

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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

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God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17; cf. Matt. 22:21 and Luke 20:25). Paul uses the same irony when he calls the gospel a mystery (see Friedrich, pp. 712, 723–25; Eph. 6:19). The disappointment of some with Jesus as Messiah was precisely that he was not the kind of savior worshiped in the cults of emperors.

The Book of Mormon uses the terms "gospel" and "doctrine" interchangeably, in a way that is consistent with New Testament usage, at least to the extent that both imply communications that can be reduced to verbal statements (see DOCTRINE). The New Testament term "doctrine" (*didaskalia*) means "teaching" and refers either to the doctrine of Christ, or to the vain teachings of people or devils. Similarly, Book of Mormon writers use both "gospel" and "doctrine" to refer to a teaching that can be reduced to a set of statements or "points of . . . doctrine" (1 Ne. 15:14; Hel. 11:22).

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## GRACE

One of the most controversial issues in Christian theology is whether salvation is the free gift of unmerited grace or is earned through good WORKS. Paul's statement that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28) is frequently cited to support the former view, while James's statement that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20) is often quoted in favor of the

latter view. The LDS doctrine that salvation requires *both* grace and works is a revealed yet commonsense reconciliation of these contradictory positions.

C. S. Lewis wrote that this dispute "does seem to me like asking which blade in a pair of scissors is most necessary" (p. 129). And in one way or another almost all Christian denominations ultimately accept the need for both grace and works, but the differences in meaning and emphasis among the various doctrinal traditions remain substantial.

LDS doctrine contains an affirmative sense of interaction between grace and works that is unique not only as to these concepts but also reflects the uniqueness of the restored gospel's view of man's nature, the FALL OF ADAM, the ATONEMENT, and the process of salvation. At the same time, the LDS view contains features that are similar to basic elements of some other traditions. For example, the LDS insistence that such works as ORDINANCES be performed with proper priesthood AUTHORITY resembles the Catholic teaching that its sacraments are the requisite channels of grace. Also the LDS emphasis on the indispensability of personal faith and REPENTANCE in a direct relationship with God echoes traditional Protestant teachings. The LDS position "is not a convenient eclecticism, but a repossession [through the Restoration] of a New Testament understanding that reconciles Paul and James" (Madsen, p. 175).

The Church's emphasis on personal responsibility and the need for self-disciplined obedience may seem to de-emphasize the role of Christ's grace; however, for Latter-day Saints, obedience is but one blade of the scissors. All of LDS theology also reflects the major premise of the Book of Mormon that without grace there is no salvation: "For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Ne. 25:23). The source of this grace is the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ: "Mercy cometh because of the atonement" (Alma 42:23).

The teachings of Christian theology since the Middle Ages are rooted in the belief that, primarily because of the effects of the Fall and original sin, humankind has an inherently evil nature. In both the Catholic and the Protestant traditions, only the grace of God can overcome this natural evil. Various Christian writers have disputed the extent to which the bestowal of grace completely overcomes man's dark nature. In the fifth century,

reflecting his personal struggle with what he believed to be his own inherent evil nature, Augustine saw grace as the only escape from the evil of earthly pleasures and the influence of the worldly “city of man.” In the thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas was more sanguine, recognizing the serious wounding caused by original sin, but also defending man’s natural potential for good.

In the early sixteenth century, Martin Luther, through his reading of Paul and reacting against the sale of indulgences, concluded that faith, God’s unilateral gift to chosen individuals, is the true source of grace and, therefore, of justification before God. Luther thus (perhaps unintentionally) broke the medieval church’s control over grace, thereby unleashing the political force of the PROTESTANT REFORMATION. For Luther, man’s individual effort can in no way “earn” or otherwise be part in the righteousness infused by grace. Even the good works demonstrated in a life of obedience to God are but the visible *effects* of grace. This idea later influenced the development of the Puritan ethic in America. John Calvin, Luther’s contemporary, developed a complete doctrine of PREDESTINATION based on Luther’s idea that God unilaterally chooses those on whom he bestows the gifts of faith and grace.

The Catholic response to Luther’s challenge rejected predestination and reaffirmed both that grace is mediated by church sacraments and that grace cannot totally displace human AGENCY. At the same time, Catholic thought underscored the primacy of God’s initiative. “Prevenient grace” operates upon the human will before one turns to God; yet, once touched by grace, one is still free to cooperate or not. The interaction between divine grace and human freedom is not totally clear; however, grace is increased as one obeys God’s commandments, and grace raises one’s natural good works to actions of supernatural value in a process of spiritual regeneration.

In recent years, some Protestant theologians have questioned the way an exclusive emphasis on unmerited grace negates a sense of personal responsibility. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for example, condemned the idea of “cheap grace,” which falsely supposes that because “the account has been paid in advance . . . everything can be had for nothing” (*The Cost of Discipleship*, 1963, p. 45). John MacArthur was concerned that contemporary evangelism promises sinners that they “can have eternal life yet continue to live in rebellion against

God” (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, 1988, pp. 15–16). And Paul Holmer wrote that stressing the dangers of works is “inappropriate if the listeners are not even trying! Most Church listeners are not in much danger of working their way into heaven” (“Law and Gospel Re-examined,” *Theology Today* 10 [1953–54]:474).

Some Latter-day Saints have shared similar concerns about the limitations of a one-sided view of the grace-works controversy, just as they have shared the Catholic concern about a doctrine of grace that undercuts the fundamental nature of free will. Latter-day Saints see Paul’s writing about the inadequacy of works and “the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:27–28) as referring mainly to the inadequacy of the ritual works of the law of Moses, “which had been superseded by the higher requirements of the Gospel [of Jesus Christ]”; thus, Paul correctly regarded many of “the outward forms and ceremonies” of the law of Moses as “non-essential works” (*AF*, p. 480). As the prophet ABINADI declared in the Book of Mormon (c. 150 B.C.), “Salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, . . . they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses” (Mosiah 13:28).

In a broader sense, LDS devotion to the primary role of grace while concurrently emphasizing self-reliance stems from a unique doctrinal view of man’s nature and destiny. As noted by Reformation scholar John Dillenberger, “In stressing human possibilities, Mormonism brought things into line, not by abandoning the centrality of grace but by insisting that the [real] powers of humanity . . . reflected the actual state of humanity as such. . . . Mormonism brought understanding to what had become an untenable problem within evangelicalism: how to reconcile the new power of humanity with the negative inherited views of humanity, without abandoning the necessity of grace.” In this way, Dillenberger concluded, “perhaps Mormonism . . . is the authentic American theology, for the self-reliance of revivalist fundamentalist groups stood in marked contrast to their inherited conception of the misery of humanity” (p. 179).

In LDS teachings, the fall of Adam made Christ’s redemption necessary, but not because the Fall by itself made man evil. Because of transgression, Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden into a world that was subject to death and evil in-

fluences. However, the Lord revealed to Adam upon his entry into mortality that “the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt”; therefore, Adam’s children were not evil, but were “*whole* from the foundation of the world” (Moses 6:54). Thus, “every spirit of man was *innocent* in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, *innocent* before God” (D&C 93:38).

As the descendants of Adam and Eve then become accountable for their own sins at age eight, all of them taste sin as the result of their own free choice. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). One whose cumulative experience leads her or him to love “Satan more than God” (Moses 5:28) will eventually become “carnal, sensual, and devilish” (Moses 5:13; 6:49) by nature. On the other hand, one who consciously accepts Christ’s grace through the Atonement by faith, repentance, and baptism yields to “the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19). In this way, the individual takes the initiative to accept the grace made available by the Atonement, exercising faith through a willing “desire to believe” (Alma 32:27). That desire is often kindled by hearing others bear testimony of Christ. When this word of Christ is planted and then nourished through obedience interacting with grace, as summarized below, the individual may “become a saint” by nature, thereby enjoying eternal (meaning godlike) life.

Grace is thus the source of three categories of blessings related to mankind’s salvation. First, many blessings of grace are *unconditional*—free and unmerited gifts requiring no individual action. God’s grace in this sense is a factor in the Creation, the Fall, the Atonement, and the plan of salvation. Specifically regarding the Fall, and despite death and other conditions resulting from Adam’s transgression, Christ’s grace has atoned for original sin and has assured the resurrection of all humankind: “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression” (A of F 2).

Second, the Savior has also atoned *conditionally* for personal sins. The application of grace to personal sins is conditional because it is available only when an individual repents, which can be a demanding form of works. Because of this condition, mercy is able to satisfy the demands of justice

with neither mercy nor justice robbing the other. Personal repentance is therefore a *necessary* condition of salvation, but it is not by itself *sufficient* to assure salvation (see JUSTICE AND MERCY). In addition, one must accept the ordinances of BAPTISM and the LAYING ON OF HANDS to receive the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST, by which one is born again as the spirit child of Christ and may eventually become sanctified (cf. D&C 76:51–52; see also GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST).

Third, after one has received Christ’s gospel of faith, repentance, and baptism unto forgiveness of sin, relying “wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save,” one has only “entered in by the gate” to the “strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life” (2 Ne. 31:17–20). In this postbaptism stage of spiritual development, one’s best efforts—further works—are required to “endure to the end” (2 Ne. 31:20). These efforts include obeying the Lord’s commandments and receiving the higher ordinances performed in the temples, and continuing a repentance process as needed “to retain a remission of your sins” (Mosiah 4:12).

In the teachings of Martin Luther, such works of righteousness are not the result of personal initiative but are the spontaneous effects of the internal grace one has received, wholly the fruits of the gracious tree. In LDS doctrine by contrast, “men should . . . do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness. For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves” (D&C 58:27–28). At the same time, individuals lack the capacity to develop a Christ-like nature by their own effort. The perfecting attributes such as hope and charity are ultimately “bestowed upon all who are true followers . . . of Jesus Christ” (Moro. 7:48) by grace through his atonement. This interactive relationship between human and divine powers in LDS theology derives both from the significance it attaches to free will and from its optimism about the “fruits of the spirit” (Gal. 5:22–25) among the truly converted, “those who love me and keep all my commandments, *and* him that seeketh so to do” (D&C 46:9).

God bestows these additional, perfecting expressions of grace conditionally, as he does the grace that allows forgiveness of sin. They are given “after all we can do” (2 Ne. 25:23)—that is, in addition to our best efforts. In general, this condition is related less to obeying particular commandments than it is to one’s fundamental spiritual character, such as “meekness and lowliness of heart” (Moro.



8:26) and possessing "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (Ps. 51:17; 3 Ne. 9:20; Hafen, chap. 9). Or, as Moroni wrote at the end of the Book of Mormon, "If ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; . . . then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ" (Moro. 10:32–33).

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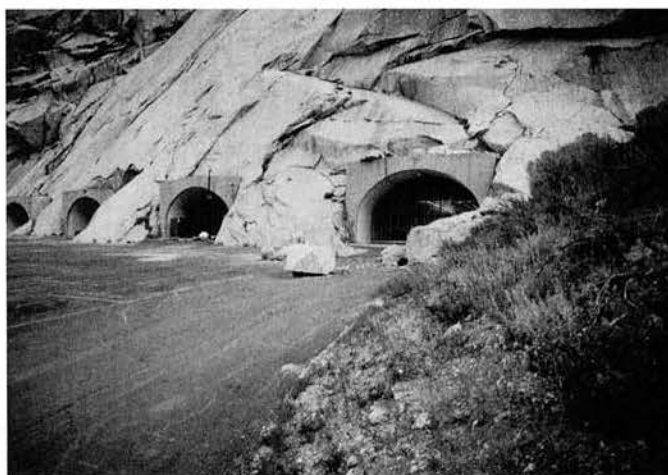
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## GRANITE MOUNTAIN RECORD VAULT

Since 1938, the GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF UTAH has been collecting genealogical and historical information on rolls of microfilm. The Granite Mountain Record Vault is the permanent repository for these microfilms. It is located about one mile from the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon in Utah's Wasatch Range, twenty miles southeast of downtown Salt Lake City.

The Vault, as it is commonly known, is a massive excavation reaching 600 feet into the north side of the canyon. Constructed between 1958 and 1963 at a cost of \$2 million, it consists of two main areas. The office and laboratory section sits beneath an overhang of about 300 feet of granite and houses shipping and receiving docks, microfilm processing and evaluation stations, and administra-



The Granite Mountain Record Vault, carved from solid rock in the Wasatch Mountains near Salt Lake City, Utah, is the repository of millions of feet of microfilmed genealogical records from around the world (c. 1980).

tive offices. Under 700 feet of stone, the Vault proper is situated farther back in the mountain behind the laboratory section and consists of six chambers (each 190 feet long, 25 feet wide, and 25 feet high), which are accessed by one main entrance and two smaller passageways. Specially constructed Mosler doors weighing fourteen tons (at the main entrance) and nine tons (guarding the two smaller entrances) are designed to withstand a nuclear blast. In the six chambers, nature maintains constant humidity and temperature readings optimum for microfilm storage.

Each chamber contains banks of steel cabinets ten feet high. As of February 1991, approximately 1.7 million rolls of microfilm, in 16mm and 35mm formats, were housed in two of the six chambers. The collection increases by 40,000 rolls per year. Alternate media, such as optical disks with greater capacity for storage than microfilm, are being considered for use and may make further expansion of the Vault unnecessary.

The genealogical information contained on these microfilms is collected from churches, libraries, and governmental agencies and consists primarily of birth, marriage, and death registers; wills and probates; census reports; and other documents that can be used to establish individual identities. Latter-day Saints use such information to assemble family group charts and pedigrees for the purpose of binding together ancestral lines of kinship through sealing ordinances performed by proxy in