

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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Edited by  
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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure  
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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DAVID F. BOONE

## PERSECUTION

Jesus told his followers that they would be persecuted, but promised them a great reward in heaven (Matt. 5:11–12). Latter-day Saints believe that righteously enduring persecution can bring blessings in both this life and the next. Although suffering is as unwelcome to Latter-day Saints as to any other people, they strive to respond with patience and faith and to avoid bitterness or revenge (Matt. 5:43–47; D&C 101:35; cf. 98:23–27).

Although Latter-day Saints claim no greater suffering than many others who have also been persecuted for their religious beliefs through the ages, many Latter-day Saints have been persecuted, beginning with Joseph SMITH (see JS—H 1:33). As the Church grew, persecutions increased; the Latter-day Saints faced threats, murder, rape, mayhem, property damage, and revilement in Kirtland, Ohio (1831–1838), in Missouri (1831–1839), and in the area of Nauvoo, Illinois (1839–1846), culminating in the assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage, Illinois, in 1844 (Hull, pp. 643–52).

The isolation and safety of the Great Basin in the American West, to which the main body of the Church fled beginning in 1846–1847, lasted only a few years before persecutions were renewed. The Great Basin area became part of the United States in 1848 after the Mexican-American War, and soon federal laws against the practice of plural marriage forced many Latter-day Saints into hiding or to settlements in Mexico and Canada. More than one thousand Latter-day Saints, mostly polygamous husbands, were fined and imprisoned. Ultimately, ANTIPOLYGAMY LEGISLATION disenfranchised the Saints and disincorporated the Church, allowing confiscation of Church property. After the 1890 MANIFESTO enjoining plural marriage, anti-Mormon persecution declined substantially, but other hostilities persisted.

Anti-Mormon literature has often incited and precipitated persecution, from early attempts to discredit Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, to recent films misrepresenting LDS doctrine. LDS missionaries have sometimes especially been persecuted. Some missionaries sent to England and Scandinavia in the 1830s and 1850s were confronted by mobs, threats, imprisonment, and physical harm. Several missionaries and potential converts were murdered in the United States at the height of antipolygamy agitation during the 1870s. As recently as 1990, two LDS missionaries were killed in Huancayo, Peru, by anti-American terrorists, and Church property was vandalized or destroyed in several South American countries.

Scriptural examples provide comfort and perspective to Latter-day Saints by showing that in God's eternal plan persecutions are sometimes allowed, with blessings then coming to the persecuted (Ivins, pp. 408–413). The biblical stories of Joseph (Gen. 37–46) and Esther (Esth. 2–9) demonstrate that faith can overcome persecution and bring honor to the persecuted. In the Book of Mormon, the Ammonites provide a poignant example of a people who became dedicated to righteousness, willing to suffer persecution and death rather than break their covenants (Alma 24). Many have also been comforted by the Lord's words to Joseph Smith when he was falsely accused and wrongfully imprisoned. Despite his many trials, the Lord reminded Joseph that the Savior had endured even more, and promised him, "All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7). He expanded the Prophet's perspective to eternity with the statement "Fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever" (D&C 122:9).

The LDS response to persecution is to temper sorrow and anger in accordance with scriptural counsel. The Savior's admonition to turn the other cheek (Matt. 5:39–42) is expanded in the Doctrine and Covenants: Great rewards are promised to those who do not seek retribution and retaliate, but the persecuted may seek for justice after they have suffered repeated offenses and given their adversaries adequate prior warnings (D&C 98:23–31). Patience and tolerance are admonished in the Book of Mormon (Alma 1:21) and in Articles of Faith 11 and 13. A true Latter-day Saint hopes to be reconciled to, and perhaps even to convert, an enemy.

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LISA BOLIN HAWKINS

## PERSONAL ANCESTRAL FILE®

Personal Ancestral File® is a genealogical software package produced by the Church for IBM-compatible, Macintosh, and Apple personal computers that enables users to organize, store, and search genealogical information; contribute genealogies to ANCESTRAL FILE™; and match and merge information from other genealogical data bases with their own files.

The package consists of three major programs: Family Records, Research Data Filer, and Genealogical Information Exchange. The Family Records program enables users to assemble pedigrees; group families together, showing relationships between family members for each generation; search pedigree lines; add, modify, and delete information about individuals; and display information on the screen and print it on genealogical forms. Research Data Filer helps users manage original research, including searching, sorting, and printing information by event, place, date, name of person, or relationship to others. Genealogical Information Exchange enables users to send Family Records data to another Personal Ancestral File user, prepare diskette submissions of names for LDS temple ordinance processing or contribution to Ancestral File, and copy data from one diskette to another.

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DAVID M. MAYFIELD

## PETER

Simon bar-Jona, later known as Cephas or Peter, became the senior and chief apostle of Jesus Christ. He was evidently the presiding officer over the ancient Church after Christ's death. In the present dispensation, as a resurrected being, he restored apostolic authority to the Prophet Joseph SMITH and Oliver COWDERY.

The New Testament contains more information about Peter than about any of the other apostles. This provides some indication of his ministry, his character, and his relationship to the Savior. In contrast to the sometimes impetuous younger Peter portrayed in the Gospels, the apostle's later ministry and epistles bespeak a mature leader of patient faith whose sincere concern is for the spiritual well-being of the flock that Jesus entrusted to him (John 21:15-17). Differences persist, however, in the portraits of Peter derived from the various biblical accounts, and these are extrapolated in scholarly analyses of the role and theology of Peter. Recourse to later Christian writings from the second and third centuries reveals other views about Peter's position in the pristine Church. It cannot be presumed, therefore, that all that is written about him is clearly factual.

Originally from Bethsaida, a small fishing port somewhere on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, Peter resided in the town of Capernaum with his wife and mother-in-law at the time of his apostolic call. Peter's given name was Simon and his patronymic, bar-Jona, identifies him as the son of Jonah (Matt. 16:17). The name Simon (*Simōn*) and that of his brother Andrew (*Andreas*) are derived from the Greek renditions of their names. Living in a region where, in addition to the native Aramaic, Greek was widely used as a language of business and trade, Peter may have been conversant with the tongue in which his scriptural writings were later penned. Although Peter was a fisherman by occupation, and despite the description of Peter and John by the elders of the Sanhedrin as being "without learning" (Acts 4:13), the Galilean apostles were literate men, probably without normal rabbinical training but with broad general understanding and capability.

Peter was among the first of Jesus' disciples. To him, then called Simon, was extended a special call, marked by the reception of a new name, which in Jewish tradition "denoted the conferring of a special divine mission" (Winter, p. 5). John