

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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

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When severe illness strikes, Church members should exercise faith in the Lord and seek competent medical assistance. However, when dying becomes inevitable, death should be looked upon as a blessing and a purposeful part of an eternal existence. Members should not feel obligated to extend mortal life by means that are unreasonable. These judgments are best made by family members after receiving wise and competent medical advice and seeking divine guidance through fasting and prayer [*General Handbook of Instruction*, 11-6].

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DONALD B. DOTY

PROMISED LAND, CONCEPT OF A

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet LEHI spoke of a particular promised land as “choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed” (2 Ne. 1:5). Because the earth belongs to the Lord (Ps. 24:1), those who inherit a promised land must covenant to “serve the God of the land,” who will then keep them “free from bondage, and from captivity” (Ether 2:12); otherwise they will “be swept off” (Ether 2:10; cf. Deut. 27-28).

From the beginning, the Lord has reserved choice lands for righteous followers. They include the GARDEN OF EDEN for Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:9), a “land of promise” for Enos (Moses 6:17), and Zion for Enoch and his people (Moses 7:19). Notably, God received up Zion’s inhabitants (Moses 7:69), who will return to earth to the NEW JERUSALEM during the LAST DAYS (Moses 7:62-64; Rev. 21:2). Moreover, God gave the land of Canaan “unto [Abraham’s] seed . . . for an everlasting possession” if “they hearken to [God’s] voice” (Abr. 2:6). This promise was partially fulfilled when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt to Canaan.

The BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLES, including the family of Lehi and the JAREDITES, were given a promised land in the hemisphere now called the Americas, on condition of keeping God’s commandments (1 Ne. 2:20; Ether 1:42-43). The prophet MORONI₂ warned future inhabitants of this land: “Behold, this is a choice land, and whatso-

ever nation shall possess it shall be free . . . if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ” (Ether 2:12). This admonition applies to all lands that the Lord has promised to any of his peoples.

Latter-day Zion, a “promised land” for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, includes the city New Jerusalem that will be built in the Americas (A of F 10) and, in another sense, the STAKES of the Church in all the world. Members also believe that the New Jerusalem is where the “lost ten tribes” will first come (D&C 133:26).

Through the Prophet Joseph SMITH, the Lord promised in 1831 to lead the Saints to a “land of promise” (D&C 38:18; cf. Ex. 3:8). Because of persecution by enemies and sin among Church members, Joseph Smith was unsuccessful in establishing a permanent community (D&C 101:1-8). After his death, the Saints migrated to the Rocky Mountains, “a land of peace” (D&C 136:16), and still anticipate fulfillment of the Lord’s promises to open the way for building New Jerusalem in the designated place (D&C 42:9; 57:1-5; 101:9-22).

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CLARISSA KATHERINE COLE

PROPHECY

Latter-day Saints believe in both ancient and modern prophecy; indeed, continuing prophetic guidance is held to be a characteristic or SIGN OF THE TRUE CHURCH. These concepts were an integral part of the LDS Church’s origin and restoration, and they continue to distinguish the Church from many other religious movements.

The term “prophecy” encompasses the entire range of divinely inspired utterances of a PROPHET, both as a “forth-teller” and as a “fore-teller.” The predominant assumption by many readers is that this term in the scriptures refers usually to foretelling—the prophetic power to reveal events in the future—but it is not so limited. Prophecy is a diverse spiritual gift bestowed by the HOLY GHOST (2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Ne. 22:2; Moro. 10:8; D&C 20:26; 68:4). Prophecy is firmly grounded in