

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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

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was active in the Utah Woman Suffrage Association and the Republican party and helped draft the suffrage clause of the Utah Constitution. She served as president of the Utah Woman's Press Club, treasurer of the Utah Woman Suffrage Association, chairman of the Salt Lake County Second Precinct Ladies' Republican Club, and board member of the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society and of Traveler's Aid Society. She died on April 12, 1958, in Salt Lake City at the age of 104.

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## FREEDOM

The gospel of Jesus Christ does not represent freedom merely as a philosophic concept or abstract possibility, but establishes it at the foundations of the creation of the world and as the fundamental condition of God's dealings with his children. As a general expression the word "freedom" refers to AGENCY, liberty, independence, and autonomy. Freedom, or the genuine possibility of choosing, necessarily defines the most basic condition of human beings in the temporal world.

Latter-day Saint scriptures teach that the pre-mortal life was an environment of choice in which God proposed to his spirit children a PLAN OF SALVATION for their growth and advancement (see Job 38:6–7; 2 Ne. 2:17; D&C 29:36; Abr. 3:22–28). In earth life, with bodies of flesh and bone and vast new possibilities of action, God's children would be free to make choices within the whole spectrum of good and evil. They would also experience the necessary consequences of those choices. "And we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abr. 3:24–25).

God promised those who would do his will that they would be redeemed from their errors and

sins and gain eternal life. Satan opposed the Father's plan, aware that this more extensive freedom involved the risk of spiritual death, where some would be separated from the Father by their sins, would not repent, and thus could not return to dwell in his kingdom. To avert such a separation, Satan proposed an environment without freedom and hence without sin. Consequently, all would return to the Father, but without moral improvement or advancement (*see* DEVIL). The "honor" for their return would belong to Satan (Isa. 14:13; Moses 4:1).

A majority of God's spirit children joyfully elected freedom over bondage, knowledge over ignorance, advancement over stagnation, and even danger over security; so the temporal world was created, with freedom as its unconditional ground. The temporal world is an environment of choices and thus of moral action and ACCOUNTABILITY as people are summoned to do the will of God. Men and women may not evade or escape their freedom, for reality always appears as a set of choices informed by some kind of understanding of good, the outcome of which defines in some measure the course of human events. The Book of Mormon says of this decision,

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself [2 Ne. 2:27].

**FREEDOM AND HUMAN CHOICE.** Latter-day Saints understand, however, that not all of God's children will find themselves in situations of equal freedom. All people are born into a world created by the acts and beliefs of those who lived before them. These differences are preserved in the traditions, institutions, and practices that have been handed down. While God gives everyone the LIGHT OF CHRIST that draws each to the good, the traditions and practices into which some are born may conceal the truth and lead such people into harmful and sinful acts. For these, God will have mercy (Alma 9:15–16).

Still others are born into situations where the truth is widely known and the opportunity to do good is broadly available. Yet they do evil in the

face of the truth and thus create consequences that reduce their choices, distance themselves from the Spirit of God, and bring upon themselves unhappiness, destruction, and the darkness of Satan's power (Gal. 5:13–25). Furthermore, they do not suffer alone from the consequences of their choices. The ill-used freedom of some can result in the undeserved suffering of others, and while this is unjust, the risk of unwarranted suffering is necessarily present in a world where evil exists. Nevertheless, this condition too serves God's purpose, for some adversity humbles people before God (Alma 32:12–16). Through earthly trials men and women are tried and tested, but thereby progress and unfold the talents and gifts that God has given them (2 Ne. 2:11; Alma 62:41; D&C 122:1–9). When a whole people choose darkness over light, however, they create a legacy of confinement for following generations that sometimes has to be divinely corrected (e.g., Gen. 6:5–7; Lev. 18:24–30; Moses 8:22–30; Hel. 10:11–12).

On the other hand, those who choose good are made more free by a larger presence of the HOLY GHOST in their lives, and a greater power to know and do God's will (John 7:16–18; 8:29–32; Alma 19:33). Therefore, the good choices of some can bless the lives of others. As a consequence of the righteous works of a few (see Gal. 5–6), previously limited lives can expand to enjoy new and positive opportunities, while old injustices and grievances are brought to settlement. In the measure that the institutions and beliefs of a people embody truth and virtue and oppose corruption and depravity, an environment of greater freedom develops. A fulness is achieved when God establishes his kingdom on earth and reveals to humankind knowledge, power, gifts, and ordinances that open up the way to complete salvation and exaltation. The city of Enoch, as well as the righteous people living in America for 200 years after the visit of the resurrected Savior (see 4 Ne. 1), established high-water marks in the history of human freedom. In this sense, then, God not only calls individuals to live righteous lives, but summons them as his people to make covenants with him and to justly exercise his power as a community of the faithful. Freedom, therefore, should not be seen as merely a possibility of individuals, for it opens up to its fulness only within the kingdom of the righteous (see D&C 138, esp. verse 18).

**FREEDOM AND GOVERNMENT.** The scriptures further teach that God instituted governments to

bless humankind on the earth (*see* CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; POLITICS: POLITICAL TEACHINGS). Good government must do more than preserve order; it must protect freedom, ensure justice, and secure the general welfare. “And the law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me” (D&C 98:5; *see* CONSTITUTIONAL LAW). God proclaims, “I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free” (D&C 98:8). The law protects individuals and their liberties from the arbitrary and deleterious acts of others. The genuine rule of law requires that all be equally subject to rules that are prospective, widely known, and publicly arrived at through mechanisms of government that have been and continue to be consensually agreed upon. The law secures peace by proscribing choices injurious to others, ensures justice by holding all accountable to the law in accordance with fair procedures, and secures the general welfare through the passage of laws that regulate and coordinate social intercourse to the benefit of all. In exchange for these advantages, citizens must fulfill their obligations to sustain and support the government. In the end, the environment of freedom is enhanced and expanded through good government.

Nevertheless, governments are often oppressive and act to restrict freedom and establish privileges for the few by arbitrarily setting up public rules and applying them unevenly without proper safeguards. The abuse of political power is most offensive and bondage nearly complete when freedom of conscience and its expression in free speech are restricted and the right to worship God openly according to one's own beliefs is abridged. In the end, Latter-day Saints believe that the claims of government should be limited to its own proper domain and not allowed to encroach upon the province of freedom to act according to moral conscience. To avoid such political evil, Latter-day Saints are encouraged not only to support constitutional government and the processes it establishes but also to work for laws that bring about freedom and encourage virtue. In this larger sense, the scriptures summon those who follow Jesus to go the extra mile, to give more than they receive, to do good without thought of what they might gain in return. Thus, as citizens, Latter-day Saints are obligated to go beyond the pursuit of self-interest; they are committed to serve others, to bring about

the common good, and to secure the general welfare of the people.

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## FREEMASONRY IN NAUVOO

The introduction of Freemasonry in NAUVOO had both political and religious implications. When Illinois Grand Master Abraham Jonas visited Nauvoo on March 15, 1842, to install the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, he inaugurated an era of difficulty with other Illinois Masons and introduced to Nauvoo ancient ritual bearing some similarity to the LDS temple ordinances (*see* FREEMASONRY AND THE TEMPLE).

Regular Masonic procedure calls for an existing lodge to sponsor each new proposed lodge. Early in the summer of 1841, several Latter-day Saints who were Masons, including Lucius N. Scovil, a key figure in Nauvoo Freemasonry, asked Bodley Lodge No. 1, in Quincy, Illinois, to request that the Illinois Grand Lodge appoint certain individuals as officers of a Nauvoo lodge. Indicating that the persons named were unknown in Quincy as Masons, the lodge returned the letter with instructions for further action.

Less than a year later, Nauvoo had a lodge without the normal sponsorship. Grand Master Jonas apparently waived the rule and granted Nauvoo a "special dispensation" to organize. He also made Joseph SMITH and his counselor, Sidney RIGDON, "Masons at sight." Some believe that Jonas was willing to follow this course because he envisioned the growing Mormon vote supporting his own political ambitions (*see* NAUVOO POLITICS). Although the action may have endeared him to some Latter-day Saints, it antagonized other Masons. Joseph Smith had reason to expect that the Saints might benefit from the network of friendship and support normally associated with the fraternal organization, but instead, the Nauvoo Lodge only produced friction.

Jonas published an account of the March 15 installation of the Nauvoo Lodge in his newspaper, *Columbia Advocate*. "Never in my life did I witness a better dressed or more orderly and well-

behaved assemblage," he wrote (*HC* 4:565–66). During the installation ceremonies, held in the grove near the temple site, Joseph Smith officiated as Grand Chaplain. That evening, with the Masons assembled in his office, the Prophet received the first degree of Freemasonry. Nauvoo Masons then commenced weekly early morning meetings.

In August 1842, Bodley Lodge No. 1 protested the granting of a dispensation to the Nauvoo Lodge, resulting in a temporary suspension of activities. An investigation found that approximately three hundred Latter-day Saints had become Masons during the brief existence of the lodge, but found no irregularities warranting dissolution. The Grand Lodge not only authorized reinstatement of the Nauvoo Lodge but subsequently granted dispensations for other lodges nearby made up principally of Latter-day Saints. Eventually nearly 1,500 LDS men became associated with Illinois Freemasonry, including many members of the Church's governing priesthood bodies—this at a time when the total number of non-LDS Masons in Illinois lodges barely reached 150.

As long-time rivals of Nauvoo for political and economic ascendancy, neighboring Masons feared and resisted Mormon domination of Freemasonry. Charging the Nauvoo Lodge with balloting for more than one applicant at a time, receiving applicants into the fraternity on the basis that they reform in the future, and making Joseph Smith a Master Mason on sight, enemies forced an investigation in October 1843. The Grand Lodge summoned Nauvoo officials to Jacksonville, Illinois. Armed with pertinent books and papers, Lucius Scovil and Henry G. Sherwood answered the allegations. Though the examining committee reported that everything appeared to be in order, it expressed fear that there *might* be something wrong, and recommended a year's suspension. At this point, Grand Master Jonas, in an impassioned speech, declared that the books of the Nauvoo Lodge were the best-kept he had seen and stated his conviction that but for the fact that the Nauvoo Lodge was composed of Mormons, it would stand as the highest lodge in the state. A committee was appointed to make a thorough investigation in Nauvoo. Though the committee reported no wrongdoing, the Nauvoo Lodge was again suspended. The injunction was later removed, but the Nauvoo Lodge continued to lack the support of its fellow Masons.

In April 1844, the Nauvoo Lodge dedicated a new Masonic hall. By this time, the lodge had