

mony” or “tabernacle of witness.” The ark within the tabernacle contained the tablets of stone with the Lord’s Ten Commandments, Aaron’s rod that budded, and a pot of manna. These were tokens of the spiritual power of God.

While most references to “witness” and “testify” carry legal meanings, one sees the additional revelatory sense of a witness in Isaiah’s revelation, in which he “saw” the Lord and heard the seraphim cry, gave him an understanding of bearing witness to prophetic matters that are beyond usual human experience (Isa. 6:1–7). Isaiah also recorded a divine commission in which the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, promised to gather his sons and daughters from the ends of the earth. As a result, Israel would come to know the acts of God on their behalf: “Therefore, ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God” (Isa. 43:1–12). Though afflicted and hated for their testimony, it would not be in vain: Generations to come would be blessed by it (Isa. 60:14–15). In another instance, the Lord instructed Jeremiah to purchase a plot of land from his cousin. He summoned legal witnesses, paid for the land with silver according to “law and custom,” and wondered why he should buy land falling to Babylon. The Lord explained that his purchase of land by a deed foreshadowed that later the people of the city would buy and sell land, a prophetic or spiritual witness of their future return from Babylon (Jer. 32:6–44).

**NEW TESTAMENT.** The terms “record,” “testimony,” and “witness” are used more than two hundred times in the New Testament. In speaking to Pilate, Jesus asserted that he had been born into the world to “bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37; cf. 1 Tim. 6:13). Further, one of Jesus’ discourses illuminating the basis of witnessing identified six foundations for a testimony: Jesus himself, John the Baptist, Jesus’ own works, the Father, the scriptures, and Moses (John 8:14; cf. 5:32–47). Just prior to his ascension, Jesus explained to the apostles that, after the Holy Ghost had come upon them, they would be “witnesses” to him in Jerusalem and the “uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). He had warned them they might be hated, afflicted, and killed for his name’s sake (Matt. 5:10–12; 24:9). The apostles’ association with Jesus during the post-Resurrection ministry satisfied the legal aspect of witnessing, but their testimony of his messianic character would be conferred and confirmed by the Holy Ghost. In a related vein,

one’s death could be viewed as a martyrdom for Christ, with eternal rewards to follow, as seen in Revelation 2:8–10; cf. 14:13. Certainly those true to the Savior, and redeemed by him, are his witnesses and are rewarded by him (Rev. 7:13–17).

**LATTER-DAY SCRIPTURE.** In the Book of Mormon, several persons die and are honored as martyrs. The prophet ABINADI is the most notable example (Mosiah 12:1–17:1). Others include the women and children of Ammonihah who were burned to death for their beliefs (Alma 14:1–10). At the death of those women and children, the prophet ALMA<sub>2</sub> assured his friend AMULEK that “the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory” (Alma 14:11).

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that “all they who have given their lives for [God’s] name shall be crowned” (D&C 101:15) and that the blood of the innocent ascends to God “in testimony” (D&C 109:49; cf. 98:13). In this connection, members of the Church refer to the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith as “the martyrdom of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and Hyrum Smith the Patriarch” (D&C 135:1). The Lord spoke through Brigham YOUNG that “it was needful that [Joseph Smith] should seal his testimony with his blood, that he might be honored and the wicked might be condemned” (D&C 136:39; cf. 135).

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## MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

Centuries before her birth, Book of Mormon prophets referred to Mary by name in prophecies of her vital mission (Mosiah 3:8). Describing her as “most beautiful and fair above all other virgins” (1 Ne. 11:13–20) and a “precious and chosen vessel” (Alma 7:10), they prophesied that Mary would bear the Son of God and was therefore blessed above all other women. “We cannot but think that the Father would choose the greatest female spirit to be the mother of his Son, even as he chose the

male spirit like unto him to be the Savior” (McConkie, p. 327).

Mary’s willingness to submit to the will of the Father was noted in the biblical account. When Gabriel announced that she would be the mother of the Savior, Mary was perplexed; yet she did not waiver in her humble OBEDIENCE and FAITH in God. Her response was unadorned: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).

Had Judah been a free nation, Mary could have been recognized as a “princess of royal blood through descent from David” (JC, p. 90). Being of that earthly lineage, Jesus was correctly called a descendant of David (see JESUS CHRIST IN THE SCRIPTURES: THE BIBLE).

As a faithful Jewish woman, she followed the customs of her day. At least forty-one days after giving birth to her first son, Mary went to the Court of the Women, where she became ceremonially clean in the purification rite, offering two turtledoves or two pigeons at the temple as a sacrifice (Luke 2:22–24). In the years that followed, Mary bore additional children by her earthly husband Joseph (Matt. 1:25; 13:55–56; Mark 6:3). One of them, “James the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:19), became a Christian leader in Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, Mary is mentioned in conjunction with the accounts of the youthful Jesus teaching in the temple (Luke 2:41–51), his turning the water to wine at Cana (John 2:2–5), his crucifixion (John 19:25–26), and as mourning with the apostles after Jesus’ ascension (Acts 1:14).

Doctrinally, Latter-day Saints do not view Mary as the intercessor with her son in behalf of those who pray and they do not pray to her. They affirm the VIRGIN BIRTH but reject the traditions of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, of Mary’s perpetual virginity, and of her “assumption” (cf. McConkie, p. 327). Mary, like all mortals, returns to the Father only through the atonement of her son Jesus Christ.

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## MATERIAL CULTURE

The artifacts of a society are known as its material culture. Latter-day Saints, like all other cultural

groups, have altered their physical surroundings to reflect their own worldview. Every object created or modified by members of a group is part of that group’s material culture. LDS material culture encompasses a particular constellation of objects, only a few of which are unique. But, taken together, they create what can be identified as a Mormon environment.

In parts of the American West settled heavily by Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century, the landscape reflects their peculiar approach to town building (see COMMUNITY; COLONIZATION). One of the top priorities for early settlers was the establishment of extensive irrigation systems that brought mountain water to every farm. Ditches were dug, and dams of a variety of designs were and still are used to divert water onto a plot of land in a rotating calendar of “water turns.” The influence of irrigation can be seen to this day in Mormon-settled areas where green fields, shady, flower-filled yards, and rows of Lombardy poplars mark the landscape, even in the driest desert areas (see AGRICULTURE).

A settlement pattern used frequently by Mormon pioneers has become known as the Mormon village (see CITY PLANNING; WARD), with homes and businesses situated closely around the central square, streets oriented toward the cardinal directions, and farm lands extending out around this settlement. Farmers left the village to work fields allotted to them by their ecclesiastical leaders. Designs of outbuildings and houses were based on settlers’ previous experience or on knowledge gained from neighbors through a process of oral tradition and example (see FOLKLORE). Hay was stacked with a “Mormon derrick,” a device that can still be seen in several variations although no longer used, in the Mormon-settled West.

The most distinctive Mormon architecture has been in religious buildings: temples, tithing houses, and meetinghouses, for instance. Important LDS symbols, such as the beehive; the sun, moon, and stars; and the all-seeing eye, appear on many of these structures.

Most material objects found in early LDS homes were similar to those found in other American homes. Ethnic origins of the makers often influenced furniture design. Some furniture built by Mormon craftspeople bore cultural symbols similar to those found on buildings. Prior to the coming of the railroad, locally made furniture was distinctive, mostly because it had to be built out of local softwoods rather than eastern hardwoods. Thus, spin-