

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



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ceived the Silver Beaver and Silver Antelope awards from BSA in recognition of many years of service on a local and national level.

In addition to Church presidents, Thomas S. Monson, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert L. Backman, Marion D. Hanks, and others among the GENERAL AUTHORITIES, have also served in positions of distinction and leadership at the national level of the Boy Scouts and have been recognized for their contribution on behalf of the Church.

Both the program and the support service system of the BSA have been influenced by LDS volunteers, and many of the values, objectives, and goals of the Church for its young men are reflected in the expanding program of BSA.

When the BSA was first organized, certain religious principles were defined as the keystone of the organization, including (1) belief in God, (2) reverence for God, (3) fulfillment of religious duties, and (4) respect for beliefs of others. Because these principles have remained at the heart of scouting, the Church has embraced and promoted scouting as a major part of its program for young men.

The BSA and the Church have forged a close working relationship. In partnership with the Church, the BSA provides its programs, facilities, support, and training. The Church, in turn, provides youth, youth leaders, financial support, and promotion of its implicit values. This relationship has flourished because scouting continues to support wholesome leisure-time activities, to provide a spiritual view of life that is compatible with the Church's teachings, and to encourage boys and leaders to be loyal to the Church.

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LOWELL M. SNOW

SCRIPTURE

[This entry consists of four articles:

- Scriptures
- Authority of Scripture
- Words of Living Prophets
- Forthcoming Scripture

The origin and history of the Latter-day Saints is closely tied to scripture, ancient and modern. The article Scriptures sets out the LDS view of scripture and the differences between it and other scriptural traditions and concepts. Authority of Scripture deals with the role of scripture in the beliefs and practices of Latter-day Saints. The essay Words of Living Prophets focuses on one of the distinctive features of LDS belief, that of divine revelation through modern prophets. The article Forthcoming Scripture treats the LDS expectation, rooted primarily in latter-day scripture, that other scriptures are yet to be revealed by God.]

SCRIPTURES

Although "scripture" usually denotes written documents, in LDS sources it is also defined as "whatsoever [God's representatives] shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost" (D&C 68:2-4; cf. 1:38; 2 Pet. 2:21; 2 Tim. 3:16). This broader understanding of the term is at once a comprehensive principle and a functional definition, taking into account both written and spoken modes of inspiration.

The corpus of LDS scripture is substantially larger than that of the traditional Protestant canon. It includes the Bible, the Book of Mormon (531 pages, 1981 English edition), the Doctrine and Covenants (294 pages, 1981 edition), and the Pearl of Great Price (61 pages, 1981 edition). From the outset, Latter-day Saints' commitment to the Bible and the Book of Mormon and their attempt immediately to formulate and standardize their teaching in relation to surrounding cultures made them a "bookish" people. By contrast, in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam the process of compiling and fixing sacred writings as "canonical" came comparatively long after their origins, and in each case the process resulted in a closed canon.

The Bible is accepted as the word of God by Latter-day Saints "as far as it is translated correctly" (A of F 8). They acknowledge that though the messages of scripture are divine in origin and impetus, the words in which they are clothed are

from humans (cf. Morm. 8:16–17; Ether 12:23–27). The title page of the Book of Mormon says, “If there are faults they are the mistakes of men.” For some such admissions strengthen rather than weaken the respect for true revelation (Stendahl, p. 100). This position avoids both the doctrine of verbal inerrancy and the naturalistic position that the Bible is a thoroughly human document, and an obsolescent one at that.

LDS scriptures are referred to as STANDARD WORKS. The word “canon” is used infrequently, in part because it connotes finality, completion, closure. In principle and in fact, additions, as well as occasional official clarifications and translations, are made to the standard works in the dual process of presentation through living leaders and, in accord with the law of COMMON CONSENT, acceptance by members of the Church. In this way, Latter-day Saints bind themselves by covenant to uphold them as scripture. The addition to the Doctrine and Covenants of both a REVELATION about the CELESTIAL KINGDOM received by Joseph Smith and a vision of the redemption of the dead received by President Joseph F. SMITH are modern examples (D&C 137, 138).

The perpetual unending character of the scripture, a corpus ever augmented by living witnesses in a setting of prophecy and TESTIMONY, is a sign and symbol of the inclusiveness of LDS faith (Davies, p. 61). Such a position is in contrast with finalist and minimalist views (“one canon is enough”). The Samaritans, for example, accorded scriptural status to the Pentateuch alone. For Latter-day Saints, scripture is not “final revelation.” There is no unexpandable “circle of faith.” No sacred texts, because of their acknowledged holiness, forbid the addition of more sacred texts. No document or collection is “all-sufficient” for redemption, for salvation, for complete enlightenment, or for the perfecting of the soul.

Two principles have emerged in defining what is to be regarded as scripture. First, one knows whether another is speaking with the authority of the Holy Ghost only by the influence of the Holy Ghost. Thus, in the last analysis, the burden of proof for scriptural status is placed upon the reader and hearer (cf. Brigham Young, *JD* 7:2). Latter-day Saints teach that all are entitled to this assurance and testimony. Second, the President of the Church and those associated with him as prophets, seers, and revelators have received a special spiritual endowment and jurisdiction. The President

alone speaks or writes for the Church and to the Church as a whole. Others can function similarly, but only within their own offices and callings. Further, “a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such” (*HC* 5:265; 2:302; *TPJS*, p. 278). Those officially called and ordained to lead are, in LDS terminology, the “living oracles,” and “Where the oracles of God are not there the Kingdom of God is not” (*WJS*, p. 156). Only the President of the Church has the responsibility and burden of exercising all the KEYS of scriptural presentation and declaration. These principles and practices are established to safeguard the sanctity, and vitalize the application, of inspired speaking and writing, both past and present.

Above the authority of the written record stands the authority of the living prophet and, beyond him, the supreme authority of the Lord himself. “You may hug up to yourselves the Bible,” said Joseph Smith, “but except through faith in it you can get revelation for yourself, the Bible will profit you but little” (Osborne). Further, “the best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching” (*TPJS*, p. 191). Brigham Young asserted that “I would rather have the living oracles than all the writing in the books” (cited in *CR*, Oct. 1897, pp. 22–23). But living oracles and responsible laymen are not, in theory or in tradition, wholly independent of the written word. B. H. Roberts, an authoritative second-generation historian and a General Authority, wrote of the corpus of scripture:

It fixes permanently the general truths which God has revealed. It preserves, for all time and for all generations of men, the great frame-work of the plan of salvation—the Gospel. There are certain truths that are not affected by ever-changing circumstances; truths which are always the same, no matter how often they may be revealed; truths which are elementary, permanent, fixed; from which there must not be, and cannot be, any departure without condemnation. The written word of God preserves the people of God from vain and foolish traditions, which, as they float down the stream of time, are subject to changes by distortion, by addition or subtraction, or by the fitful play of fancy in fantastic and unreliable minds. It forms a standard by which even the living oracles of God may instruct themselves, measure themselves, and correct themselves. It places within the reach of the people, the power to confirm the oral words, and the ministry of the living oracles, and thus to add

faith to faith, and knowledge to knowledge [*IE* 3 (May 1900):576–77].

In contrast, in Judaism the replacement of prophets by rabbis or scholars as custodians and interpreters of scripture was taken to the extreme: “Even if they [the sages] tell you that left is right and right is left—hearken unto their words” (*Midrash Siphre on Deut.* 17:10–11; cf. Jerusalem Talmud tractate *Horayoth* 1:1, 45d). Reassurance against error, even community error, was given on the ground that even the errors made in decisions of law are binding. In a dramatic case, Rabbi Eliezer claimed that a heavenly voice sanctioned his minority opinion. But Rabbi Joshua insisted that the Torah, or text of scripture, is not in heaven but on earth and that the majority view must prevail (see also Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 1980, pp. 374, 212n). In traditional Christianity, ecclesiastical councils have sometimes assumed similar prerogatives.

In their doctrine of scripture, Latter-day Saints have reduced these and other tensions, such as those that exist between biblical and Talmudic Judaism (i.e., between the written and the oral law) or, as in the Roman and Eastern Christian traditions, between the biblical heritage and the claims of both tradition and the pronouncements of the creeds, or, as in Protestantism, between the original intent, coupled with the spirit of scripture, and the claim that individual interpretation is valid.

The idea of an open canon has meant historically a certain openness to other historical, apocryphal, and pseudepigraphical sources. Modern scripture assures Latter-day Saints that important records will yet come to light (cf. 2 Ne. 29:10–14; A of F 9). The Old Testament Apocrypha contains many things “that are true” but also many interpolations (D&C 91); “To those who desire it, should be given by the Spirit to know the true from the false” (*HC* 1:363). By analogy, other documents recently recovered (e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi library, and related inscriptions and fragments) are viewed as instructive, though not canonical. In some cases, their teachings anticipate and echo authentic scriptural materials.

The importance of linguistic, contextual, historical, and literary approaches to scripture has been emphasized in the LDS Church in several ways: a SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS was organized

in the very infancy of the Church where Hebrew, Greek, and German were studied as biblical aids; the alternative Bible translations, including the revisions of the JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (JST), were used; official preference was given for the King James Version on the grounds of its literary style and its availability to other Christian groups, and others; various editions of biblical and latter-day scriptures, including critical texts, Bible dictionaries, and selective utilization of burgeoning efforts of worldwide biblical scholarship were utilized (see BIBLE SCHOLARSHIP).

A whole constellation of meanings attends the concept of the living word coming from a living prophetic voice. Moreover, the living voice is generally richer than any writing, which is at best a cryptosynopsis. On these grounds, Joseph Smith said, in effect, that one should never trust a letter to say what could be said in person. “No matter how pure your intentions may be; no matter how high your standing is, you cannot touch man’s heart when absent as when present” (*Woman’s Exponent* 3 [April 1, 1875]:162). The range of possible misunderstanding is significantly increased when one has only the written word.

In the history of canon, various stages or periods have witnessed exegesis, expansion, and the glosses and stylistic alterations that also change substance. One can argue that over the centuries this process has worked in the direction of textual improvement and power; but one can maintain equally that there have been departure and dilution and textual corruption. Latter-day Saints see both processes at work. “Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors” (*TPJS*, p. 327). On the other hand, the Bible and other texts are impressively preserved, with sufficient light to bless and condemn. For their part, Latter-day Saints ultimately trust the inspiration of the Spirit.

Latter-day Saints are not alone in this position. For instance, H. J. Schoeps shows that Jewish criticism of the ideas of temple and sacrifice were changed when the Bible was assembled (Davies, p. 61). And over the centuries, changes have often led away from, rather than toward, a refinement of original Christian norms and practices.

The revelatory power of scripture depends in part on its adaptive quality. Of modern scripture and, by implication, all earlier scripture the word of the Lord says, “These commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their

weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding” (D&C 1:24).

Plain meaning has also been a leading principle in LDS exegesis. “My soul delighteth in plainness,” said the Book of Mormon prophet NEPHI₁ (2 Ne. 31:3). Nothing can override the plain meaning of the text (cf. Talmudic tractate *Shabbath* 63a). This position is neither a refusal to see subtle and layered meanings in the text nor a theologically a priori position that permits allegorical excess, as in the teachings of some early rabbis and Christian schoolmen. Deeper meanings cannot be superimposed on a text of scripture, but are to be found by divine aid in the intent and spirit of the original author (cf. 2 Pet. 1:20–21). For all their complexity and diversity, the scriptures are written in ordinary language; for instance, the working vocabulary of the Book of Mormon comprises fewer than 2,300 basic words.

In practice, Latter-day Saints view certain other texts with special respect, based on their use, each with its own measure of authority. For example, exact prayers are specified for baptism and for the sacrament (*see* BAPTISMAL PRAYER; PRAYER). Other authoritative texts and words—with differing levels of authority—include messages of the First Presidency, temple ordinances and covenants, patriarchal blessings, the hymnal, handbooks for priesthood and auxiliary organizations, and manuals for teaching in the various ward organizations.

A unity of the faith, often seen as remarkable, arises both from a unique openness to further revelation and from the Church’s system of checks and balances. The Church’s lay participation, which entails the sharing of responsibility, and the law of common consent operate together in the process of presenting, confirming, and accepting the inspired word.

For Latter-day Saints, the scriptures are not reducible to scientific history, sociology, or folklore; a simple set of fundamentals, commandments, and legal apparatus; charming parabolic accounts; esoteric and hidden names with mystical connections that have a power and life of their own. The scriptures are the result of an outpouring from on high whose present meaning and relevance to a person require painstaking study and direct inspiration.

Objecting to the views of the Torah as a closed world, Martin Buber wrote, “To you God is one who created once and not again; but to us God is

He who ‘renews the work of creation every day.’ To you God is One who revealed Himself once and no more; but to us He speaks out of the burning thornbush of the present . . . in the revelations of our innermost hearts—greater than words” (p. 204). This statement captures much of the spirit of the LDS approach to scripture. Meaning and power rise against “hardening” traditions and sponsor trust in the living witness of the Spirit to illumine, clarify, and sanctify scripture as the “present truth.”

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W. D. DAVIES
TRUMAN G. MADSEN

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

For Latter-day Saints, the concept of scripture entails two complementary definitions—a broad definition that embraces all revelation from God as “scripture,” and a narrower view that includes only the STANDARD WORKS as “the scriptures.” Both categories are authoritative, since both are viewed as coming from God.

The first definition uses “scripture” as synonymous with such terms as “inspired” or “divinely revealed.” Concerning those who have been called and ordained to proclaim God’s word, a revelation in the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS provides the foundation: “Whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” (D&C 68:4). In this light, Latter-day

Saints hold in high regard the words of Church leaders at all levels. Especially authoritative are the official pronouncements of the FIRST PRESIDENCY and the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES, who are sustained by Church members as “prophets, seers, and revelators.” Their writings and addresses—particularly in general conference—are cited frequently as guides for living and for authoritative interpretation of doctrine. Statements issued by the First Presidency represent the official position and policy of the Church.

Joseph SMITH taught that “a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such” (*HC* 5:265). Thus, the words of prophets carry the force of scripture only when they are uttered under the influence of the HOLY GHOST. Latter-day Saints freely acknowledge this divine influence in the teachings and counsel of leaders and deem it a privilege to be instructed by them. They consider this inspired direction to be “scripture” in the broad definition and endeavor to harmonize their lives with it.

The more restrictive view of what constitutes scripture would include only what is called “the scriptures”—that is, the four standard works: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These constitute the canonized, authoritative corpus of revealed writings against which all else is measured. President Joseph Fielding SMITH taught, “My words, and the teachings of any other member of the Church, high or low, if they do not square with the revelations, we need not accept them. . . . We have accepted the four standard works as the measuring yardsticks, or balances, by which we measure every man’s doctrine” (*DS* 3:203).

While the Church views its scriptures as a canon in a strict sense, they are not viewed as closed. The doctrine of continuing revelation is one of the fundamental beliefs of the Church. As was expressed by Joseph Smith, “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (A of F 9). While accepting “all that God has revealed,” whether canonized in the scriptures or not, Latter-day Saints also believe that revelation continues to enlighten their leaders. Moreover, additional divine guidance is anticipated because God “will yet reveal many great and important things.” Those future revelations will be scripture,

according to the broad definition, and it is likely that some of them will be added to the scriptures in due time.

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KENT P. JACKSON

WORDS OF LIVING PROPHETS

Any message that comes from God to man by the power of the HOLY GHOST is scripture to the one who receives it, whether in written or spoken form (*MD*, p. 682; cf. 2 Ne. 32:3). PAUL wrote to Timothy that “all [written] scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Further, every person may receive personal revelation for his or her own benefit. God, however, has always designated prophets to speak for him, thus resulting in holy writ or scripture. When Aaron was called as a spokesman for Moses, the Lord said, “And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be . . . to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God” (Ex. 4:15–16).

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe in continuous REVELATION, especially to prophets who direct the Church. This doctrine was announced in a revelation received through the Prophet Joseph SMITH in November 1831: “And whatsoever [the Lord’s servants] shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” (D&C 68:4). Inspired utterances of the Prophet and PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH have been and may in the future be added to the STANDARD WORKS by the COMMON CONSENT of the Church.

Latter-day Saints sustain the FIRST PRESIDENCY and the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES as PROPHETS, SEERS, AND REVELATORS. Since the prophet and President of the Church is sustained as *the* prophet, seer, and revelator, he is

the official spokesman who speaks on behalf of the Lord to the Church (D&C 21:4–5; 28:2). These other prophets, seers, and revelators have the right, power, and authority to declare the mind and will of God to his people, subject to the presiding authority of the President (D&C 132:7).

The inspired utterances of the President of the Church become binding upon members of the Church whether formally accepted as part of the written CANON or not. The living prophet's inspired words supersede and become more important to Latter-day Saints than the written canon or previous prophetic statements (D&C 5:10). The salvation and exaltation of members of the Church depend upon their adherence to this divine INSPIRATION through the living prophet, which comes as a VOICE OF WARNING to the world (D&C 1:4–5).

This doctrine appears in the Old Testament. For example, people could be saved from the flood only by listening to the voice of God through his prophet NOAH. Likewise, the Israelites were expected to accept and be responsibly obedient to words of Moses as if the Lord himself had spoken them (Deut. 18:18–22). The Lord also taught that “if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream” (Num. 12:6).

Early Christian emphasis on the “living voice” can be found in the writings of Papias (c. A.D. 130): “If anyone chanced to come who had actually been a follower of the elders, I would enquire as to the discourses of the elders, what Andrew or Peter said, or what Philip or Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples . . . say. For I supposed that things out of books did not profit me so much as the utterances of a living and abiding voice” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.4).

Latter-day Saints accept the doctrine that what God declares, “whether by [his] own voice or by the voice of [his] servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38). On the other hand, prophets have the right to personal opinions; not every word they speak is therefore regarded as an official pronouncement or interpretation of scripture. Only when they are inspired to speak to the Church by the Holy Ghost do they speak scripture. In order for a hearer to determine whether a prophet speaks thus, the power of the Holy Ghost must testify to the individual that the message is divinely inspired. The

Holy Ghost is given to all to know the truth of all things (Moro. 10:5).

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A. GARY ANDERSON

FORTHCOMING SCRIPTURE

Latter-day Saints believe that God “will yet reveal many great and important things” (A of F 9), that the heavens are not closed, and that God continues to “pour down knowledge from heaven upon [their] heads” (D&C 121:23). Forthcoming revelations are expected to include both ancient truths restored and new truths uncovered.

The scriptures specifically foretell the restoration of many books that will make known plain and precious things taken away from the world (1 Ne. 13:39–40). These include the BOOK OF ENOCH (D&C 107:57); an additional account of the events on the Mount of Transfiguration (D&C 63:20–21); the fulness of the record of JOHN and of visions about the end of the world (1 Ne. 14:18–27; Ether 4:16; D&C 93:6, 18); the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon, which includes the vision of the BROTHER OF JARED (2 Ne. 27:7–11; Ether 3:25–27; 4:7); the brass plates (Alma 37:4–5; *see also* BOOK OF MORMON PLATES AND RECORDS); a more complete record of the teachings of Jesus Christ to the Nephites (3 Ne. 26:6–11); and records of the lost tribes of Israel (2 Ne. 29:12–13).

How or when these scriptures will come forth is unknown, beyond the general belief that further revelations will come in the Lord's time when people repent, exercise faith, and are prepared to receive them (2 Ne. 28:30; Ether 4:1–12). Latter-day Saints believe that the world has seen only the beginning of the great doctrinal and scriptural restoration whereby God will “gather together in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:10). Heavenly and earthly records of all DISPENSATIONS are to be

gathered together (1 Ne. 13:41), and “nothing shall be withheld” (D&C 121:28).

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ROBERT A. CLOWARD

SCRIPTURE, INTERPRETATION WITHIN SCRIPTURE

The key to interpreting scriptural passages often lies in the body of scripture itself. For example, some passages from the Old Testament receive commentary and interpretation in the New Testament. Jesus Christ frequently taught from the Old Testament, not only giving interpretation—as in David’s need to eat the temple shew bread (1 Sam. 21:1–6) as justification for his disciples plucking wheat on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23–26)—but also often emphasizing that the scriptures testify of himself as Messiah (Luke 4:18–21; John 5:39). The additional scriptures that Latter-day Saints accept—the BOOK OF MORMON, the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS, and the PEARL OF GREAT PRICE—also cite and interpret the Bible. In fact, many of the clearest explications of doctrine arise from modern REVELATIONS or restored scripture.

In the Pearl of Great Price, the BOOK OF MOSES and the BOOK OF ABRAHAM augment the Old Testament Genesis account of the Creation (Moses 2–3; Abr. 4–5), affirm human AGENCY (Moses 3:17; 7:32), clarify the fall of Adam (Moses 4; Abr. 5), and explain the resulting need for a redeemer (Moses 6:59; cf. 4:1–2; 5:7–8). In addition, these two books add information on the claims of Satan and the choosing of Christ in the premortal world (Moses 4:1–4; Abr. 3:27–28) where all the spirits of mankind lived before their advent on the earth (see PREMORTAL LIFE).

In JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW, the Prophet Joseph Smith received clarification of the Savior’s discussion in Matthew 24 of the events to precede the fall of Jerusalem and those to precede Jesus’ latter-day coming. According to the JOSEPH

SMITH—HISTORY, MORONI₂ quoted Malachi 4:6 to Joseph Smith differently from the Old Testament version, suggesting that the phrase “the fathers” refers to the patriarchs, especially ABRAHAM, with whom God made covenants pertaining to Abraham’s posterity, who would bear priesthood ORDINANCES to the world for the exaltation of the human family (JS—H 1:39; D&C 27:9–10).

The Book of Mormon clarifies many of the writings of Old Testament prophets. The prophet NEPHI₁ quoted Isaiah 48–49 (1 Ne. 20–21) and then gave a plain commentary on the major points of those chapters in 1 Nephi 22, emphasizing that the NEPHITES were a remnant of scattered Israel, who would eventually be gathered with the aid of the GENTILES. In another example, about 148 B.C. the Nephite prophet ABINADI identified the “suffering servant” of Isaiah 53 as Jesus Christ (Mosiah 15:2–5) and enlarged on Isaiah’s discussion of the Messiah’s atonement (Mosiah 14–15).

The Book of Mormon also illuminates the SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matt. 5–7). In a similar sermon given in the Western Hemisphere (3 Ne. 12–14), the resurrected Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit *who come unto me*” (3 Ne. 12:3; italics added). Such added words, plus the context of Jesus’ address, indicate that one must come to the Savior through BAPTISM and righteousness to receive the blessings promised in the BEATTITUDES.

The Doctrine and Covenants offers explication on several obscure points in the book of Revelation that pertain to events of the Last Days, such as the gathering of Israel and their receiving priesthood ordinances (D&C 77:8–9, 11). Elucidation of biblical passages that focus on latter-day signs to precede Jesus’ second coming are found especially in Doctrine and Covenants 45 and 86. While pondering 1 Peter 3:18–20, President Joseph F. SMITH received a vision of the redemption of the dead (now D&C 138) that clarified and enlarged the Savior’s redemptive work in the SPIRIT WORLD following his crucifixion.

Much modern revelation came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in response to questions arising from his work on the JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (JST). For example, while meditating on the resurrection to life or damnation mentioned in John 5:29, Joseph Smith and Sidney RIGDON received the revelation on the DEGREES OF GLORY in the resurrection (D&C 76). Joseph Smith recorded several instances in which, while pondering a pas-