

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
Daniel H. Ludlow

*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



Copyright Brigham Young University, 1992.

Archived at Book of Mormon Central by Permission.

is the fulfillment of a divine admonition: “If ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

Historically, miraculous healings have followed spiritual administrations to the sick for every kind of affliction, in every generation, and in every part of the Church. The promise is that the blind may receive sight, the deaf hear, the paralytic regain the use of limbs. Illustrative scriptural references are: “He that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed” (D&C 42:48). And those who “have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness” (verse 43).

Three scriptural cautions apply to the principle of blessing the sick. First, worthiness is to be cultivated by all. At any time, men or women may face the crisis of disease or injury and be asked to exercise faith in behalf of themselves or loved ones. Second, blessings are not to be given as SIGNS for the skeptical, to satisfy curiosity, or to “consume it upon their lusts” (D&C 46:9). Faith in Christ is the prerequisite, not the consequence, of blessing the sick. Third, the resulting relief, healing, and fulfillment are not to be boasted about or heralded, but rather to “be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64; 84:73; 105:24). This is consistent with the plea of the Master in the New Testament after many of his miraculous healings: “See thou tell no man!” (Matt. 8:4; cf. D&C 50:33).

NEPHI K. KEZERIAN

SIGMA GAMMA CHI

See: LDS Student Association

SIGNS

[Signs mark, indicate, represent, symbolize, give direction, or point to other things beyond themselves, and are sometimes miraculous or extraordinary in nature. The scriptures speak of God’s “signs and wonders” by which his work, power, and wisdom are made known or recognized by people in the earth (Ex. 7:3–5). True signs provide objective evidence that an event can reasonably be expected, such as the new star in the east being a sign of Christ’s birth (Matt. 2:1, 2) or certain dark clouds heralding a storm (Matt. 16:1–4). False or counterfeit signs are deceptive and give a false hope of security if accepted (Ex. 7:11–12; 8:7; D&C 63:7–9.)

Articles pertaining directly to this subject are Sign Seeking; Signs as Divine Witnesses; Signs of the Times; Signs of the True Church. Related articles are Jesus Christ: Birth of Jesus Christ; Miracles; and Second Coming of Jesus Christ.]

SIGNS AS DIVINE WITNESS

Signs have been given by the Lord to manifest his power “both in heaven and in earth” (Jacob 7:14); to witness that Jesus Christ shall come (Jacob 7:14; D&C 39:23; 68:10); to strengthen the faith of believers (D&C 35:8; 58:64; 84:65); and to ratify the condemnation of unbelievers (D&C 63:11).

In revealing his power in the heavens and on earth, God has used numerous signs and wonders. He “hath given a law unto all things, by which they move in their times and their seasons; and their courses are fixed, even the courses of the heavens and the earth, which comprehend the earth and all the planets, . . . and any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power” (D&C 88:42–47). Miracles performed by the power of God are signs of his might and majesty (cf. Ex. 7:3). He parted the Red Sea for the children of Israel after bringing the ten plagues upon the Egyptians (Ex. 7–12; 14:1–31). He confirmed Gideon’s divine call by several signs (Judg. 6:17–23, 36–40).

During his mortal ministry the Lord filled empty nets with fish after the disciples had fished all night but caught nothing (Luke 5:6). He healed the sick, raised the dead, caused the lame to walk and the blind to see, and calmed the storm (*see MIRACLES*). The foregoing, and with hundreds of other instances, attest to the power and might of God, both in heaven and on earth.

Signs strengthen the faith of believers and therefore are beheld by those who already believe in Christ as confirmations of their belief. Jesus Christ revealed to the Prophet Joseph SMITH, “I will show miracles, signs, and wonders, unto all those who believe on my name” (D&C 35:8) and “he that believeth shall be blest with signs following, even as it is written” (D&C 68:10). Signs that follow faithful believers are many. They “shall heal the sick, . . . cast out devils, and shall be delivered from those who would administer . . . deadly poison,” and if occasion warrants, they could even “raise the dead” (D&C 124:98–100; cf. Mark 16:17–18). In addition, faithful Saints have a com-

forting assurance, which comes to those who recognize the signs, that God's plans will not be frustrated (D&C 3:1; 10:43)

In addition to manifesting God's power, signs have been given as a witness of the coming of Christ to earth. Latter-day Saints believe that signs were given to prepare the people for his coming in the MERIDIAN OF TIME. King BENJAMIN declared, "And many signs, and wonders, and types, and shadows showed he unto them, concerning his coming" (Mosiah 3:15). MORMON reports that among the Book of Mormon people, signs and wonders abounded prior to the birth of Christ in the Holy Land (3 Ne. 1:4–22) and before his visit to the Western Hemisphere (3 Ne. 8–10).

Of particular interest in the present DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES are signs pertaining to the second coming of Christ (*see* SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST). The Lord has revealed the SIGNS OF THE TIMES (1 Thes. 5:1–2) to guide the faithful in their preparation for the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (D&C 110:14)—that is, for Christ's second coming to the earth. Thus, the faithful watch for the signs so that when the hour comes, it will be great, but not dreadful to them (cf. 1 Thes. 5:2–4).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted at least fifty-one different signs, many of which pertain to natural phenomena, that have been foretold, pointing to the second coming of Christ. These include earthquakes, famines, depressions, economic turmoil, strikes, anarchy, violence, disasters, calamities, disease, plague, and pestilence. At the same time, both worldly knowledge and gospel knowledge increase, holy temples are built throughout the earth, Israel is gathered, and the true gospel is preached in all the world (*MD*, pp. 715–34).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Smith, Joseph. *TPJS*, pp. 160, 198, 224, 262.

R. WAYNE SHUTE

SIGN SEEKING

Signs are greeted by the faithful with reverence and appreciation (*see* SIGNS AS DIVINE WITNESS). On the other hand, a sign can become a condemnation to an unbeliever (D&C 63:7–11). Skeptics may rationalize the signs as aberrations of nature,

harden their heart, and not recognize or acknowledge God's "hand in all things" (D&C 59:21). When an unbeliever seeks for a sign he is tempting God and subjects himself to possible condemnation and the WRATH OF GOD. Two vivid Book of Mormon cases illustrating the consequences of unholy sign seeking are Sherem (Jacob 7:13–14) and Korihor (Alma 30:43–56). Furthermore, Jesus said to the Jewish rulers, "a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matt. 16:4). And in the latter days, Jesus explained that "he that seeketh signs shall see signs, but not unto salvation" (D&C 63:7). There is a great difference between signs to confirm or reward faith and the seeking of signs as an excuse for not exercising faith or as a substitute for faith.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Smith, Joseph. *TPJS*, pp. 157, 278.

Smith, Joseph Fielding. *Church History and Modern Revelation*, p. 4. Salt Lake City, 1948.

R. WAYNE SHUTE

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The phrase "signs of the times" was used by Jesus Christ when he reproved certain antagonists for not recognizing earlier prophecies relative to his second advent. He said they understood signs pertaining to the weather, but did not understand the "signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3). Recognizing such signs will enable discerning individuals to understand the unfolding of prophetic events in the final phase of the earth's history. Prophets before and after Christ have prophesied that there would be signs pertaining to events occurring prior to Christ's second coming (Joel 2:30–31; Amos 8:11–12; 2 Thes. 2:1–3; *TPJS*, pp. 286–87).

These signs include the coming of false Christs and false prophets and the deception of many who believe in them (Matt. 24:11, 23–24). Included also are wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilence, and other natural calamities (Matt. 24:6, 27; Mark 13:5–8). Latter-day revelation provides additional insights concerning these eschatological catastrophes and the consequences of them for those who are unprepared (D&C 29:13–21; 45:25–45). The gospel of Jesus Christ will be preached throughout the earth as a sign that the Lord's coming draws near (JS—M