory quickened him (Moses 1:2, 11). He learned that he was created in the similitude of God’s Only Begotten Son (Moses 1:6), and was told to write his revelations, even though much of what he recorded would be lost—due to wickedness—until another prophet, like himself, would bring forth his visions to believers of a later day (Moses 1:40–41).

Latter-day scripture attests to Moses’ hand in the composition of the Pentateuch (1 Ne. 5:11; 19:23). He had access to, and edited, prior prophetic records, including those of ADAM and ENOCH, which were once apparently included in the works composing the earliest form of the Pentateuch, now found in Moses 2–8 (cf. 1 Ne. 13:20–40).

While in the wilderness, Moses taught the Israelites about the sanctifying power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, “that they might behold the face of God” (D&C 84:23). Unfortunately, they rejected his efforts, and because of their hardened hearts, Moses and the Melchizedek Priesthood were taken from their midst. The lesser or AARONIC PRIESTHOOD remained (D&C 84:24–27).

Moses’ ministry extended beyond his mortal lifetime. Along with ELIJAH, he returned to the MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION, spoke with Christ, and bestowed certain KEYS of the PRIESTHOOD upon the chief APOSTLES (Matt. 17:1–4; D&C 138:45; HC 3:387). Because he needed a body of flesh and bones to perform this errand and because the RESURRECTION was yet forthcoming, Moses was translated and taken into heaven, like Enoch and Elijah, without experiencing the normal death portrayed in Deuteronomy 34:5–6 (cf. Alma 45:19).

Possessing the keys for gathering Israel (Petersen, p. 186), Moses appeared in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE on April 3, 1836, and conferred those keys on the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY (D&C 110:11) so that the full authority of the priesthood could operate in this DISPENSATION. Latter-day scripture reminds all priesthood holders of Moses’ significance by declaring that those who honor and magnify the priesthood become the

adopted sons of Moses (D&C 84:33–34). Moses is also revered by other Christians and by Jews and Moslems.

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MOSES, BOOK OF

See: Book of Moses

MOSIAH₁

The first Mosiah mentioned in the Book of Mormon, a king, saved those NEPHITES who “would hearken unto the voice of the Lord” by leading them away from their ancestral home, the land of Nephi, where they were threatened by LAMANITES about 200 B.C. (Omni 1:12). After they had wandered for an unknown period, Mosiah and his group “discovered a people, who were called the people of Zarahemla” (Omni 1:13–14; *see also* BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLES; MULEK). He taught them his language—their language having deteriorated because they lacked written records—and was chosen ruler over both groups (Omni 1:17–19). “By the gift and power of God” he interpreted “engravings” on a stone that the people of Zarahemla had discovered, telling of yet another and earlier migration (Omni 1:20–22; *see also* JAREDITES). Mosiah ruled for about four decades and was succeeded as king by his son BENJAMIN.

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