

Heinerman, Joseph. "Early Utah Pioneer Cultural Societies." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47 (Winter 1979):70–89, discusses the Universal Scientific Society, the Polysophical Society, the Deseret Theological Institution, the Deseret Dramatic Association, and others.


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**SOCIETY**

[Mormon life is inseparably involved with people. See, generally: Children; Community; Family; Lifestyle; Marriage; Men, Roles of; Social and Cultural History; Social Characteristics; Socialization; Values, Transmission of; Vital Statistics: Women, Roles of; and Youth.

Belonging to the Church is the basis of many aspects of Latter-day Saint societal values and concepts. See Activity in the Church; Brotherhood; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Lay Participation and Leadership; Membership; Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, and Heresy; Senior Citizens; Sisterhood; Volunteerism; and Ward.

On the single individual in LDS society, see Dating and Courtship; Divorce; Individuality; and Single Adults.

For discussions of specific social topics, see various entries under Business; City Planning; Education; Family; Fine Arts; Folk Art; Folklore; Holidays; Humor; Language and Culture; Literature; Material Culture; Mental Health; Minorities; Music; Politics; Science; Societies and Organizations; Sports; Symbolism; and Welfare.

Social relations with members of other religious groups are treated under Interfaith Relationships; Non-Mormons, Social Relations with; and Tolerance.]

**SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES**

In the Old Testament, *Israel* met in solemn assembly on the seventh day of the Feast of the Passover (Ex. 23:14–17; Deut. 16:8, 16) and the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33–36; Neh. 8:18). The dedication of Solomon’s Temple occurred during the latter feast (2 Chr. 5:2–3; 7:9–11).

By commandment, the Prophet Joseph Smith convened a solemn assembly on March 27, 1836, in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE and in a nearby schoolhouse. During the meeting, the SAINTS sustained Joseph and other Church leaders in their CALLINGS, Joseph offered the dedicatory prayer for the new temple, and Church leaders instructed each other and bore TESTIMONY, which led to a rich outpouring of the Spirit of God (D&C 88:70; 105:4; *HC* 2:410–28).

Church leaders have called solemn assemblies for many purposes since then. The foremost is to sustain general Church leaders. Following the death of a PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH, the Church holds a solemn assembly in the Salt Lake TABERNACLE to approve and sustain its new FIRST PRESIDENCY. Church members participate at the Tabernacle and in other places where the proceedings are broadcast (see, e.g., *CR* [Apr. 1986]:93–95).

A second purpose is to dedicate new or refurbished temples. Worthy Church members attend dedicatory services, which are held in the temples themselves and in other nearby facilities (see DEDICATIONS).

A third purpose is to instruct and encourage Church members in their responsibilities. Such solemn assemblies generally take place in temples or STAKE centers. Church members invited to
these assemblies are usually PRIESTHOOD leaders. Sometimes in such assemblies the sacrament is served, but traditionally the main function is for those assembled to receive counsel from the presiding Church authorities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

RICHARD E. TURLEY, JR.

SON OF GOD
See: Jesus Christ: Names and Titles of

SONS OF PERDITION

In LDS scripture Lucifer and Cain are called Perdition, meaning “destruction” (D&C 76:26; Moses 5:24). The unembodied Spirits who supported Lucifer in the War in Heaven and were cast out (Moses 4:1–4) and mortals who commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost will inherit the same condition as Lucifer and Cain, and thus are called “sons of perdition.”

Perdition is both a place and a spiritual condition. As a place, it is synonymous with that hell to which both unembodied and resurrected sons of perdition will be consigned following the last judgment (2 Ne. 28:23; D&C 29:38; TPJS, p. 361). This future kingdom of the devil will be devoid of any of the Spirit and glory of God. (D&C 88:24).

The spiritual condition of those in this realm is described metaphorically as a lake of unquenchable fire and brimstone and as “a worm [that] dieth not” (Jacob 6:10; D&C 76:44). They will be “vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God” (D&C 76:33). God’s wrath will originate within them when they contrast his holiness and majesty with their own filthiness and ignominy (2 Ne. 9:14; Alma 12:14–17; Mormon 9:4–5; TPJS, p. 361). The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “A man is his own tormentor and his own condemnner. . . . The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone” (TPJS, p. 357). Fire and brimstone characterize the person, not the place.

The awful realization that they are truly damned, have lost all favor with God, have rejected all that he represents, and have lost the opportunity for repentance will be compounded by their subjection to Lucifer and Cain, who are consumed with like misery and frustration (2 Ne. 2:27; Moses 1:22). Such is the ultimate “damnation of hell” (TPJS, p. 198; see damnation).

Perdition is the second death: total banishment not only from God’s literal presence but also from the influence of his Spirit (2 Ne. 9:15–16; Hel. 14:18; D&C 88:32). Those who sin against the Holy Ghost commit the unpardonable sin and will suffer the fulness of the second death (Alma 39:6; Hel. 14:16–19). All others will be saved eventually in one of the degrees of glory (D&C 76:40–43; JD 8:154).

Sons of perdition are not merely wicked; they are incorrigibly evil. In sinning against the revelations of the Holy Ghost, they have sinned against the greater light and knowledge of God. They willfully and utterly pervert principles of righteousness and truth with which they were once endowed, and transform them into principles of evil and deception. Joseph Smith declared, “You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance” (TPJS, p. 358). No divine principle can cleanse the sons of perdition; following the last judgment, they will remain “filthy still” (D&C 29:44; 88:35). It is revealed that “it had been better for them never to have been born” (D&C 76:32).

Those who become sons of perdition while in mortality will be resurrected with unglorified physical bodies and “rise to the damnation of their own filthiness” (TPJS, p. 361). Cain, thus resurrected, will then rule over the unembodied Lucifer (Moses 5:23; MD, p. 109).

It has been suggested that in the absence of the life-sustaining powers of God’s Spirit, sons of perdition will eventually become disorganized and return to “native element” (JD 1:349–52; 5:271; 7:358–59). However, scripture declares that “the soul can never die” (Alma 12:20) and that in the Resurrection the spirit and the body are united “never to be divided” (Alma 11:45; cf. 12:18; D&C 93:33). The ultimate fate of sons of perdition will be made known only to those who are partakers thereof and will not be definitely revealed until the