

writings may confirm further the authenticity of the Joseph Smith translation known as the book of Abraham. A major question about its authenticity continues to revolve around whether Joseph Smith translated the work from the papyrus fragments the Church now has in its possession or whether he used the URIM AND THUMMIM to receive the text of the book of Abraham by revelation, as is the case with the translation of the scroll of John the Revelator, found in Doctrine and Covenants section 7, or the BOOK OF MOSES, which is excerpted from the JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE and is also found in the Pearl of Great Price. From these examples, it is evident that for Joseph Smith it was not necessary to possess an original text in order to have its translation revealed to him. In his function as PROPHET, SEER, and REVELATOR, many channels were open to him to receive information by divine inspiration.

[See also Book of Abraham Facsimiles.]

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## BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS

The Prophet Joseph SMITH and a council of HIGH PRIESTS collected the Prophet's early revelations in November 1831, into the Book of Commandments. They originally decided to print 10,000 copies of the book at Independence, Missouri, but later reduced this number to 3,000. As editor of the Church's newspaper called *The Evening and*

*The Morning Star* and of the Book of Commandments, William W. Phelps also printed some of the major revelations in that paper during 1832–1833.

Publication plans were frustrated when a mob destroyed the printing establishment on July 20, 1833, when Phelps had printed only five 32-page signatures. These 160 pages contained sixty-five revelations, the last of which was not completely typeset. Although fire destroyed most of these uncut pages, Church members salvaged enough to put together about a hundred copies, only a few of which survive today. The revelations in the Book of Commandments became part of a larger collection titled the Doctrine and Covenants, first printed in 1835.

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## BOOK OF JOSEPH OF EGYPT

See: Joseph of Egypt: Writings of Joseph

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## BOOK OF LIFE

In a figurative sense, the book of life is the complete record of one's life, the sum total of thoughts, words, and deeds written in the soul, of which the Lord will take account in the day of judgment (Rev. 20:12; Alma 12:14).

The scriptures also speak of a book of life, or "the Lamb's book of life," as "the record . . . kept in heaven" (D&C 128:7) in which are written both the names and deeds of the faithful. It is also the heavenly register of those who inherit eternal life (Heb. 12:23; Alma 5:58; D&C 76:68), "the book of the names of the sanctified, even them of the celestial world" (D&C 88:2; cf. Mal. 3:16–17).

In the Bible, the phrase "book of the living" appears first in Psalm 69:28, and the notion of a heavenly ledger is alluded to often (Ex. 32:32–33;

Dan. 7:10; 12:1; Isa. 4:3; 65:6; see also Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 21:27). Names of faithful Saints may be recorded in the book of life conditionally while they are in mortality (Luke 10:20) or “from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 17:8), but may be “blotted out” because of unrepented transgression (Rev. 3:5; 22:19; Alma 5:57; D&C 85:5, 11). Ultimately, only the names of those who qualify for eternal life remain written or “sealed” (*TPJS*, p. 9) in the Lamb’s book of life.

Latter-day Saints believe that essential items written in the “books yet to be opened” are linked to proper Church records, including those of essential gospel ordinances performed by priesthood authority for individuals and attested by authorized witnesses. In ancient covenant ceremonies, the names of the righteous were solemnly recorded, thus numbering them among “the living” (e.g., Num. 1:1–46; Mosiah 6:1–2). What is properly recorded on earth is recorded in heaven (D&C 128:7–8). Final sealing in the Lamb’s book requires, further, the approval of the Holy Spirit of Promise (D&C 132:19).

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## BOOK OF MORMON

[*This entry introduces the Book of Mormon, with the Overview describing its basic nature, contents, and purposes; a brief article follows on the Title Page from the Book of Mormon; and the remaining articles are devoted to a brief explanation of each book in the Book of Mormon.*]

### Overview

Title Page from Book of Mormon  
 First Book of Nephi

Second Book of Nephi

Book of Jacob

Book of Enos

Book of Jarom

Book of Omni

The Words of Mormon

Book of Mosiah

Book of Alma

Book of Helaman

Third Nephi

Fourth Nephi

Book of Mormon

Book of Ether

Book of Moroni

*The teachings of the Book of Mormon are discussed in doctrinal articles throughout the Encyclopedia; see Doctrine; Gospel of Jesus Christ. See also Book of Mormon Religious Teachings and Practices; Jesus Christ in the Scriptures: the Book of Mormon; Prophecy: Prophecy in the Book of Mormon.*

*Concerning its essential relationship with the Bible and other scripture, see Bible; Book of Mormon, Biblical Prophecies about; Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture; Isaiah; Scripture; Standard Works.*

*On the writing and composition of the Book of Mormon, see Book of Mormon Authorship; Book of Mormon Language; Book of Mormon Literature; Book of Mormon Plates and Records.*

*For information about its origin and publication, see Book of Mormon Editions; Book of Mormon Manuscripts; Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith; Book of Mormon Translations; Book of Mormon Witnesses; Manuscript, Lost 116 Pages; Moroni, Visitations of. See, generally, Book of Mormon Studies.*

*Separate articles can be found on Book of Mormon Peoples; Jaredites; Lamanites; Nephites; Women in the Book of Mormon; articles on the main individuals in this scripture are listed under Book of Mormon Personalities.*

*Internal aspects of Book of Mormon culture and civilization are discussed in such entries as Book of Mormon Chronology; Book of Mormon Economy and Technology; Book of Mormon Geography; Book of Mormon, Government and Legal History in; Book of Mormon, History of Warfare in; Jesus Christ: Forty-Day Ministry and Other Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Christ; Liahona; Secret Combinations; Sword of Laban; Three Nephites; Tree of Life.]*

## OVERVIEW

The Prophet Joseph SMITH called the Book of Mormon “the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion” and said that a person “would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*TPJS*, p. 194), for it contains the fulness of the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST (D&C 20:8–9). To members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon forms the doctrinal foundation of the Church and speaks the word of God to all the world.

The Book of Mormon both confirms and supplements the Bible: “Behold, this [the Book of Mormon] is written for the intent that ye may believe that [the Bible]; and if ye believe [the Bible] ye will believe [the Book of Mormon] also” (Morm.