

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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*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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Ohio to Missouri for the purpose of recovering the land of their fellow Saints.

The other parable cited in the December 1833 revelation (D&C 101:81–91) is that of the woman and the unjust judge (Luke 18:1–8). The judge grants the woman’s suit because her continual pleading annoys him. Likewise the displaced Saints of the time were urged to “importune at the feet of the judge,” then the governor, then the president of the United States, until they obtained redress (D&C 101:85–89).

These parables, as well as others he employed (cf. D&C 35:16; 38:24–27; 45:36–38; 88:51–61), add a richness to Joseph Smith’s teachings.

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SUSAN HOWE

PARADISE

Paradise is a Persian word (*para-daeza*, meaning “enclosure”) that came into Greek and meant a pleasant place, such as a park or garden. Later it came to refer generally in scripture to that place where righteous spirits go after death. The word “paradise” is not found in the Old Testament, but occurs three times in the New Testament: Luke 23:43, where the Savior on the cross says to the thief, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”; 2 Corinthians 12:2–4, where Paul alludes to his vision of the third heaven and also to paradise; and Revelation 2:7, which describes the righteous who partake of the TREE OF LIFE in the midst of God’s paradise (cf. D&C 77:2, 5). The latter two uses of paradise seem to refer to the highest degree of heaven (the CELESTIAL KINGDOM) rather than to the SPIRIT WORLD. Another sense of paradise pertains to the condition of the GARDEN OF EDEN, which was paradisiacal in nature. Article of Faith 10 declares that “the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory,” which is to say that it will eventually return to the edenic state that existed before the FALL OF ADAM (see NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH).

The Savior’s reference to paradise in Luke 23:43 pertains neither to heaven, nor to a specific place of righteous spirits, but to the spirit world in general, since the thief was not prepared to enter into the abode of the righteous. It is a misconception that this passage justifies “deathbed REPENTANCE,” that is, the idea that one can delay repentance until death and still enter a heavenly condition. The gospel of Jesus Christ requires that persons use the gift of mortal life to learn to control appetites, thus preparing themselves to meet God and to acquire the divine nature (Rom. 8:29; Alma 34:32–35). The Prophet Joseph SMITH taught that the thief on the cross was to be with Jesus Christ “in the world of spirits” (he did not say paradise or heaven). “Hades, Sheol, paradise, spirits in prison, are all one: it is a world of spirits. The righteous and the wicked all go to the same world of spirits” (TPJS, pp. 309–310).

It is apparent from the scriptures, however, that even though the spirit world is one world, there exists a division between righteous and disobedient spirits. Luke 16:22–26 indicates a division and also a gulf fixed between the place of the righteous (Abraham’s bosom) and the place of the wicked (cf. 1 Ne. 15:28–29). Between his death and his RESURRECTION, the Savior visited the spirit world (1 Pet. 3:18–20; 4:6; D&C 138) and bridged the gulf by giving righteous spirits authority to cross the gulf and carry the gospel to the spirits dwelling in darkness. This darkness is sometimes referred to as SPIRIT PRISON, HELL, or even “outer darkness” (Alma 40:13–14).

The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants teach that paradise is the part of the spirit world where the righteous, those who in mortality obeyed God’s commandments and were faithful to their COVENANTS, await the resurrection. ALMA teaches that the spirits of the righteous “are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow” (Alma 40:12). It was in paradise that righteous spirits like ADAM, EVE, and ABRAHAM greeted the Savior on his appearance in the spirit world after his crucifixion (D&C 138:38–49). Paradise is a temporary condition. At the resurrection it “must deliver up the spirits of the righteous” (2 Ne. 9:13). Even though the righteous spirits attain to a greater state of rest and happiness (Alma 40:12) than is possible in this life, they look

“upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage” (D&C 138:50). When the Savior visited the spirit world, he taught these righteous spirits in paradise and “gave them power to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father’s kingdom, there to be crowned with IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE, and continue thenceforth their labor as had been promised by the Lord, and be partakers of all blessings which were held in reserve for them that love him” (D&C 138:51–52). As teaching and missionary work proceed in the spirit prison and ORDINANCES for the dead are performed in temples on the earth, the once uninformed and the disobedient but now repentant and purified spirits may enter into paradise and enjoy association with the righteous and the blessings of the gospel. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “There is never a time when the spirit [of man] is too old to approach God. All are within the reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, which hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. There is a way to release the spirits of the dead; that is by the power and authority of the Priesthood—by binding and loosing on earth” (TPJS, pp. 191–92).

[See also Spirit World.]

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M. CATHERINE THOMAS

PARMLEY, LAVERN WATTS

Martha LaVern Watts Parmley (1900–1980) served as general president of the PRIMARY of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1951 to 1974, a period when the Church was adapting its programs to serve the needs of a rapidly growing, worldwide membership. She was born January 1, 1900, in Murray, Utah, to LDS parents. LaVern served as a Primary teacher at age fourteen. She married Thomas Jennison Parmley on June 28, 1923. After her husband completed a doctorate at Cornell University in New York, the Parmleys returned to Utah. They were the parents of three children.

When she returned from New York, LaVern Parmley became a member of a STAKE Primary board. After serving on that board for three years, she was called as a member of the Primary General Board in 1942. Six months later, she was appointed second counselor to Primary President May Green Hinckley. She became first counselor to a new president, Adele Cannon Howells, a year later, a position she held until her call as Primary general president in 1951.

As president, LaVern Parmley was instrumental in adapting the Primary programs to meet a new set of challenges. When the Boy Scouts of America lowered its admission age to eleven, Church and Primary leaders discussed whether the Primary or the YOUNG MEN’S organization should direct the activities of the eleven-year-old boys. Although the National Scout Committee initially opposed having women leaders direct a scouting program, the Primary obtained permission for women to administer SCOUTING activities for boys until they turned twelve. The Primary also adopted Cub Scouting, thereby assuming responsibility for four years of scouting. LDS women



LaVern W. Parmley (1900–1980), fifth general president of the Primary Association, served from 1951 to 1974.