

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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

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ers characterize such messianic servants, Jesus Christ exemplifies these qualities perfectly (D&C 113:1–2). Jesus is the exemplar prophet, priest, and king. He identified himself as the PROPHET “like unto Moses” (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22–23; 3 Ne. 20:23) and was a HIGH PRIEST after the order of MELCHIZEDEK (Heb. 5:9–10; 7:15–22). Jesus is King of Kings (Rev. 19:16), greater than all other leaders of all time. Some see in Jesus Christ the complete fulfillment of the prophecy of a future David. Others feel that, while the titles and functions of the future Davidic king apply to Jesus, there will also be another righteous king by the name of David in the last days, a leader from the loins of Jesse (and thus of Judah).

VICTOR L. LUDLOW

DEACON, AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

Twelve-year-old LDS males usually receive the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD and are ordained deacons, continuing in that PRIESTHOOD OFFICE until age fourteen. Deacons receive assignments from their BISHOPS that may include distributing the SACRAMENT to the congregation, serving as messengers, collecting FAST OFFERINGS, providing assistance to the elderly or disabled, and caring for the meetinghouse and grounds.

Although the exact role of deacons (from the Greek *diakonos*, or “servant”) in the Christian church of the New Testament is not known, tradition indicates that they were ordained to their positions and were ranked below bishops and elders. Their duties apparently involved collecting and distributing alms and waiting on tables. Also, relatively early in the Catholic tradition, deacons may have assisted in the administration of communion and taken the sacrament to the homes of those who could not attend church. They also maintained church properties and read the gospel lection in Eucharist assembly. While closely associated with bishops in their service at the sacrament table, deacons were younger and were understood to be in schooling for greater service upon reaching maturity (Shepherd, Vol. 1, pp. 785–86).

The office of deacon was introduced by Joseph Smith at least as early as the Church conference held on June 9, 1830 (D&C 20:39). Some deacons may have been ordained at the organizational

meeting on April 6, 1830 (HC 1:79), but the records are not specific.

Latter-day scriptures provide that teachers and deacons are “to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59) and are to edify one another (D&C 20:85). Deacons may be ordained by any elder or priest at the direction of the local bishop, contingent on a worthiness interview and the sustaining vote of the congregation (D&C 20:39, 48).

Deacons are organized into quorums of twelve or fewer members, with one called as president, two as counselors, and another as secretary (*see* PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS). The BISHOPRIC assigns an adult adviser to teach and help train the quorum members to emulate the example of Jesus Christ in word and deed and helps prepare them for ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood and for missionary service.

Church-sponsored Boy Scout troops provide the major activity program for deacons in the United States and Canada, and give them important learning and leadership experiences (*see* SCOUTING).

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RONALD L. BRAMBLE

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

[*This entry has two parts:*

- Overview
- LDS Perspective.]

OVERVIEW

The major corpus of the Dead Sea scrolls, about 600 manuscripts, dates from c. 250 B.C.E. to 68 C.E. Other works from the Southern Jordan Rift, Nahal Hever and Nahal Seelim chiefly, date from 131 to 135 C.E. Masada produced materials from the first century B.C. to A.D. 73.

The manuscripts include segments of all the Hebrew scriptures (except Esther; *see* OLD TESTAMENT), and more than one variant of many. For example, the three Samuel manuscripts from Qumran are much fuller texts than those of the Masoretic Bible (the traditional text). Also found were fragments of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books, as well as manuscripts of previously unknown religious works, including a Temple Scroll, a Manual of Discipline, and a Thanksgiving Scroll.

The scrolls have required reappraisal of understanding in three categories: (1) the development of Hebrew scriptures before the formation of the CANON; (2) the dating and pervasive influence of APOCALYPTIC thinking; and (3) the religious milieu of the New Testament.

1. The “biblical” library of Qumran represents a fluid stage of the biblical text. Those documents show no influence of the rabbinic recension of the canon, the direct ancestor of the traditional Hebrew Bible. The scrolls help to place both the Pharisaic text and the canon in the era of Hillel, roughly the time of Jesus. In their selection of canonical books, the rabbis excluded those attributed to prophets or patriarchs before MOSES (e.g., the ENOCH literature, works written in the name of ABRAHAM and other patriarchs). They traced the succession of prophets from Moses to figures of the Persian period. Late works were excluded, with the exception of Daniel, which, the rabbis presumably, attributed to the Persian period.

2. The literature of Qumran includes apocalypses and works colored by apocalyptic. The writers saw world history in the grip of a final war between the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of evil; this conflict is at once cosmic and earthly. They considered themselves proper heirs of Israel and placed themselves under a new covenant as Sons of Light to contend with Sons of Darkness. They had a strict reading of the law, lived in daily self-denial, practiced ablutions, and had ceremonial meals. Their Manual of Discipline reflects the expectation of the immediate coming of the heavenly kingdom. A “Teacher of Righteousness” was apparently the priestly head of the earthly community of God; the forces of good were also led by a cosmic power or holy spirit called the “Prince of Light.” The writers saw their own age as the age of consummation. The Messiah was about to appear, “bringing the sword.” Collapse of other social structures was imminent before the new age. The people at Qumran, probably

Essenes, expected that the Davidic or royal Messiah would appear to defeat the earthly and cosmic powers of wickedness. Commentaries on the biblical materials, found in the same area, treat traditional prophecies in this eschatological setting. Theirs was a church of anticipation.

The Temple Scroll shows that these Jewish priests were separatists, maintaining that the Temple cultus was defunct. They replaced the lunar with a solar calendar for the festivals and introduced feasts of oil and wine mentioned nowhere in the Pentateuch. Considering themselves warriors in the last holy war, fighting alongside holy angels, they forbade all uncleanness (which in their view included the lame, blind, or diseased) both in the anticipated temple and in the temple city. At least for the duration of the war they were celibate.

Apocalypticism is now to be seen as a major element in the complex matrix that formed the background for the development of both Tannaic Judaism and early Christianity. Gershom Scholem shocked scholars of this generation by demonstrating the existence and importance of apocalyptic mysticism in the era of Rabbi Akiba. It is now necessary to place apocalyptic thinking as beginning earlier than scholars had previously supposed, perhaps as early as the fourth century B.C.E. and lasting half a millennium.

3. The New Testament reflects these apocalyptic theological tendencies that scholars heretofore passed over lightly. For example, it now appears that the thought and teachings of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth are more apocalyptic than prophetic in their essential character. The dualistic, apocalyptic, and eschatological framework marks John as the most Jewish of the four Gospels. In John’s Gospel the spirit of truth is called the Paraclete or Advocate. He is the Holy Spirit, but as at Qumran he is not precisely identical with God’s own spirit, which explains why he does not speak on his own authority (John 16:13). The emphasis on light and darkness, unity, community, and love is reiterated and expanded. The theme of religious knowing in an eschatological sense is comparable to statements in the epistles of Paul and the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of Luke quotes almost verbatim a pre-Christian apocalypse of Daniel, found in Cave 4, which refers to an eschatological king, whom we take to be the royal Messiah, from the titles “Son of God” and “Son of the Most High.” In the parable of the banquet in

Luke 14:15–24, Jesus condemns those who seek places of rank in his kingdom, perhaps in polemic response to the Essene exclusion from their banquet of all except the elite of the desert who shared their goods and were “men of renown.”

For the Essenes, the New Age was still anticipated. For early Christians, Jesus had been resurrected as the Messiah who brought the New Age. Both communities lived in anticipation of the full coming of redemption or the consummation of the kingdom of God. The Essenes formed a community of priestly apocalyptists. The early Christian movement was made up largely of lay apocalyptists, much like the Pharisaic party. Both searched the prophets for allusions to the events of their times, which they understood to be the “last times,” and both spoke in language pervaded by the terminology of Jewish apocalyptic.

FRANK MOORE CROSS, JR.

LDS PERSPECTIVE

Like many Jews and like other Christians, Latter-day Saints were deeply interested in the announcement that ancient manuscripts from New Testament times were discovered in Palestine in 1947. Initial zeal led to some superficial treatments, sensationalism, and misunderstandings. But in the decades since the initial finds, Latter-day Saints who have followed the more careful analyses have come to appreciate several contributions of the Dead Sea Scrolls, including insights into the literary and sectarian diversity of Judaism at the time of Jesus, new evidence relating to the history and preservation of the biblical text, advances in the science of dating Hebrew and Aramaic documents based on changing styles of script, and valuable additions to the corpus of Jewish texts and text genres.

Certain aspects of the scrolls have particularly interested Latter-day Saints. For example, the Essenes of Qumran accepted the concepts of continuing REVELATION and open CANON much as Latter-day Saints do, in contrast to the current teaching of most Christians and Jews. Qumran commentaries on the books of Habakkuk, Nahum, and other prophets from the Old Testament contain new Essene prophetic interpretations of world events of the LAST DAYS, and the Qumran Temple Scroll claims to be a direct revelation to Moses. Similarly, Latter-day Saints believe that the Bible does not contain all of God’s word, but that he has

revealed his will to prophets in the Book of Mormon and to Joseph SMITH, and he continues to reveal new truths to modern prophets.

Latter-day Saints point out that the Bible does not require or demand its own uniqueness. Now the Qumran library has shown that some of the most pious and observant Jews around the time of Christ consulted not only extrabiblical texts but also a variety of differing texts of the biblical books. For the Essenes, the sacredness of scripture did not impose a fixed or standard text. For example, their library contains several versions of the book of Isaiah, with minor differences in wording. They used both long and short versions of Jeremiah. They had varying collections of the Psalms. This open-mindedness about scriptural words and editions is similar to LDS views (*see*, for example, various LDS accounts of the CREATION). The Dead Sea Scrolls provide evidence that the successive theological concepts of (1) an authoritative text, (2) a fixed text, and ultimately (3) an inerrant text originated with Pharisaic or rabbinic Judaism.

Some people have made much of comparisons between Essene practices and those of the New Testament church, or between both of these and elements of Mormonism. For example, Essene cleansing rituals are in some ways similar to New Testament baptisms, and Essene ritual meals can be interpreted as sacramental. Some see the Christian idea of conversion in the Essene doctrine that an individual is elected to the community by deliberate choice and initiation rather than by birth and infant CIRCUMCISION. Some relate the Essene communal council, with its twelve men and three priests, to Jesus’ calling of twelve apostles and favoring among them PETER, JAMES, and JOHN, or to the Latter-day Saint organization with twelve apostles and a three-member FIRST PRESIDENCY. The role of New Testament or modern LDS BISHOPS seems to correspond to many of the functions of the Qumranic *maskil*, or “guardian.”

For Latter-day Saints, the emergence of such parallels is not surprising. The covenants of the Old and New Testaments are more alike than different (*see* DISPENSATIONS OF THE GOSPEL). They proceed from the same God. However, the similarities are counterbalanced by radical differences between Essene practices and the teachings of Jesus Christ, of Paul, or of the Church in modern times. Notably, the Essenes taught their adherents to hate their enemies. Their sect was strict and exclusive. Their ideas of ritual cleanness effectively

barred women from the temple and from the temple city of Jerusalem. Such Essene doctrines are opposite to later Christian and LDS teachings. Similarities between Essenism and Christian or LDS concepts should therefore be explained as a dispersion of ideas among groups that share ancient connections rather than as evidences of more intrinsic relationships.

Much is still to be learned from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many fragments and some scrolls remain unpublished or are not yet fully understood. Much light may yet be shed on ancient Jewish worship patterns, apocalyptic literature, angelology, and sectarianism beyond what is available in biblical accounts.

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For a more ample general statement, see S. Kent Brown, "The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Mormon Perspective," *BYU Studies* 23 (Winter 1983):49-66. Hugh Nibley discusses broad patterns in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon, Since Cumorah*, and *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, in *CWHN*, Vols. 6-8. For a listing of editions of the scrolls, see Robert A. Cloward, *The Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Selected Bibliography of Text Editions and English Translations*, Provo, Utah, 1988.

ROBERT A. CLOWARD

DEAF, MATERIALS FOR THE

The Church makes a serious effort to serve the hearing impaired with gospel materials in formats they can understand. These formats include simplified versions, signed inserts (interpreters superimposed on film who sign conversations and sounds), closed captions (words that show on the screen only when decoded), printed signs, productions with all-deaf casts, and Church manuals translated into signing for the deaf on videocassettes. Each Church film is signed or closed-captioned. All satellite broadcasts and special programs are closed-captioned. To use closed-captioned videos requires a decoder, which the Church provides to units serving the hearing impaired.

All general conference sessions are signed and closed-captioned. The deaf and hearing impaired who attend general conference in SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, are invited to the Church Office's auditorium to view the proceedings with an interpreter. Those who do not attend in person

may participate via closed captions on the Church's satellite network at their local meetinghouses. The sessions are also recorded on videos, with sign language inserts, and made available on loan. **TEMPLE ORDINANCES** are also presented in formats understandable by the hearing impaired.

A handbook for interpreters and a dictionary of words and phrases peculiar to the Church are available in print and on videocassettes. The Book of Mormon is being translated into American Sign Language (ASL) on videocassette targeted for completion in 1994. A current list of all materials, including their costs and how to order, is available on request from the Special Curriculum Department of the Church.

In a meetinghouse serving the hearing impaired, the Church provides a Com Tek System which amplifies the spoken language. The Church participates in supplying TTY/TDDs (telecommunication devices) for the deaf and hearing-impaired members to carry on Church functions.

DOUGLAS L. HIND

DEATH AND DYING

At death, the spirit and body separate and "the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life" (Alma 40:11; cf. Eccl. 12:7). **ALMA₂** describes how 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; *see* **PARADISE**; **SPIRIT WORLD**). In contrast, the wicked, who "chose evil works rather than good," suffer fear of the wrath of God (Alma 40:13; *see* **SPIRIT PRISON**). Both those who reside in paradise and those in the spirit prison await the **RESURRECTION** and the judgment of God (*see* **JUDGMENT DAY**, **FINAL**).

RESURRECTION FROM DEATH. Through the atonement of Christ, all mortals will be resurrected irrespective of personal righteousness. Their spirits will have their **PHYSICAL BODIES** restored to them, and thus there will be a permanent unity of the spirit with an immortal, incorruptible body (John 5:28-29; Alma 11:42-45). Except for the resurrection of Christ, "this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother