

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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Peter, James, and John also saw the millennial day when the earth will be transfigured, returning it to its condition prior to the FALL OF ADAM (*TPJS*, pp. 12–13; cf. A of F 10). The earth's transfiguration will take place at the time of Christ's second coming (*MD*, pp. 795–96).

The bestowal of priesthood keys on the presiding apostles formed a fifth purpose of the transfiguration. During his ministry, Jesus conferred the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD on the twelve, authorizing them to act under his direction (Mark 3:14–15; John 15:16; cf. *JD* 25:207). But with the prospect of his departure, the twelve needed independent authority to direct Church affairs. Fulfilling his promise that Peter would receive the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:13–20), Jesus took the chief apostles to the mount, where they received those keys.

After beholding the transfigured Jesus and undergoing transfiguration themselves, the apostles saw Moses and Elijah (and perhaps others; cf. McConkie, p. 400), who had been translated so that they could appear with physical bodies to bestow priesthood keys by the LAYING ON OF HANDS, which made possible, among other things, the preaching of the gospel throughout the world (Matt. 18:19–20) and performing saving ORDINANCES for the living and the dead (cf. 1 Cor. 15:29).

The latter-day fulfillment of some of these events occurred in the Kirtland Temple. The Melchizedek Priesthood and the office and keys of apostleship had been conferred on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery probably in late May or early June 1829 (cf. D&C 27:12), embracing the authority to establish the Church (D&C 128:20). On April 3, 1836, additional keys were given to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple by Moses and Elijah—the same ancient ministrants who appeared on the mount—and an additional messenger named ELIAS, who conferred the “dispensation of the gospel of Abraham” (D&C 110:12). The restoration of these keys set in motion the latter-day mission of the Church, including missionary work and all ordinances for the living, as well as redemption of the dead through vicarious ordinance work in temples.

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DALE C. MOURITSEN

MULEK

Mulek, a Book of Mormon character, son of Zedekiah, escaped the sack of Jerusalem (587 B.C.) and went with others to a place in the Western Hemisphere that they called the land of Mulek (Hel. 6:10). Later a region was named for Zarahemla, a descendant of Mulek (Mosiah 25:2). These people were eventually discovered by Nephite refugees from LAMANITE predations in the south. Mulek is important because he established one of the BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLES and because Bible students have assumed that Nebuchadnezzar executed all of Zedekiah's sons, an observation unsupported by ancient evidence and refuted by the Book of Mormon account of Mulek's survival.

According to the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and “Mulekites” formed a coalition, making Mosiah₂ king over both groups. The Nephites discovered in Mulek's descendants an additional witness concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. The Mulekites were elated to have access to Nephite records, since their own language and traditions had been distorted in the absence of historical documents. The Mulekites lived thenceforth among the Nephites, enjoying separate-but-equal status and ultimately outnumbering the descendants of Nephi (Mosiah 25:1–4, 13).

Ancient Near Eastern sources affirm that during the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, Mulek's father, Zedekiah, who was deserted by all who escaped, was captured with members of his family and a few courtiers. Nebuchadnezzar slew Zedekiah's sons and courtiers, put his eyes out, and deported him to Babylon (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 10.8.2). But his daughters, and presumably his wives, stayed at Mizpah until Gedeliah, a former minister with Babylonizing tendencies in Zedekiah's cabinet, was murdered by Ishmael, who then tried to deport the Mizpah colony. When pursued, Ishmael abandoned his captives and fled with eight men to Ammon. The people of Mizpah,

including Zedekiah's women, headed for Egypt, fearful of Chaldean reprisals (2 Kgs. 25; Jer. 41–43).

Mulek might have been away when the city fell; perhaps he eluded his captors at Jericho; the women could have hidden him (as Jehoshiba hid her nephew Joash of the royal line earlier [see 2 Kgs. 11:2–4]); he may even have been unborn, although he probably avoided captivity some other way. But nothing in the Bible or other known sources precludes the possibility of his escape from Jerusalem.

Concerning Mulek's existence, the Bible offers important evidence. Mulek is a nickname derived from *melek* (Hebrew, king), a diminutive term of endearment meaning "little king." Its longer form occurs in the Bible as *Malkiyahu* (in English, Malchiah), meaning "Jehovah is king." Malchiah is identified as "the son of Hammelech" in Jeremiah 38:6. But Hammelech is a translator's error, since *ben-hammelek* means "son of the king" and is not a proper name—a fact confirmed by the Septuagint (LXX Jer. 45:6). A fictive paternity thus obscures the lineage of Malchiah as the actual son of Zedekiah. It is also known that names ending in *-yahu* (in English, *-iah*) were common during the late First Temple period, that Zedekiah indeed had a son named Malkiyahu (Aharoni, p. 22), and that the familial forms of *yahu*-names were shorter than their "full" forms. The study of a seal owned by Jeremiah's scribe shows that his full name was Berekyahu (in English, Berechiah), although the biblical text uses only the shorter Baruch (Avigad). This is consistent with viewing the hypocoristic Mulek as the diminutive of Malkiyahu, since *a* is often assimilated to *o* or *u* in the vocalic structure of most Semitic languages. It is therefore possible that the Mulek of the Book of Mormon is "Malchiah, son of the king" mentioned in Jeremiah 38:6.

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H. CURTIS WRIGHT

MURDER

Murder is condemned in latter-day scripture just as it is in the TEN COMMANDMENTS and numerous other passages in both the Old and the New Testament. The Doctrine and Covenants declares that "thou shalt not kill" (D&C 42:18). The murderer "shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come" (D&C 42:18).

In LDS doctrine, murder is second in seriousness only to the UNPARDONABLE SIN of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. And even that sin involves a kind of murderous treachery in that one who previously had obtained an absolute witness of Jesus' divinity (*TPJS*, p. 358) in effect "crucifies [Christ]" afresh or "assent[s] unto [his] death" (D&C 76:35; 132:27). Thus, murder can be thought of as the archetypal sin, as in the sin of Cain (Gen. 4:6–11, and esp. Moses 5:18–26, 31).

Murder violates the sanctity of life and cuts off the ability of its victims to "work out their destiny" (Benson, p. 355). Moreover, because "man cannot restore life," and restoration or restitution is a necessary step for REPENTANCE, obtaining forgiveness for murder is impossible (Kimball, 1969, p. 129; D&C 42:18–19). Murder wrenches all lives connected to the victim, and ultimately the perpetrator of this crime suffers even more than the victims. "For Cain suffered far more than did Abel, and murder is far more serious to him who commits it than to him who suffers from it" (Kimball, 1982, p. 188).

Secular punishment for killing is to be proved and "dealt with according to the laws of the land" (D&C 42:79). Those who have been convicted of, or have confessed to, homicide cannot be baptized without clearance from the FIRST PRESIDENCY, and excommunication of members guilty of murder is mandatory. Joseph Fielding SMITH, as an apostle, indicated that vicarious temple work should not be done for deceased murderers (*DS* 2:192).

The Church defines "murder" as the deliberate and unjustified taking of human life. If death is caused by carelessness or by defense of self or others, or if overriding mitigating circumstances prevail (such as deficient mental capacity or state of war), the taking of a human life may be regarded as something other than murder. In making the assessment of a member's guilt or innocence of murder, Church leaders are encouraged to be responsive to inspiration and to submit the facts of the