

teen-year-old youth, on the night of September 21, 1823, and told him of the sacred records deposited in a stone box in a nearby hill (the hill Cumorah) in what is now Ontario County, New York, within a few miles of Joseph's home in Manchester Township. Moroni appeared to Joseph more than twenty times during the next six years, tutoring him for his calling as a prophet and giving counsel and information concerning the acquisition, translation, and guardianship of the Book of Mormon plates (Joseph Smith—History 1:27–54).

Moroni is frequently identified with the Church because portrayals of him blowing a trumpet, handling the gold plates, or instructing Joseph Smith are commonly displayed—for instance on LDS temple spires, on covers of several printings of the Book of Mormon, and in paintings. A depiction of Moroni with a trumpet is the official emblem on grave markers of American Mormon servicemen.

Moroni is commonly portrayed with a trumpet because of an interpretation of a prophecy of John the Revelator wherein he saw an angel heralding the return of the everlasting gospel to the earth in the last days:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters [Rev. 14:6–7].

[See also Angel Moroni Statue.]

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#### MORRILL ACT OF 1862

See: Antipolygamy Legislation

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#### MORTALITY

Mortality is not viewed as a curse by Latter-day Saints, but as an opportunity and an essential stage

in progress toward obtaining EXALTATION. The ultimate purpose of the period of mortality from birth to death is to prepare to meet God with a resurrected body of glory (John 5:25–29; Alma 12:24). Death is a temporary separation of the body and the spirit, and, for those who have striven to live in accordance with God's commandments, is not something to be feared: "Fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full" (D&C 101:36; cf. Mosiah 16:7; D&C 42:46).

Although mortality is a temporary stage of life, it is essential for an individual's ETERNAL PROGRESSION for two reasons. First, it is necessary to receive a PHYSICAL BODY. God the Father, in his perfected state, has a body of flesh and bone, as does the Son (Luke 24:36–39; D&C 130:22). Mortal men and women, as the spirit offspring of God, also gain physical bodies in mortality that are indispensable to their progress, and will rise in the RESURRECTION and be perfected (Job 19:25–26; Luke 24:39). Without a physical body one cannot have a fulness of joy.



*The Rod and the Veil*, by Franz Johansen (1975, cast bronze and resin, 84" × 99"). "The figure reaching through the veil suggests those in the spirit world concerned about our progress in mortality; the iron rod itself, reaching into both spheres, is the sure guide through mortality upon which all of us, like the slipping boy, must struggle to retain a firm grip" (artist's description). Church Museum of History and Art.

Second, this life is a period of development and probation, a time to overcome temptation or inclinations toward sin and corruption (Mosiah 3:19; *see* NATURAL MAN). Such inclinations can be given up through REPENTANCE, the ATONEMENT, and AGENCY (Mosiah 5:2). Mortals experience opposites—good and evil, happiness and bitterness, joy and misery—and have the opportunity to live true to the commandments and teachings of God. OPPOSITION is a fundamental feature of mortality, where human actions and choices are made within the possibility of doing wrong, where acceptance of the commandments and teachings of God is done in the face of opposition and temptation. While Latter-day Saints do not believe that perfection is possible in this life, they believe in working toward it in response to the injunction of Jesus Christ to “Be ye therefore perfect” (Matt. 5:48; cf. 3 Ne. 12:48). Through repentance and obedience they try to resist the temptations that beset them.

Inasmuch as mortal existence is a time of learning in order to make the greatest progress, each individual first must accept by faith the validity of God’s commandments and teachings, and then through experience gain a knowledge of their truth. People exercise agency in how they live their lives, even as they respond to the Spirit of Christ, which is given to all born into mortality. Thus all have the ability, when given proper instruction, including associations with those who are examples of the light and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to recognize and understand the laws of God (D&C 84:45–46; Moro. 7:16).

To all who are willing and who make the effort, mortality provides a vast opportunity for learning, for overcoming weaknesses, for repenting of wrongdoing, for correcting mistakes, for increasing in wisdom, and for progressing toward God. EVE recognized this when she declared that were it not for her and ADAM’s transgression, the human race “never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient” (Moses 5:11).

[*See also* Birth; Death and Dying; Evil; Fall of Adam; Joy; Life and Death, Spiritual; Man; Premortal Life; Purpose of Earth Life.]

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## MOSES

Few PROPHETS are more revered in ancient and latter-day scripture than Moses, who serves as a model of prophetic leadership not only in the Bible but also in the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price (see Luke 16:29–31; 24:27; 2 Ne. 3:9; D&C 28:2; 103:16; 107:91; Moses 1:41). Modern REVELATION confirms and amplifies the biblical accounts of Moses’ intimate association with deity, his role as seer, liberator, lawgiver, and leader of ISRAEL, and his connection with the books of the Pentateuch.

God chose Moses for his earthly mission in PREMORTAL LIFE (*TPJS*, p. 365). JOSEPH OF EGYPT, son of Jacob, prophesied that the Lord would raise up Moses to deliver Jacob’s descendants from Egyptian bondage (2 Ne. 3:9–10; JST Gen. 50:29, 34–35). His preparation for his monumental task began in his youth. Raised in Pharaoh’s court, Moses “was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” and became “mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). After fleeing from Egypt to Midian (Ex. 2:15), he married Zipporah. His father-in-law, Jethro, ordained him to the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD that had come down through generations of prophets (D&C 84:6–17). Known as “priest of Midian” (Ex. 3:1), Jethro descended from Midian, son of ABRAHAM and Keturah (Petersen, pp. 49–50).

Moses not only received instructions directly from God, as the Bible records, but he was also given inspiring revelations concerning God’s many creations (Moses 1:4, 33–35) and the earth and its inhabitants (Moses 1:8, 27–28). An account of these VISIONS was revealed to the Prophet JOSEPH SMITH in June 1830 as part of the JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (JST) and constitutes chapter one of the BOOK OF MOSES in the Pearl of Great Price. For Latter-day Saints, this stands as “the missing introduction not only to Genesis, but to the entire Bible” (Turner, p. 43).

The visions were given to Moses on a high mountain, “the name of which shall not be known among the children of men” (Moses 1:1, 42), after the event at the burning bush and before he led Israel from bondage (Moses 1:17, 26). Hence, they were received separately from the revelations of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 3–4; 19–20). The visions exhibit five themes: the greatness of God in comparison to humans (Moses 1:2–5, 8–11, 35–