

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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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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to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents. And this sealing work “fulfills the mission of Elijah” (*TPJS*, p. 330; see also ELIJAH, SPIRIT OF).

When the Twelve Apostles chosen in Joseph Smith’s day were instructed to initiate these ordinances in Nauvoo in 1842, they soon recognized that it was the beginning of an immense work and that to administer all the ordinances of the gospel to the hosts of the dead was no easy task. They asked if there was some other way. The Prophet Joseph replied, “The laws of the Lord are immutable, we must act in perfect compliance with what is revealed to us. We need not expect to do this vast work for the dead in a short time. I expect it will take at least a thousand years” (*Millennial Star* 37:66). As of 1991 vicarious temple ordinances have been performed for more than 113 million persons. The Prophet Joseph said, “It is no more incredible that God should save the dead, than that he should raise the dead” (*TPJS*, p. 191).

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ELMA W. FUGAL

SAMUEL THE LAMANITE

Samuel the LAMANITE was the only Book of Mormon prophet identified as a Lamanite. Apart from his sermon at Zarahemla (Hel. 13–15), no other record of his life or ministry is preserved. Noted chiefly for his prophecies about the birth of Jesus Christ, his prophetic words, which were later examined, commended, and updated by the risen Jesus (3 Ne. 23:9–13), were recorded by persons who accepted him as a true PROPHET and even faced losing their lives for believing his message (3 Ne. 1:9).

Approximately five years before Jesus’ birth, Samuel began to preach repentance in Zarahemla. After the incensed Nephite inhabitants expelled him, the voice of the Lord directed him to return. Climbing to the top of the city wall, he delivered his message unharmed, even though certain citizens sought his life (Hel. 16:2). Thereafter, he fled and “was never heard of more among the Nephites” (Hel. 16:8).

Samuel prophesied that Jesus would be born in no more than five years’ time, with two heavenly signs indicating his birth. First, “one day and a night and a day” of continual light would occur (Hel. 14:4; cf. Zech. 14:7). Second, among celestial wonders, a new star would arise (Hel. 14:5–6). Then speaking of mankind’s need of the ATONEMENT and RESURRECTION, he prophesied signs of Jesus’ death: three days of darkness among the Nephites would signal his crucifixion, accompanied by storms and earthquakes (14:14–27).

Samuel framed these prophecies by pronouncing judgments of God upon his hearers. He spoke of a final devastation—four hundred years distant—that would end Nephite civilization because of its rebellion against God. This desolation would come through “the sword and with famine and with pestilence” (13:9; cf. Morm. 1:19). He spoke of curses from God on the land (13:17–20, 23, 30, 35–36), on property (13:18–19, 21, 31), and on the people themselves (13:19, 21, 32, 38). Such afflictions would arise because the Nephites would knowingly reject true prophets while accepting false ones, clamor for wealth, and refuse to acknowledge the blessings of God (13:19–34). Samuel reiterated the judgments of God against the Nephites (15:1–3, 17) and then emphasized the divine promises extended to the Lamanites—including assurances for “the latter times” of “restoration” (15:4–16).

S. MICHAEL WILCOX

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the process of becoming a SAINT, holy and spiritually clean and pure, by purging all SIN from the SOUL. Latter-day Saint scriptures mention several factors that make sanctification possible.

First is the ATONEMENT of JESUS CHRIST (D&C 76:41–42; 88:18; Moro. 10:33; Alma 13:11). Christ’s blood sanctifies God’s repentant children by washing them clean in a way that extends beyond the REMISSION OF SINS at BAPTISM. This cleansing is given through GRACE to all who “love and serve God” (D&C 20:31). “For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified” (Moses 6:60; cf. 1 John 5:8).

Second is the power of the HOLY GHOST, the agent that purifies the heart and gives an abhorrence of sin (Alma 13:12; 3 Ne. 27:20).

Third is progression through personal RIGHTEOUSNESS (*see also* JUSTIFICATION). Faithful men and women fast; pray; repent of their sins; grow in HUMILITY, FAITH, JOY, and consolation; and yield their hearts to God (Hel. 3:35). They also receive essential ORDINANCES such as baptism (D&C 19:31) and, if necessary, endure CHASTENING (D&C 101:5). Thus, Latter-day Saints are exhorted to “sanctify yourselves” (D&C 43:11) by purging all their iniquity (*MD*, pp. 675–76).

King BENJAMIN’s people in the Book of Mormon illustrate the sanctification process. They humbled themselves and prayed mightily that God would apply the atoning blood of Christ and purify their hearts. The Spirit came upon them and filled them with joy; a mighty change came into their hearts and they had “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2).

Latter-day Saint scripture often states that no unclean thing can dwell in God’s presence (e.g., 3 Ne. 27:19; Moses 6:57). Thus, the sanctification that Latter-day Saints seek is more than a physical or moral state; it is a perpetual spiritual life—an ongoing effort to be worthy and pure to live with God—to overcome the evils of one’s life and lose “every desire for sin” (*TPJS*, p. 51).

C. ERIC OTT

SARAH

Sarah was the wife of ABRAHAM. Originally named Sarai (which possibly meant “contentions”), she was renamed Sarah (“princess”) when, in her old age, God promised Abraham that she would bear a son. The fragmentary information available about her paints a picture of great faith manifested in sacrifices not easily made. Sarah shared equally in Abraham’s trials; her experience permits a feminine perspective on the universal obligations of faith, hope, and sacrifice.

Childless until late in life, Sarah suffered years of travail. Barrenness was a heavy burden for any woman in Near Eastern cultures but would have been felt as a particularly searing inadequacy by a woman whose husband had received divine promises of endless posterity.

Against this backdrop, Sarah was twice thrust into situations where she had to feign being un-

married in order to protect Abraham—first with Pharaoh (Gen. 12) and then with Abimelech (Gen. 20). The book of Abraham makes it clear that this was not mere cowardice or prevarication on Abraham’s part; it was obedience to divine direction (Abr. 2:22–25). But this did not simplify Sarah’s dilemma. Already torn between commitment to sacred marriage vows and the apparent certainty of death if she did not play the allotted role, she was required to rely on God for protection during the very hours when his instructions seemed to place her in the jaws of destruction. As in the ultimate trial with Isaac, it was the joint faith of Sarah and Abraham that ultimately opened the path of deliverance.

In her old age, Sarah gave Hagar, her maid, to Abraham. Modern revelation indicates that Sarah thereby “administered unto Abraham according to the law” (D&C 132:65), and more recent scholarship has confirmed the widespread legal obligation of the childless wife in the ancient Near East to provide her husband with a second wife (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, p. 239, Minneapolis, 1985). Tensions flared with Hagar and later Ishmael (Gen. 16:4–16; 21:8–10). In both cases, Hagar was driven away, first temporarily when pregnant, and then permanently, with her teenage son Ishmael. Significantly, in both cases, the Lord had Abraham place the resolution of these conflicts in Sarah’s hands: “In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice” (Gen. 21:12; cf. Gen. 16:4–6).

The promise that she would bear a son, which had caused Sarah to “laugh . . . within herself” (Gen. 18:12), was fulfilled in the birth of Isaac. The scriptures do not indicate whether Sarah knew beforehand of the call to take Isaac to Moriah, but she had been prepared. Her experiences had carved out in her a reservoir of patient faith, and she was capable of complete trust in God. Sarah was human and real and sometimes even imperfect in wrestling with the burdens of obedience. Yet she endured. Ultimately, she entered with Abraham into the exaltation that her motherhood helped prepare for all the house of Israel (*see* D&C 132:37).

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