

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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

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today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another” (*TPJS*, p. 345).

Much of the LDS concept of godhood is expressed in a frequently cited aphorism written in 1840 by Lorenzo SNOW, fifth President of the Church. At the time, Snow was twenty-six years old, having been baptized four years earlier. He recorded in his journal that he attended a meeting in which Elder H. G. Sherwood explained the parable of the Savior regarding the husbandman who hired servants and sent them forth at different hours of the day to labor for him in his vineyard. Snow continued, as recorded in his sister’s biography of him: “The Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon me—the eyes of my understanding were opened, and I saw as clear as the sun at noonday, with wonder and astonishment, the pathway of God and man. I formed the following couplet which expresses the revelation, as it was shown me. . . . As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be” (Eliza R. Snow, p. 46).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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#### GOLD PLATES

On September 21, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph SMITH and instructed him about a record engraved on thin goldlike sheets. The record, written by MORONI<sub>2</sub>, his father MORMON, and other ancient inhabitants of the Americas, was buried in a stone box in a hill not far from the Smith residence. Moroni eventually delivered these plates to Joseph, who translated and published

them as the Book of Mormon and returned them to Moroni. While the plates were in Joseph’s keeping, others saw them, including eleven witnesses whose testimonies appear in all editions of the book. Various descriptions provided by eyewitnesses suggest that the plates may have been made of a gold alloy, measured about 6 inches by 8 inches (15.2 cm by 20.3 cm), were 6 inches (15.2 cm) thick, and weighed about 50 pounds (22.7 kg).

[See also Book of Mormon Plates and Records; Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith; Book of Mormon Witnesses; Plates, Metal.]

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#### GOSPEL OF ABRAHAM

On April 3, 1836, the keys of the “dispensation of the gospel of Abraham” were committed to the Prophet Joseph SMITH and Oliver COWDERY in the Kirtland Temple as part of the RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS in the DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES (D&C 110:12). It was promised that through latter-day recipients of the gospel and their seed, all generations who accept it shall be blessed (HC 2:434–36). This renewed the promise that was given anciently to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; Abr. 2:6, 9–11; cf. Gal. 3:7–9, 29).

Latter-day Saints teach that Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and many others headed DISPENSATIONS OF THE GOSPEL. Divine blessings and commandments were bestowed appropriate to the circumstances of the faithful people of God in each dispensation.

The gospel dispensation of Abraham includes the PATRIARCHAL ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD and the eternal marriage covenant (D&C 131:1–4; 132:28–30; see also MARRIAGE: ETERNAL MARRIAGE), by which the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT is perpetuated from generation to generation among the faithful. Abraham was given a promise of innumerable posterity both in the world and out of the world. This promise is renewed for all who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ and receive the priesthood covenant of celestial marriage, “and by this law is the continuation of the works of [the] Father” among mankind both in time and eternity (D&C 132:31–33). The restoration of all things included the restoration of the KEYS to Joseph Smith to make it possible in modern times for all who do