

# JESUS THE CHRIST

*A Study of the Messiah and His Mission according to  
Holy Scriptures both Ancient and Modern*

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## **PREFACE**

The scope of the subject presented in this work is expressed on the title page. It will be readily seen that the author has departed from the course usually followed by writers on the Life of Jesus Christ, which course, as a rule, begins with the birth of Mary's Babe and ends with the ascension of the slain and risen Lord from Olivet. The treatment embodied in these pages, in addition to the narrative of the Lord's life in the flesh comprises the Antemortal existence and activities of the world's Redeemer, the revelations and personal manifestations of the glorified and exalted Son of God during the apostolic period of old and in modern times, the assured nearness of the Lord's second advent, and predicted events beyond—all so far as the Holy Scriptures make plain.

It is particularly congruous and appropriate that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the only Church that affirms authority based on specific revelation and commission to use the Lord's Holy Name as a distinctive designation—should set forth her doctrines concerning the Messiah and His mission.

The author of this volume entered upon his welcome service under request and appointment from the presiding authorities of the Church; and the completed work has been read to and is approved by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. It presents, however, the writer's personal belief and profoundest conviction as to the truth of what he has written. The book is published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A characteristic feature of the work is the guidance afforded by modern scriptures and the explication of the Holy Writ of olden times in the light of present day revelation, which, as a powerful and well directed beam, illumines many dark passages of ancient construction.

The spirit of the sacredness inherent in the subject has been a constant companion of the writer throughout his pleasing labor, and he reverently invokes the same as a minister to the readers of the volume.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.  
Salt Lake City, Utah,  
September, 1915.

## **PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION**

The second edition of this work appeared in December, 1915, and the third in March, 1916. The third edition presented several minor alterations in wording and contained additional notes and references. Succeeding issues, including the fifth which was printed on India paper, and the present edition are practically uniform with the third.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.  
Salt Lake City, Utah,  
October, 1922.

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# 39

## MINISTRY OF THE RESURRECTED CHRIST ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

By considering the apostolic ministry in immediate sequence to our study of the Lord's ascension from the Mount of Olives, we have departed from the chronological order of the several personal manifestations of the risen Savior to mortals; for very soon after His final farewell to the apostles in Judea He visited His "other sheep," not of the eastern fold, whose existence He had affirmed in that impressive sermon concerning the Good Shepherd and His sheep.[1452] Those other sheep who were to hear the Shepherd's voice and eventually be made part of the united fold, were the descendants of Lehi who, with his family and a few others, had left Jerusalem 600 B.C. and had crossed the great deep to what we now know as the American continent, whereon they had grown to be a mighty though a divided people.[1453]

### THE LORD'S DEATH SIGNALIZED BY GREAT CALAMITIES ON THE AMERICAN CONTINENT

As already set forth in these pages, the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem had been made known to the Nephite nation on the western hemisphere by divine revelation; and the glad event had been marked by the appearance of a new star, by a night devoid of darkness so that two days and the night between had been as one day, and by other wonderful occurrences, all of which had been predicted through the prophets of the western world.[1454] Samuel the Lamanite, who through faithfulness and good works had become a prophet, mighty in word and deed, duly chosen and commissioned of God, had coupled with his predictions of the glorious occurrences that were to mark the birth of Christ, prophecies of other signs – of darkness, terror, and destruction – by which the Savior's death on the cross would be signalized.[1455] Every prophetic word concerning the phenomena that were to attend the Lord's birth had been fulfilled; and many people had been brought thereby to believe in Christ as the promised Redeemer; but, as is usual with those whose belief rests on miracles, many among the Nephites **"began to forget those signs and wonders which they had heard, and began to be less and less astonished at a sign or a wonder from heaven, insomuch that they began to be hard in their hearts, and blind in their minds, and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen."**[1456]

Thirty and three years had sped their course since the illumined night and the other signs of Messiah's advent; then, on the fourth day of the first month, or, according to our calendar, during the first week of April, in the thirty-fourth year, there arose a great

and terrible tempest, with thunderings, lightnings, and both elevations and depressions of the earth's surface, so that the highways were broken up, mountains were sundered, and many cities were utterly destroyed by earthquake, fire, and the inrush of the sea. For three hours the unprecedented holocaust continued; and then thick darkness fell, in the which it was found impossible to kindle a fire; the awful gloom was like unto the darkness of Egypt[1457] in that its clammy vapors could be felt. This condition lasted until the third day, so that a night a day and a night were as one unbroken night, and the impenetrable blackness was rendered the more terrible by the wailing of the people, whose heart-rending refrain was everywhere the same, "O that we had repented before this great and terrible day."[1458]

Then, piercing the darkness, came a Voice,[1459] before which the frightful chorus of human lamentation was silenced; "**Wo, wo, wo unto this people**" resounded throughout the land. The Voice proclaimed increasing woes except the people should repent. Destruction had befallen because of wickedness, and the devil was then laughing over the number of the dead and the retributive cause of their destruction. The extent of the dread calamity was detailed; cities that had been burned with their inhabitants, others that had sunk into the sea, yet others buried in the earth, were enumerated; and the divine reason for this widespread destruction was plainly set forth – that the wickedness and abominations of the people might be hidden from the face of the earth. Those who had lived to hear were declared to be the more righteous of the inhabitants; and to them hope was offered on conditions of more thorough repentance and reformation.

The identity of the Voice was thus made known: "**Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.**" The Lord commanded that the people should no longer serve Him with bloody sacrifices and burnt offerings; for the law of Moses was fulfilled; and thenceforth the only acceptable sacrifice would be the broken heart and the contrite spirit; and such should never be rejected. The humble and repentant the Lord would receive as His own. "**Behold,**" He said, "**for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved.**"

The Voice ceased; and through the space of many hours of continuing darkness vociferous lamentations were hushed, for the people were convicted of their guilt and silently wept in astonishment over what they had heard, and in hopeful anticipation of the salvation that had been offered. A second time the Voice was heard, as in sorrow over those who had refused to accept the Savior's succor; for often had He protected them, more often would He have so done had they been willing, and yet in the future would He cherish them, "**as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings**" if they would repent and live in righteousness. On the morning of the third day the darkness

dispersed, seismic disturbances ceased, and the storms abated. As the pall was lifted from the land the people saw how profound had been the convulsions of earth, and how great had been their loss of kindred and friends. In their contrition and humiliation they remembered the predictions of the prophets, and knew that the mandate of the Lord had been executed upon them.[1460]

Christ had risen; and following Him many of the righteous dead on the western continent rose from their graves, and appeared as resurrected, immortalized beings among the survivors of the land-wide destruction; even as in Judea many of the saints had been raised immediately after the resurrection of Christ.[1461]

### **FIRST VISITATION OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE NEPHITES [1462]**

About six weeks or more after the events last considered, [1463] a great multitude of the Nephites had assembled at the temple in the land called Bountiful, [1464] and were earnestly discoursing with one another over the great changes that had been wrought in the land, and particularly concerning Jesus Christ, of whose atoning death the predicted signs had been witnessed in all their tragic details. The prevailing spirit of the assembly was that of contrition and reverence. While thus congregated they heard a sound as of a Voice from above; but both a first and a second utterance were to them unintelligible. As they listened with rapt intentness, the Voice was heard a third time, and it said unto them: "*Behold my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name: hear ye him.*" [1465]

While gazing upward in reverent expectation, the people beheld a Man, clothed in a white robe, who descended and stood among them. He spake, saying: "**Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world; and behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.**" The multitude prostrated themselves in adoration for they remembered that their prophets had foretold that the Lord would appear among them after His resurrection and ascension.[1466]

As He directed, the people arose, and one by one came to Him, and did see and feel the prints of the nails in His hands and feet, and the spear-wound in His side. Moved to adoring utterance, with one accord they cried: "**Hosanna! blessed be the name of the Most High God!**" then, falling at the feet of Jesus, they worshiped Him.

Summoning Nephi and eleven others to approach, the Lord gave them authority to baptize the people after His departure, and prescribed the mode of baptism with particular injunction against disputation in the matter or alteration of the given form, as witness the Lord's words:

**"Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them: behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying, Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name, for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one. And according as I have commanded you thus shall ye baptize. And there shall be no disputations among you, as there hath hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there hath hitherto been."**[1467]

The people in general, and particularly the Twelve, chosen as stated, were impressively warned against contention over matters of doctrine, the spirit of which was declared to be of the devil, "who is the father of contention." The doctrine of Jesus Christ was set forth in simple yet comprehensive summary in these words:

**"Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine. And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me, and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men: everywhere, to repent and believe in me; And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned."**[1468]

Repentance, and humility akin to that of the innocent trusting child were the prerequisites for baptism, without which none could inherit the kingdom of God. With the incisiveness and simplicity that had characterized His teachings in Palestine, the Lord thus instructed His newly chosen Twelve:

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this, buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock, but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell standeth open to receive such, when the floods come and the winds beat upon them. Therefore go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken unto the ends of the earth."**[1469]

Then, turning to the multitude, Jesus admonished them to give heed to the teachings of the Twelve, and continued with a discourse embodying the sublime principles He had taught among the Jews in the Sermon on the Mount. [1470] The Beatitudes, the Lord's

Prayer, and the same splendid array of ennobling precepts are set forth, and the same wealth of effective comparison and apt illustration appear, in both Matthew's and Nephi's versions of this unparalleled address; but a significant difference is observed in every reference to the fulfillment of the Mosaic law; for where the Jewish scriptures record the Lord's words as pointing to a fulfillment then incomplete, the corresponding expressions in the Nephite account are in the past tense, the law having been already fulfilled in its entirety through the death and resurrection of Christ. Thus, to the Jews Jesus had said: "**Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled**"; but to the Nephites: "**For verily I say unto you, one jot nor one tittle hath not passed away from the law, but in me it hath all been fulfilled.**"[1471]

Many marveled over this matter, wondering what the Lord would have them do concerning the law of Moses; "**for they understood not the saying that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new.**" Jesus, conscious of their perplexity, proclaimed in plainness that He was the Giver of the law, and that by Him had it been fulfilled and therefore abrogated. His affirmation is particularly explicit:

**"Behold I say unto you, that the law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel: therefore, the law in me is fulfilled, for I have come to fulfil the law; therefore it hath an end. Behold, I do not destroy the prophets, for as many as have not been fulfilled in me, verily I say unto you, shall all be fulfilled. And because I said unto you, that old things hath passed away, I do not destroy that which hath been spoken concerning things which are to come. For behold, the covenant which I have made with my people is not all fulfilled; but the law which was given unto Moses, hath an end in me."**[1472]

Addressing Himself to the Twelve He affirmed that never had the Father commanded Him to inform the Jews concerning the existence of the Nephites, except indirectly by mention of other sheep not of the Jewish fold; and as, "**because of stiffneckedness and unbelief**," they had failed to comprehend His words, the Father had commanded Him to say no more with reference either to the Nephites or to the third fold — comprising "**the other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land.**" To the Nephite disciples Jesus taught many other matters that had been withheld from the Jews, who through unfitness to receive had been left in ignorance. Even the Jewish apostles had wrongly supposed that those "other sheep" were the Gentile nations, not realizing that the carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles was part of their particular mission, and oblivious to the fact that never would Christ manifest Himself in person to those who were not of the house of Israel. Through the promptings of the Holy Ghost and under the ministrations of men commissioned and sent would the Gentiles hear the word of God; but to the personal manifestation of the Messiah they were ineligible.[1473] Great, however, will be the Lord's mercies and blessings to the

Gentiles who accept the truth, for unto them the Holy Ghost shall bear witness of the Father and of the Son; and all of them who comply with the laws and ordinances of the gospel shall be numbered in the house of Israel. Their conversion and enfoldment with the Lord's own will be as individuals, and not as nations, tribes, or peoples.[1474]

The adoring multitude, numbering about two thousand five hundred souls, thought that Jesus was about to depart; and they tearfully yearned to have Him remain. He comforted them with the assurance that He would return on the morrow, and admonished them to ponder upon the things He had taught, and to pray in His name to the Father for understanding. He had already informed the Twelve, and now stated to the people, that He would show Himself and minister **"unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for he knoweth whither he hath taken them."**

Voicing the compassion He felt, the Lord directed the people to fetch their afflicted ones, the lame, halt, maimed, blind and deaf, the leprous, and the withered; and when these were brought He healed them, every one. Then, as He commanded, parents brought their little children, and placed them in a circle around Him. The multitude bowed in prayer; and Jesus prayed for them; **"And,"** wrote Nephi, **"no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvellous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father."** The prayer being ended, Jesus bade the multitude arise; and joyfully He exclaimed: **"Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full."** Jesus wept. Then He took the children, one by one, and blessed them, praying unto the Father for each.

**"And when he had done this he wept again, and he spake unto the multitude, and saith unto them, behold your little ones. And as they looked to behold, they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were, in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them."**[1475]

The Lord Jesus sent for bread and wine, and caused the people to sit down. The bread He brake and blessed, and gave thereof to the Twelve; these, having eaten, distributed bread to the multitude. The wine was blessed, and all partook, the Twelve first, and afterward the people. With impressiveness similar to that attending the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper among the apostles in Jerusalem, Jesus made plain the sanctity and significance of the ordinance, saying that authority for its future administration would be given; and that it was to be participated in by all who had been baptized into fellowship with Christ, and was always to be observed in remembrance of Him, the bread being the sacred emblem of His body, the wine the token of His blood that had been shed. By express commandment, the Lord forbade the sacrament of bread and wine to all but the worthy; **"For,"** He explained, **"whoso eateth**

**and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood, ye shall forbid him."** But the people were forbidden to cast out from their assemblies those from whom the Sacrament was to be withheld, if so be they would but repent and seek fellowship through baptism.[1476]

The necessity of prayer was explicitly emphasized by the Lord, the commandment to pray being given to the Twelve and to the multitude separately. Individual supplication, family devotions, and congregational worship were thus enjoined:

**"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name; and whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you. Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed. And behold, ye shall meet together oft, and ye shall not forbid any man from coming unto you when ye shall meet together, but suffer them that they may come unto you, and forbid them not; but ye shall pray for them, and shall not cast them out; and if it so be that they come unto you oft, ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name."**[1477]

The Lord then touched with His hand each of the Twelve, investing them, in words unheard by others, with power to confer the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands upon all repentant and baptized believers.[1478] As he finished the ordination of the Twelve, a cloud overshadowed the people, so that the Lord was hidden from their sight; but the twelve disciples "saw and did bear record that he ascended again into heaven."

## **CHRIST'S SECOND VISITATION TO THE NEPHITES [1479]**

On the morrow a yet greater multitude assembled in expectation of the Savior's return. Throughout the night messengers had spread the glorious tidings of the Lord's appearing, and of His promise to again visit His people. So great was the assembly that Nephi and his associates caused the people to separate into twelve bodies, to each of which one of the disciples was assigned to impart instruction and to lead in prayer. The burden of supplication was that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them. Led by the chosen disciples the whole vast concourse approached the water's edge, and Nephi, going first, was baptized by immersion; he then baptized the eleven others whom Jesus had chosen. When the Twelve had come forth out of the water, "they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And behold, they were encircled about as if it were fire; and it came down from heaven, and the multitude did witness it, and do bear record; and angels did come down out of heaven, and did minister unto them. And it came to pass that while the angels were ministering unto the disciples, behold, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and ministered unto them."[1480]

Thus Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples and ministering angels. At His command the Twelve and the multitude knelt in prayer; and they prayed unto Jesus, calling Him their Lord and their God. Jesus separated Himself by a little space, and in humble attitude prayed, saying in part: "**Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen; and it is because of their belief in me, that I have chosen them out of the world. Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words.**" The disciples were yet fervently praying to Jesus when He returned to them; and as He looked upon them with merciful and approving smile, they were glorified in His presence, so that their countenances and their apparel shone with a brilliancy like unto that of the face and garments of the Lord, even so that "**there could be nothing on earth so white as the whiteness thereof.**" A second and a third time Jesus retired and prayed unto the Father; and while the people comprehended the meaning of His prayer, they confessed and bare record that "**so great and marvellous were the words which he prayed, that they cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man.**" The Lord rejoiced in the faith of the people, and to the disciples He said: "**So great faith have I never seen among all the Jews; wherefore I could not shew unto them so great miracles, because of their unbelief. Verily I say unto you, there are none of them that have seen so great things as ye have seen; neither have they heard so great things as ye have heard.**"[1481] Then the Lord administered the Sacrament in manner as on the yesterday; but both the bread and the wine were provided without human aid. The sanctity of the ordinance was thus expressed: "**He that eateth this bread, eateth of my body to his soul, and he that drinketh of this wine, drinketh of my blood to his soul, and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled.**"

This was followed by instructions concerning the covenant people, Israel, of whom the Nephites were a part, and of the relation they would bear to the Gentile nations in the future development of the divine purpose. Jesus declared Himself to be that Prophet whose coming Moses had foretold, and the Christ of whom all the prophets had testified. The temporary supremacy of the Gentiles, whereby the further scattering of Israel would be accomplished, and the eventual gathering of the covenant people, were predicted, with frequent reference to the inspired utterances of Isaiah bearing thereon.[1482] The future of Lehi's descendants was pictured as a dwindling in unbelief through iniquity; in consequence of which the Gentiles would grow to be a mighty people on the western continent, even though that land had been given as an ultimate inheritance to the house of Israel. The establishment of the then future but now existent American nation, characterized as "a free people," was thus foretold and God's purpose therein explained: "**For it is wisdom in the Father that they should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel.**"[1483]

As a sign of the time in which the gathering of the several branches of Israel from their long dispersion should take place, the Lord specified the prosperity of the Gentiles in America, and their agency in bringing the scriptures to the degraded remnant of Lehi's posterity or the American Indians.[1484] It was made plain that all Gentiles who would repent, and accept the gospel of Christ through baptism, should be numbered among the covenant people and be made partakers of the blessings incident to the last days, in which the New Jerusalem would be established on the American continent. The joyful account of gathered Israel as Jehovah had given it aforetime through the mouth of His prophet Isaiah, was repeated by the resurrected Jehovah to His Nephite flock.[1485] Admonishing them to ponder the words of the prophets, which were of record amongst them, and to give heed to the new scriptures He had made known, and especially commanding the Twelve to teach the people further concerning the things He had expounded, the Lord informed them of the revelations given through Malachi, and directed that the same be written.[1486]

The prophecies so reiterated by Him who had inspired Malachi to utterance, were at that time obviously of the future, and are even yet unfulfilled in their entirety. The advent of the Lord, to which these scriptures testify, is yet future; but that the time is now near – that "great and dreadful day of the Lord" – is attested by the fact that Elijah who was to come before that day, has appeared in the discharge of his particular commission – that of turning the hearts of the living children to their dead progenitors, and the hearts of the departed fathers to their still mortal posterity.[1487]

The personal ministry of Christ on the occasion of this second visitation lasted three days, during which He gave the people many scriptures, such as had been before given unto the Jews, for so the Father had commanded; and He expounded unto them the purposes of God, from the beginning until the time at which Christ shall return in His glory; "And even unto the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues shall stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil; if they be good, to the resurrection of everlasting life; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of damnation, being on a parallel, the one on the one hand, and the other on the other hand, according to the mercy, and the justice, and the holiness which is in Christ, who was before the world began." In merciful ministrations He healed their afflicted folk, and raised a man from the dead. At later but unspecified times, He showed Himself among the Nephites, and "did break bread oft, and bless it, and give it unto them."[1488]

After His second ascension from among them, the spirit of prophecy was manifest among the people, and this extended even to children and babes, many of whom spake of marvelous things, as the Spirit gave them utterance. The Twelve entered upon their ministry with vigor, teaching all who would hear, and baptizing those who, through repentance, sought communion with the Church. Upon all who thus complied with the

requirements of the gospel, the Holy Ghost was bestowed; and those so blessed lived together in love, and were called the Church of Christ.[1489]

## **CHRIST'S VISITATION TO HIS CHOSEN TWELVE AMONG THE NEPHITES** [1490]

Under the administration of the twelve ordained disciples the Church grew and prospered in the land of Nephi.[1491] The disciples, as special witnesses of the Christ, traveled, preached, taught, and baptized all who professed faith and showed forth repentance. On a certain occasion the Twelve were assembled in "**mighty prayer and fasting**," seeking instruction on a particular matter which, notwithstanding the Lord's injunction against contention, had given rise to disputation among the people. As they supplicated the Father in the Son's name, Jesus appeared amongst them, and asked: "What will ye that I shall give unto you?" Their answer was: "**Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter.**" They had provisionally called the community of baptized believers the Church of Christ; but, apparently this true and distinguishing name had not been generally accepted without question.

**"And the Lord said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing? Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? for by this name shall ye be called at the last day; and whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day; therefore whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name, that he will bless the church for my sake; And how be it my church, save it be called in my name? for if a church be called in Moses' name, then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man, then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name, then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel. Verily I say unto you, that ye are built upon my gospel; therefore ye shall call whatsoever things ye do call, in my name; therefore if ye call upon the Father, for the church, if it be in my name, the Father will hear you; and if it so be that the church is built upon my gospel, then will the Father shew forth his own works in it; but if it be not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you, they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return; for their works do follow them, for it is because of their works that they are hewn down; therefore remember the things that I have told you."**[1492]

In such wise did the Lord confirm as an authoritative bestowal, the name which, through inspiration, had been assumed by His obedient children, *The Church of Jesus Christ*. The Lord's explanation as to the one and only Name by which the Church could

be appropriately known is cogent and convincing. It was not the church of Lehi or Nephi, of Mosiah or Alma, of Samuel or Helaman; else it should have been called by the name of the man whose church it was, even as today there are churches named after men;[1493] but being the Church established by Jesus Christ, it could properly bear none other name than His.

Jesus then reiterated to the Nephite Twelve many of the cardinal principles He had before enunciated to them and to the people at large; and commanded that His words be written, excepting certain exalted communications which He forbade them to write. The importance of preserving as a priceless treasure the new scriptures He had given was shown, with assurance that in heaven records were kept of all things done by divine direction. The Twelve were told that they were to be the judges of their people; and in view of such investiture they were admonished to diligence and godliness.[1494] The Lord was made glad by the faith and ready obedience of the Nephites amongst whom He had ministered; and to the twelve special witnesses He said: "And now behold, my joy is great, even unto fulness, because of you, and also this generation; yea, and even the Father rejoiceth, and also all the holy angels, because of you and this generation; for none of them are lost. Behold, I would that ye should understand; for I mean them who are now alive of this generation; and none of them are lost; and in them I have fulness of joy." His joy, however, was mingled with sorrow because of the apostasy into which the later generations would fall; this He foresaw as a dire condition that would attain its climax in the fourth generation from that time.[1495]

## THE THREE NEPHITES

In loving compassion the Lord spoke unto the twelve disciples, one by one, asking:

**"What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?"**[1496]

All but three expressed the desire that they might continue in the ministry until they had reached a goodly age, and then in due time be received by the Lord into His kingdom. To them Jesus gave blessed assurance, saying: **"After that ye are seventy and two years old, ye shall come unto me in my kingdom, and with me ye shall find rest."** He turned to the three who had reserved the request they ventured not to express;

**"And he said unto them, Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me; therefore more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death, but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father, unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled, according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory, with the powers of heaven; and ye shall never endure the pains of death; but when I shall come in my glory, ye shall be changed in the**

**twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality: and then shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father.**"[1497]

The blessed three were assured that in the course of their prolonged life they should be immune to pain, and should know sorrow only as they grieved for the sins of the world. For their desire to labor in bringing souls unto Christ as long as the world should stand, they were promised an eventual fullness of joy, even like unto that to which the Lord Himself had attained. Jesus touched each of the nine who were to live and die in the Lord, but the three who were to tarry till He would come in His glory He did not touch. **"And then he departed."**

A change was wrought in the bodies of the Three Nephites, so that, while they remained in the flesh, they were exempt from the usual effects of physical vicissitude. The heavens were opened to their gaze; they were caught up, and saw and heard unspeakable things. **"And it was forbidden them that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw and heard."** Though they lived and labored as men among their fellows, preaching, baptizing, and conferring the Holy Ghost upon all who gave heed to their words, the enemies to the truth were powerless to do them injury. Somewhat later than a hundred and seventy years after the Lord's last visitation, malignant persecution was waged against the Three. For their zeal in the ministry they were cast into prison; but "the prisons could not hold them, for they were rent in twain." They were incarcerated in underground dungeons; **"But they did smite the earth with the word of God, insomuch that by his power they were delivered out of the depths of the earth; and therefore they could not dig pits sufficient to hold them."** Thrice they were cast into a furnace of fire, but received no harm; and three times were they thrown into dens of ravenous beasts, but, "behold they did play with the beasts, as a child with a suckling lamb, and received no harm."[1498] Mormon avers that in answer to his prayers the Lord had made known unto him that the change wrought upon the bodies of the Three, was such as to deprive Satan of all power over them, and that **"they were holy, and that the powers of the earth could not hold them; and in this state they were to remain until the judgment day of Christ; and at that day they were to receive a greater change, and to be received into the kingdom of the Father to go no more out, but to dwell with God eternally in the heavens."**[1499] For nearly three hundred years, and possibly longer, the Three Nephites ministered visibly among their fellows; but as the wickedness of the people increased these special ministers were withdrawn, and thereafter manifested themselves only to the righteous few. Moroni, the last prophet of the Nephites, when engaged in completing the record of his father, Mormon, and adding thereto matters of his own knowledge, wrote concerning these three disciples of the Lord, that they **"did tarry in the land until the wickedness of the people was so great, that the Lord would not suffer them to remain with the people; and whether they be upon the face of the land no man knoweth. But behold, my father and I have seen them, and they have ministered unto us."**[1500] Their ministry was to be extended to Jews and Gentiles,

amongst whom they labor unrecognized as of ancient birth; and they are sent unto the scattered tribes of Israel, and to all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples, from whom they have brought and are bringing many souls unto Christ, "that their desire may be fulfilled, and also because of the convincing power of God which is in them."[1501]

## **GROWTH OF THE CHURCH FOLLOWED BY THE APOSTASY OF THE NEPHITE NATION**

The Church of Jesus Christ developed rapidly in the land of Nephi, and brought to its faithful adherents unprecedented blessings. Even the hereditary animosity between Nephites and Lamanites was forgotten; and all lived in peace and prosperity. So great was the unity of the Church that its members owned all things in common, and "therefore they were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift."[1502] Populous cities replaced the desolation of ruin that had befallen at the time of the Lord's crucifixion. The land was blessed, and the people rejoiced in righteousness. "And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God."[1503] Nine of the twelve special witnesses chosen by the Lord passed at appointed times to their rest, and others were ordained in their stead. The state of blessed prosperity and of common ownership continued for a period of a hundred and sixty-seven years; but soon thereafter came a most distressing change. Pride displaced humility, display of costly apparel superseded the simplicity of happier days; rivalry led to contention, and thence the people "did have their goods and their substance no more common among them, and they began to be divided into classes, and they began to build up churches unto themselves, to get gain, and began to deny the true church of Christ."[1504] Man-made churches multiplied, and persecution, true sister to intolerance, became rampant. The red-skinned Lamanites reverted to their degraded ways, and developed a murderous hostility against their white brothers; and all manner of corrupt practices became common among both nations. For many decades the Nephites retreated before their aggressive foes, making their way north-eastward through what is now the United States. About 400 A.D. the last great battle was fought near the hill Cumorah;[1505] and the Nephite nation became extinct.[1506] The degenerate remnant of Lehi's posterity, the Lamanites or American Indians, have continued until this day. Moroni, the last of the Nephite prophets, hid away the record of his people in the hill Cumorah, whence it has been brought forth by divine direction in the current dispensation. That record is now before the world translated through the gift and power of God, and published to the edification of all nations, as the BOOK OF MORMON.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 39

**1. The Land Bountiful** – This comprised the northerly part of South America, extending to the Isthmus of Panama. On the north it was bounded by the Land of Desolation, which embraced Central America, and, in later Nephite history, an indefinite extent north of the Isthmus. The South American continent in general is called, in the Book of Mormon, the Land of Nephi.

**2. The Jewish and Nephite Versions of the "Sermon on the Mount"** – As indicated in the text, one of the most impressive contrasts between the Sermon on the Mount and the virtual repetition of the discourse by our Lord on the occasion of His visit to the Nephites, is that of prediction concerning the fulfillment of the law of Moses in the first delivery, and unqualified affirmation in the second that the law had been fulfilled. Among the Beatitudes certain differences appear, in each of which the Nephite sermon is more explicit. Thus, instead of, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit**" (Matt. 5:3), we read, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me**" (3 Nephi 12:3). Instead of, "**Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled**" (Matt.), we read, "**And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost**" (Nephi). Instead of, "**for righteousness' sake**," (Matt.) we have "**for my name's sake**," (Nephi). For the difficult passage, "**Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?**" (Matt.), we have the clearer expression, "**I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted?**" (Nephi). And, as already noted, in place of "**one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled**" (Matt.), we have "**one jot nor one tittle hath not passed away from the law, but in me it hath all been fulfilled**" (Nephi). Variations in succeeding verses are incident to this prospective fulfillment (Matt.), and affirmed accomplishment (Nephi). Instead of the strong analogy concerning the plucking out of an offending eye, or the severing of an evil hand (Matt.), we find: "**Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart; for it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell**" (Nephi). Following the illustrative instances of the gospel requirements superseding those of the law, the Nephite record presents this splendid summation: "**Therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law in me, are all fulfilled. Old things are done away, and all things have become new; therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.**"

In Matthew's report of the sermon, little distinction is made between the precepts addressed to the multitude in general, and the instructions given particularly to the Twelve. Thus, Matt. 6:25-34 was spoken inferentially to the apostles; for they and not the people were to lay aside all worldly pursuits; in the sermon delivered to the Nephites the distinction is thus made clear: "**And now it came to pass that when Jesus**

had spoken these words, he looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and said unto them, Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" etc. (See 3 Nephi 13:25-34). Matt 7 opens with "Judge not that ye be not judged," without intimation as to its general or special application; 3 Nephi 14 begins "And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he turned again to the multitude, and did open his mouth unto them again, saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, judge not, that ye be not judged." A careful, verse-by-verse comparison between the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew, and the risen Lord's discourse to His people on the western continent is earnestly recommended to every student.

**3. Baptisms Among the Nephites After the Lord's Visitation** – We read that before the second appearing of Christ to the Nephites, the chosen Twelve were baptized (3 Nephi 19:10-13). These men had doubtless been baptized before, for Nephi had been empowered not only to baptize but to ordain others to the requisite authority for administering baptism (3 Nephi 7:23-26). The baptism of the disciples on the morn of the Savior's second visit, was in the nature of a rebaptism, involving a renewal of covenants, and confession of faith in the Lord Jesus.

It is possible that in the earlier Nephite baptisms some irregularity in mode or impropriety in the spirit of administering the ordinance may have arisen; for, as we have seen the Lord enjoined upon the people in connection with the instructions concerning baptism that disputations must cease. (3 Nephi 11:28-33.)

As to second or later baptisms, the author has written elsewhere (see *The Articles of Faith*, vii:12-17) practically as follows. Rebaptisms recorded in scripture are few, and in each instance the special circumstances justifying the action are apparent. Thus, we read of Paul baptizing certain disciples at Ephesus, though they had already been immersed after the manner of John's baptism. But in this case the apostle was evidently unconvinced that the baptism had been solemnized by due authority, or that the believers had been properly instructed as to the import of the ordinance. When he tested the efficacy of their baptism by asking "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" they answered him, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Then asked he in seeming surprise, "Unto what then were ye baptized? and they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (See Acts 19:1-6.)

In the Church today a repetition of the baptismal rite on an individual is allowable under certain specific conditions. Thus, if one, having entered the Church by baptism,

withdraws from it, or is excommunicated therefrom, and afterward repents and desires to regain his standing in the Church, he can do so only through baptism. However, such is a repetition of the initiatory ordinance as previously administered. There is no ordinance of "rebaptism" in the Church distinct in nature, form, or purpose, from other baptism; and, therefore, in administering baptism to a subject who has been formerly baptized, the form of the ceremony is exactly the same as in first baptisms.

## FOOTNOTES

[1452] John 10:16; compare B. of M., 3 Nephi 15:17-21; See chapter 25 herein.

[1453] See chapter 5 herein.

[1454] See chapter 5 herein.

[1455] Helaman 14:14-27.

[1456] 3 Nephi 2:1.

[1457] Exo. 10:21-23.

[1458] 3 Nephi 8:5-25; compare Helaman 14:20-27.

[1469] 3 Nephi chap. 9.

[1460] 3 Nephi, chap. 10.

[1461] Helaman 14:25; 3 Nephi 23:7-13; compare Matt. 27:52, 53.

[1462] 3 Nephi, chaps. 11-18 inclusive.

[1463] 3 Nephi 10:18. Bear in mind that Christ's ascension took place forty days after His resurrection.

[1464] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1465] 3 Nephi 11:7; compare Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 9:35; P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 2:17.

[1466] 3 Nephi 11:12; compare 1 Nephi 12:6; 2 Nephi 26:1, 9; Alma 16:20.

[1467] 3 Nephi 11:23-28; compare Doc. and Cov. 20:72-74.

[1468] 3 Nephi 11:31-34; compare Mark 16:15, 16; see also John 12:48.

[1469] 3 Nephi 11:39-41.

[1470] 3 Nephi, chaps. 12, 13, 14; compare Matt, chaps. 5, 6, 7.

[1471] Matt. 5:18, and 3 Nephi 12:18; compare 46, 47; 15:2-10; and 9:17-20. See Note 2, end of chapter.

[1472] 3 Nephi 15:4-8. See chapter's 17 and 23 herein.

[1473] 3 Nephi 15:11-24.

[1474] 3 Nephi 16:4-20.

[1475] 3 Nephi 17:23-24; read entire chapter.

[1476] 3 Nephi 18:1-14, 27-34; compare 1 Cor. 11:23-30. For the prescribed manner of administering the Sacrament, see Moroni, chaps. 4 and 5; compare Doc. and Cov. 20:75-79.

[1477] 3 Nephi 18:19-23.

[1478] 3 Nephi 18:36, 37; Moroni 2:1-3.

[1479] 3 Nephi, chaps. 19-25, and 26:1-5.

[1480] Note 3, end of chapter.

[1481] 3 Nephi, chap. 19:35, 36; read the entire chapter.

[1482] 3 Nephi, chap. 20; see references to Isaiah given therein.

[1483] 3 Nephi 21:4.

[1484] 3 Nephi 21:1-7; for prophecies concerning subsequent events see remainder of chapter.

[1485] 3 Nephi, chap. 22; compare Isa. chap. 54.

[1486] 3 Nephi, chaps. 24 and 25; compare Malachi, chap. 3 and 4.

[1487] Doc. and Cov. 110:13-16. Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple April 3, A.D. 1836, and committed to the Church the keys of authority for vicarious work in behalf of the dead. See chapter 41 herein.

[1488] 3 Nephi 26:4, 5, 13-15.

[1489] 3 Nephi 26:14-21.

[1490] 3 Nephi, chaps. 26, 27, and 28:1-12.

[1491] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1492] 3 Nephi 27:4-12.

[1493] E.g. of Calvin, Luther, Wesley; see also "The Great Apostasy," 10:21, 22.

[1494] Note the assurance of a similar commission promised the Jewish apostles: Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30.

See also 1 Nephi 12:9.

[1495] 3 Nephi 27:32 and references given therewith.

[1496] 3 Nephi 28:1; read verses 1-12.

[1497] 3 Nephi 28:6-8; see chapter 37 herein.

[1498] 3 Nephi 28:13-23; compare 4 Nephi 1:14, 29-33.

[1499] 3 Nephi 28:39, 40.

[1500] Mormon 8:10, 11; see also 3 Nephi 28:26-32, 36-40, 4 Nephi 1:14, 37; Ether 12:17.

[1501] 3 Nephi 28:27-32.

[1502] 4 Nephi 1:3; read 1:23; see chapter 18 herein.

[1503] 4 Nephi 1:15, 16.

[1504] 4 Nephi 1:25, 26.

[1505] Near Manchester, Ontario county, New York.

[1506] See Mormon, chapters 1-9; and Moroni, chapter 10.

# 40

## THE LONG NIGHT OF APOSTASY

For over seventeen hundred years on the eastern hemisphere, and for more than fourteen centuries on the western, there appears to have been silence between the heavens and the earth.[1507] Of direct revelation from God to man during this long interval, we have no authentic record. As already shown, the period of apostolic ministry on the eastern continent probably terminated before the dawn of the second century of the Christian era. The passing of the apostles was followed by the rapid development of a universal apostasy as had been foreseen and predicted.[1508]

In the accomplishment of this great falling away, external and internal causes cooperated. Among the disintegrating forces acting from without, the most effective was the persistent persecution to which the saints were subjected, incident to both Judaistic and pagan opposition. Vast numbers who had professed membership and many who had been officers in the ministry deserted the Church; while a few were stimulated to greater zeal under the scourge of persecution. The general effect of opposition from the outside – of external causes of decline in faith and works considered as a whole – was the defection of individuals, resulting in a widespread *apostasy from the Church*. But immeasurably more serious was the result of internal dissension, schism and disruption, whereby an absolute *apostasy of the Church* from the way and word of God was brought about.

Judaism was the earliest oppressor of Christianity, and became the instigator and abettor of the succeeding atrocities incident to pagan persecution. Open and vigorous hostility of the Roman powers against the Christian Church became general during the reign of Nero, (beginning about 64 A.D.), and continued with occasional respites of a few months or even years at a time to the close of Diocletian's reign (about 305 A.D.). The inhuman cruelty and savage barbarity to which were subjected those who dared profess the name of Christ during these centuries of heathen domination are matters of accepted history.[1509] When Constantine the Great came to the throne in the first quarter of the fourth century, a radical change was inaugurated in the attitude of the state toward the church. The emperor straightway made the so-called Christianity of the time the religion of his realm; and zealous devotion to the church became the surest recommendation to imperial favor. But the church was already in great measure an apostate institution and even in crude outline of organization and service bore but remote resemblance to the Church of Jesus Christ, founded by the Savior and builded through the instrumentality of the apostles. Whatever vestiges of genuine Christianity may have possibly survived in the church before, were buried beyond the sight of man

by the abuses that followed the elevation of the churchly organization to secular favor through the decree of Constantine. The emperor, even though unbaptized, made himself the head of the church, and priestly office was more sought after than military rank or state preferment. The spirit of apostasy, by which the church had become permeated before Constantine threw about it the mantle of imperial protection and emblazoned it with the insignia of state, now was roused to increased activity as the leaven of Satan's own culture flourished under the conditions most favorable for such fungoid growth.

*Also one of the big problems in the early church is that there were no quick ways to communicate. Today we have television, radio, phones, internet and texting, etc., as well as fast transpiration, i.e. cars, boats, planes, etc. Leaders and Apostles can keep in touch much easier.*

The bishop of Rome had already asserted supremacy over his fellows in the episcopate; but when the emperor made Byzantium his capital, and renamed it in his own honor, Constantinople, the bishop of that city claimed equality with the Roman pontiff. The claim was contested; the ensuing dissension divided the church; and the disruption has persisted until the present day, as is evidenced by the existing distinction between the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic churches.

The Roman pontiff exercised secular as well as spiritual authority; and in the eleventh century arrogated to himself the title of Pope, signifying Father, in the sense of paternal ruler in all things. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the temporal authority of the pope was superior to that of kings and emperors; and the Roman church became the despotic potentate of nations, and an autocrat above all secular states. Yet this church, reeking with the stench of worldly ambition and lust of dominance, audaciously claimed to be the Church established by Him who affirmed: "**My kingdom is not of this world.**" The arrogant assumptions of the Church of Rome were not less extravagant in spiritual than in secular administration. In her loudly asserted control over the spiritual destinies of the souls of men, she blasphemously pretended to forgive or retain individual sins, and to inflict or remit penalties both on earth and beyond the grave. She sold permission to commit sin and bartered for gold charters of indulgent forgiveness for sins already done. Her pope, proclaiming himself the vicar of God, sat in state to judge as God Himself; and by such blasphemy fulfilled the prophecy of Paul following his warning in relation to the awful conditions antecedent to the second coming of the Christ: "**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**"[1510]

In her unrestrained abandon to the license of arrogated authority, the Church of Rome hesitated not to transgress the law of God, change the ordinances essential to salvation, and ruthlessly break the everlasting covenant, thereby defiling the earth even as Isaiah had foretold.[1511] She altered the ordinance of baptism, destroying its symbolism and associating with it imitations of pagan rites; she corrupted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and befouled the doctrine thereof by the vagary of *transubstantiation*;<sup>[1512]</sup> she assumed to apply the merits of the righteous to the forgiveness of the sinner in the unscriptural and wholly repellent dogma of *supererogation*; she promoted idolatry in most seductive and pernicious forms; she penalized the study of the holy scriptures by the people at large; she enjoined an unnatural state of celibacy upon her clergy; she revelled in unholy union with the theories and sophistries of men, and so adulterated the simple doctrines of the gospel of Christ as to produce a creed rank with superstition and heresy; she promulgated such perverted doctrines regarding the human body as to make the divinely formed tabernacle of flesh appear as a thing fit only to be tortured and contemned; she proclaimed it an act of virtue insuring rich reward to lie and deceive if thereby her own interests might be subserved; and she so thoroughly departed from the original plan of Church organization as to make of herself a spectacle of ornate display, fabricated by the caprice of man.[1513]

The most important of the internal causes by which the apostasy of the Primitive Church was brought about may be thus summarized: **(1)** The corrupting of the simple doctrines of the gospel of Christ by admixture with so-called philosophic systems. **(2)** Unauthorized additions to the prescribed rites of the Church and the introduction of vital alterations in essential ordinances. **(3)** Unauthorized changes in Church organization and government.[1514]

Under the tyrannous repression incident to usurped and unrighteous domination by the Roman church, civilization was retarded and for centuries was practically halted in its course. The period of retrogression is known in history as the Dark Ages. The fifteenth century witnessed the movement known as the Renaissance or Revival of Learning; there was a general and significantly rapid awakening among men, and a determined effort to shake off the stupor of indolence and ignorance was manifest throughout the civilized world. By historians and philosophers the revival has been regarded as an unconscious and spontaneous prompting of the "spirit of the times"; it was a development predetermined in the Mind of God to illumine the benighted minds of men in preparation for the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was appointed to be accomplished some centuries later.[1515]

With the renewal of intellectual activity and effort in material betterment, there came, as a natural and inevitable accompaniment, protest and revolt against the ecclesiastical tyranny of the age. The Albigenses in France had risen in insurrection against churchly despotism during the thirteenth century; and in the fourteenth, John Wickliffe of Oxford University had boldly denounced the corruption of the Roman church and clergy, and

particularly the restrictions imposed by the papal hierarchy on the popular study of the scriptures. Wickliffe gave to the world a version of the Holy Bible in English. These manifestations of independent belief and action the papal church sought to repress and punish by force. The Albigenses had been subjected to inhuman cruelties and unrestrained slaughter. Wickliffe was the subject of severe and persistent persecution; and though he died in his bed the vindictiveness of the Roman church was unsated until she had caused his body to be exhumed and burned and the ashes scattered abroad. John Huss and Jerome of Prague were prominent on the continent of Europe in agitation against papal despotism, and both fell martyrs to the cause. Though the church had become apostate to the core, there were not lacking men brave of heart and righteous of soul, ready to give their lives to the furtherance of spiritual emancipation.

A notable revolt against the papacy occurred in the sixteenth century, and is known as the Reformation. This movement was begun in 1517 by Martin Luther, a German monk; and it spread so rapidly as soon to involve the whole domain of popedom. Formal *protests* against the despotism of the papal church were formulated by the representatives of certain German principalities and other delegates at a diet or general council held at Spire A.D. 1529; and the reformers were thenceforth known as Protestants. An independent church was proposed by John, Elector of Saxony, a constitution for which was prepared at his instance by Luther and his colleague, Melancthon. The Protestants were discordant. Being devoid of divine authority to guide them in matters of church organization and doctrine, they followed the diverse ways of men, and were rent within while assailed from without. The Roman church, confronted by determined opponents, hesitated at no extreme of cruelty. The court of the Inquisition, which had been established in the latter part of the fifteenth century under the infamously sacrilegious name of the "Holy Office," became intoxicated with the lust of barbarous cruelty in the century of the Reformation, and inflicted indescribable tortures on persons secretly accused of heresy.

In the early stages of the Reformation instigated by Luther, the king of England, Henry VIII, declared himself a supporter of the pope, and was rewarded by a papal bestowal of the distinguishing title "Defender of the Faith." Within a few years, this same British sovereign was excommunicated from the Roman church, because of impatient disregard of the pope's authority in the matter of Henry's desire to divorce Queen Catherine so that he could marry one of her maids. The British parliament, in 1534, passed the Act of Supremacy, by which the nation was declared free from all allegiance to papal authority. By Act of Parliament the king was made the head of the church within his own dominions. Thus was born the Church of England, a direct result of the licentious amours of a debauched and infamous king. With blasphemous indifference to the absence of divine commission, with no semblance of priestly succession, an adulterous sovereign created a church, provided therein a "priesthood" of his own, and proclaimed himself supreme administrator in all matters spiritual.

With the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism in Great Britain the student of history is familiar. Suffice it here to say that the mutual hatred of the two contending sects, the zeal of their respective adherents, their professed love of God and devotion to Christ's service, were chiefly signalized by the sword, the ax, and the stake. Reveling in the realization of at least a partial emancipation from the tyranny of priestcraft, men and nations debauched their newly acquired liberty of thought, speech, and action, in a riot of abhorrent excess. The mis-called Age of Reason, and the atheistical abominations culminating in the French Revolution stand as ineffaceable testimony of what man may become when glorying in his denial of God.

Is it to be wondered at, that from the sixteenth century onward, churches of man's contriving have multiplied with phenomenal rapidity? Churches and churchly organizations professing Christianity as their creed have come to be numbered by hundreds. On every side is heard in this day, "Lo, here is Christ" or "Lo, there." There are sects named from the circumstances of their origin – as the Church of England; others after their famous founders or promoters – as Lutheran, Calvinist, Wesleyan; some are known by peculiarities of doctrine or plan of administration – as Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregationalist; but down to the third decade of the nineteenth century there was no church on earth affirming name or title as the Church of Jesus Christ. The only organization called a church existing at that time and venturing to assert claim to authority by succession was the Catholic church, which for centuries had been apostate and wholly bereft of divine authority or recognition. If the "mother church" be without a valid priesthood, and devoid of spiritual power, how can her offspring derive from her the right to officiate in the things of God? Who would dare to affirm that man can originate a priesthood which God is bound to honor and acknowledge? Granted that men may and do create among themselves societies, associations, sects, and even "churches" if they choose so to designate their organizations; granted that they may prescribe rules, formulate laws, and devise plans of operation, discipline, and government, and that all such laws, rules, and schemes of administration are binding upon those who assume membership – granted all these rights and powers – whence can such human institutions derive the authority of the Holy Priesthood, without which there can be no Church of Christ?[1516]

The apostate condition of Christendom has been frankly admitted by many eminent and conscientious representatives of the several churches, and by churches as institutions. Even the Church of England acknowledges the awful fact in her official declaration of degeneracy, as set forth in the "*Homily Against Peril of Idolatry*," in these words:

"So that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children of whole Christendom – an horrible and most dreadful thing to think – have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; of all other vices most

detested of God, and most damnable to man; and that by the space of eight hundred years and more." [1517]

Let it not be concluded that through the night of the universal apostasy, long and dark as it was, God had forgotten the world. Mankind had not been left wholly to itself. The Spirit of God was operative so far as the unbelief of men permitted. John the apostle, and the Three Nephite disciples, [1518] were ministering among men, though unknown. But through the centuries of spiritual darkness men lived and died without the administration of a contemporary apostle, prophet, elder, bishop, priest, teacher, or deacon. Whatever of the form of Godliness existed in the churches of human establishment was destitute of divine power. The time foreseen by the inspired apostle had fully come – mankind in general refused to endure sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, did they heap to themselves teachers, after their own lusts, and verily had they turned away their ears from the truth to follow after fables. [1519] The first quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed the cumulative fulfillment of the conditions predicted through the prophet Amos: "**Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.**" [1520]

Throughout the period of apostasy the windows of heaven had been shut toward the world, so as to preclude all direct revelation from God, and particularly any personal ministration or theophany of the Christ. Mankind had ceased to know God; and had invested the utterances of prophets and apostles of old, who had known Him, with a pall of mystery and fancy, so that the True and the Living God was no longer believed to exist; but in His place the sectaries had tried to conceive of an incomprehensible being, devoid of "body, parts, or passions," an immaterial nothing. [1521]

But it had been determined in the councils of heaven, that after many centuries of benighted ignorance the world should be illumined anew by the light of truth. Through the operation of the genius of intelligence, which is the Spirit of Truth, the soul of the race had been undergoing a preparation, like unto the deep plowing of a field, for the planting of the gospel afresh. The principle of the mariner's compass was revealed by the Spirit; the material embodiment thereof was invented by man; and by its aid the unknown oceans were explored. Toward the end of the fifteenth century Columbus was led by the inspiration of God to the discovery of the New World, whereon dwelt the degenerate posterity of Lehi, a dark-skinned remnant of the house of Israel – the American Indians. In due time the good ships *Mayflower* and *Speedwell* brought to the western world the Pilgrim Fathers, as the vanguard of a host escaping from exile and seeking a new home wherein they could worship according to the dictates of their consciences. The coming of Columbus and the later immigration of the Puritan Pilgrims had been predicted nearly six hundred years before Christ; their respective missions

had been as truly appointed unto them as has been the sending of any prophet with a message to deliver and a work to do.[1522] The war between the American Colonies and the Mother Country, and the victorious issue thereof in the emancipation of the American nation once and forever from monarchial rule, had been foretold as further steps in preparation for the restoration of the gospel. Time was allowed for the establishment of a stable government, for the raising up of men chosen and inspired to frame and promulgate the Constitution of the United States, which promises to every man a full measure of political and religious freedom. It was not meet that the precious seed of the restored gospel be thrown upon unplowed soil, hardened by intolerance, and fit to produce only thorns of bigotry and rank weeds of mental and spiritual serfdom. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the embodiment of liberty; it is the truth that shall make free every man and every nation who will accept and obey its precepts.

At the appointed time, the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus the Christ appeared to man upon the earth, and inaugurated the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 40

**1. Cessation of Revelation on the Western Hemisphere** – "The eastern world had lost this knowledge of the Lord earlier than the western hemisphere. Upon the land of North America, four hundred years after the birth of our Savior and Master, there stood at least one man who knew the Lord God Almighty as a distinct personality, a Being capable of communicating Himself to man. That man was Moroni, the son of Mormon, whose testimony abides now and must abide through all the ages to come." – George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith*, p. 21. See B. of M., Moroni 10:27-34.

**2. Results of the Great Apostasy Divinely Overruled for Eventual Good** – The thoughtful student cannot fail to see in the progress of the great apostasy and its results the existence of an overruling power operating toward eventual good, however mysterious its methods. The heart-rending persecutions to which the saints were subjected in the early centuries of our era, the anguish, the torture, the bloodshed incurred in defense of the testimony of Christ, the rise of an apostate church, blighting the intellect and leading captive the souls of men – all these dread conditions were foreknown to the Lord. While we cannot say or believe that such exhibitions of human depravity and blasphemy of heart were in accordance with the divine will, certainly God willed to permit full scope to the free agency of man, in the exercise of which agency some won the martyr's crown, and others filled the flagon of their iniquity to overflowing. Not less marked is the divine permission in the revolts and rebellions, in the revolutions and reformations, that developed in opposition to the darkening influence of the apostate church. Wickliffe and Huss, Luther and Melancthon, Zwingli and Calvin, Henry VIII in his arrogant assumption of priestly authority, John Knox in Scotland, Roger Williams in America – these and a host of others builded better than

they knew, in that their efforts laid in part the foundation of the structure of religious freedom and liberty of conscience – and this in preparation for the restoration of the gospel as had been divinely predicted. – *The Great Apostasy*, 10:19, 20.

**3. Declaration of a General Apostasy by the Church of England** – The *Book of Homilies*, from which the quotation given in the text is taken, was published about the middle of the sixteenth century. The official proclamation of a universal apostasy was made prominently current, for the Homilies were "appointed to be read in churches" in lieu of sermons under certain conditions. In the statement cited, the Church of England solemnly avers that a state of apostasy affecting all ages, sects, and degrees throughout whole Christendom, had prevailed for eight hundred years prior to the establishment of the church making the declaration. That this affirmation remains effective today, as both confession and profession of the Church of England, appears from the fact that the homily "Against Peril of Idolatry" and certain other homilies are specifically ratified and endorsed, and withal prescribed "to be read in Churches by the Ministers diligently and distinctly that they may be understood of the people." See "Articles of Religion" xxxv, in current issues of Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer*.

**4. The "Creed of Athanasius"** – At the Council of Nice, convoked by the emperor Constantine, 325 A.D., a formal statement of belief concerning the Godhead was adopted. Later a modification was issued, known as the "Creed of Athanasius," and though the authorship is questioned, the creed has a place in the ritual of some of the Protestant churches. No more conclusive evidence that men had ceased to know God need be adduced than the Athanasian Creed. As confessed by the Church of England in this day, and as published in the official ritual (see *Prayer Book*) "The Creed of Saint Athanasius" is this: "We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate: and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated: but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord."

*What a confusing belief...not one but three, but not really three, but one, but not three, but really one?? A child could explain this better, A father says, "I'm pleased" that must*

*mean there are two, a Father and a Son. Add a Holy Ghost as a Testifier... that adds up to three. Easy enough.*

Then follows this strange confession of what is at once required by "Christian verity," and forbidden by the "Catholick Religion": "For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the Catholick Religion: to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords."

**5. The Mission of Columbus and Its Results**—Unto Nephi, son of Lehi, was shown the future of his people, including the degeneracy of a branch thereof, afterward known as Lamanites and in modern times as American Indians. The coming of a man from among the Gentiles, across the deep waters, was revealed in such plainness as to positively identify that man with Columbus; and the coming of other Gentiles to this land, out of captivity, is equally explicit. The revelation is thus recorded by Nephi to whom it was given: "**And it came to pass that I looked and beheld many waters; and they divided the Gentiles from the seed of my brethren. And it came to pass that the angel said unto me, Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren. And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters.**" (1 Nephi 13:10-13). The establishment of a great Gentile nation on the American continent, the subjugation of the Lamanites or Indians, the war between the newly established nation and Great Britain, or "**their mother Gentiles,**" and the victorious outcome of that struggle for independence, are set forth with equal clearness in the same chapter.

## FOOTNOTES

[1507] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1508] No extended account of the apostasy of the Primitive Church can be attempted here; the reader is referred to special works treating this important subject. See the author's "**The Great Apostasy**, considered in the Light of Scriptural and Secular History," a work of 176 pages.

[1509] See "The Great Apostasy," chaps. 4 and 5.

[1510] 1 Thess. 2:3, 4.

[1511] Isa. 24:5.

[1512] The false doctrine of "transubstantiation" is to the effect that the bread and wine administered as emblems of Christ's flesh and blood in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are transmuted by priestly consecration into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. See "The Great Apostasy," 8:16-19. As to "supererogation" see the notes in chapter 32 herein.

[1513] "The Great Apostasy," chaps. 6, 7, 8.

[1514] "The Great Apostasy," 6:14, 15; for comprehensive treatment of the subject see chapters 6 to 9 inclusive.

[1515] Note 2, end of chapter.

[1516] This paragraph is in part a paraphrase of "The Great Apostasy," 10:21, 22.

[1517] Note 3, end of chapter.

[1518] See chapters 37 and 39 herein.

[1519] See 2 Tim. 4:1-4; also "The Great Apostasy," 2:30.

[1520] Amos. 8:11, 12.

[1521] See Church of England "Book of Common Prayer," "Articles of Religion" i. Note 4, end of chapter.

[1522] See B. of M., 1 Nephi 13:10-13. Note 5, end of chapter.

# 41

## PERSONAL MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD THE ETERNAL FATHER AND OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST IN MODERN TIMES

### A NEW DISPENSATION

In the year of our Lord 1820 there lived at Manchester, Ontario county, state of New York, a worthy citizen named Joseph Smith. His household comprised his wife and their nine children. The third son and fourth child of the family was Joseph Smith Jr., who at the time of which we speak was in his fifteenth year. In the year specified, New York and adjacent states were swept by a wave of intense agitation in religious matters; and unusual zeal was put forth by ministers of the numerous rival sects to win converts to their respective folds. The boy Joseph was profoundly affected by this intense excitement, and was particularly puzzled and troubled over the spirit of confusion and contention manifest through it all. As our present subject has to do with him specifically, and in view of the transcendent importance of his testimony to the world, his own account of what ensued is given herewith.

*Joseph was 14 – he was born December 23, 1805. The events below happened in the Spring of 1820.*

**"Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, 'Lo, here!' and others, 'Lo, there!' Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.**

**"For notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased – yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued; priest contending against priest,**

and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.

"I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely – my mother Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

"During this time of great excitement, my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

"My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of either reason or sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

"In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself, What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

"While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

"Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

"At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to 'ask of God,' concluding that if He gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

"So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

"After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

*The last thing Lucifer would want is for young Joseph to meet his destiny.*

"But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction – not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being – just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other – *This is my beloved Son, hear him!*

### *"Oh How Lovely Was the Morning"*

*Oh, how lovely was the morning!  
Radiant beamed the sun above.  
Bees were humming, sweet birds singing,  
Music ringing thru the grove,  
When within the shady woodland  
Joseph sought the God of love. ...*

*Humbly kneeling, sweet appealing –  
'Twas the boy's first uttered prayer –  
When the pow'rs of sin assailing  
Filled his soul with deep despair;  
But undaunted still he trusted*

*In his Heav'nly Father's care. ...*

*Suddenly a light descended,  
Brighter far than noonday sun,  
And a shining glorious pillar  
O'er him fell, around him shone,  
While appeared two heav'nly beings,  
God the Father and the Son. ...*

*"Joseph, this is my Beloved;  
Hear him!" Oh, how sweet the word!  
Joseph's humble prayer was answered,  
And he listened to the Lord.  
Oh, what rapture filled his bosom,  
For he saw the living God.*

*Hear the song sung by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir at  
[http://www.allaboutmormons.com/ENG\\_Video85.php](http://www.allaboutmormons.com/ENG_Video85.php)*

**"My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right – and which I should join.**

**"I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.'**

**"He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven.**

**"Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying, it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them.**

"I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects – all united to persecute me.

"It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself.

"However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light, and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

"So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it, at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

"I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned; that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true, that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided."<sup>[1523]</sup>

In this wise was ushered in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.<sup>[1524]</sup> The darkness of the long night of apostasy was dispelled; the glory of the heavens once

more illumined the world; the silence of centuries was broken; the voice of God was heard again upon the earth. In the spring of A.D. 1820 there was one mortal, a boy not quite fifteen years old, who knew as well as that he lived, that the current human conception of Deity as an incorporeal essence of something possessing neither definite shape nor tangible substance was as devoid of truth in respect to both the Father and the Son as its statement in formulated creeds was incomprehensible. The boy Joseph knew that both the Eternal Father and His glorified Son, Jesus Christ, were in form and stature, perfect Men; and that in Their physical likeness mankind had been created in the flesh.[1525] He knew further that the Father and the Son were individual Personages, each distinct from the other – a truth fully attested by the Lord Jesus during His mortal existence, but which had been obscured if not buried by the sophistries of human unbelief. He realized that the unity of the Godhead was a oneness of perfection in purpose, plan, and action, as the scriptures declare it to be, and not an impossible union of personalities, as generations of false teachers had tried to impress. This resplendent theophany confirmed the fact of a universal apostasy, with the inevitable corollary – that the Church of Christ was nowhere existent upon the earth. It effectively dissipated the delusion that direct revelation from the heavens had forever ceased; and affirmatively proved the actuality of personal communication between God and mortals.

For the fourth time since the Savior's birth in the flesh, the voice of the Father had attested the Son's authority in matters pertaining to earth and man.[1526] In this latter-day revelation of Himself, as on the earlier occasions, the Father did no more than affirm the fact of the Son's identity, and command that He be obeyed.

### "A MESSENGER SENT FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD" [1527]

For about three and a half years following the glorious appearing of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith, the youthful revelator was left to himself, so far as further manifestations from heaven were concerned. The period was one of probation. He was subjected to the sneers of youths of his age, and to aggressive persecution on the part of older men, "who," as he very justly and somewhat accusingly remarks, **"ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me."**[1528] He pursued his usual vocation, that of farm work in association with his father and brothers, from whom he received kindness, consideration, and sympathy; and in spite of raillery, abuse, and denunciation from the community at large he remained firm and faithful in his solemn avouchment that he had seen and heard both the Eternal Father and Jesus the Christ, and that he had been instructed to join none of the contending sects or churches because they were all fundamentally wrong.

On the night of the 21st of September 1823, while engaged in fervent prayer to God in the solitude of his chamber, Joseph observed the room become illuminated until the

light exceeded that of a cloudless noon. A glorious personage appeared within the room, standing a little space above the floor. Both the body of the visitant and the loose robe he wore were of exquisite whiteness. Calling Joseph by name he announced himself as Moroni, "a messenger sent from the presence of God"; and informed the young man that the Lord had a work for him to do, and that his name should come to be spoken of both for good and for evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues. The angel told of a record engraven on plates of gold, which contained an account of the former inhabitants of the American continent, and the fulness of the everlasting gospel as delivered by the Savior to those ancient people; and furthermore, that with the record were a breastplate, and the Urim and Thummim, which had been prepared by divine instrumentality for use in translating the book. The place at which the plates and the other sacred things were deposited was shown to Joseph in vision, and so clear was the demonstration that he readily recognized the spot when he visited it next day.

The angel quoted several passages from the Old and one from the New Testament, some verbatim, and some with small variations from the Biblical version. Joseph's statement concerning the scriptures cited by Moroni is as follows:

**"He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi, and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:**

*"For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*

**"And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: *Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.***

**"He also quoted the next verse differently: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.***

**"In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ; but the day had not yet come when they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people, but soon would come.**

**"He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in."<sup>[1529]</sup>**

The messenger departed, and the light disappeared with him. Twice during the same night, however, the angel returned, each time repeating what had been said at his first appearing and adding words of instruction and caution. On the next day Moroni appeared to the young man again, and directed him to inform his father of the visitations and commandments he had received. Joseph's father instructed him to obey the messenger's instructions and testified that they were given of God. Joseph then went to the locality specified by the angel, on the side of a hill called in the record Cumorah, and immediately identified the spot that had been shown him in vision. By the aid of a lever he removed a large stone, which proved to be the cover of a stone box wherein lay the plates and other articles described by Moroni. The angel appeared at the place, and forbade Joseph to remove the contents of the box at that time. The young man replaced the massive stone lid and left the spot.

Four years later, the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate were delivered into Joseph's keeping by the angel Moroni. This Moroni, who now came as a resurrected being, was the last survivor of the Nephite nation; he had completed the record, and then shortly before his death had hidden away the same in the hill Cumorah, whence it was brought forth through his instrumentality and delivered to the modern prophet and seer, Joseph Smith, September 22, 1827. That record, or, strictly speaking a part thereof, is now accessible to all; it has been translated through divine instrumentality and is now published in many languages as the Book of Mormon.[1530]

## THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD CONFERRED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

On the 15th of May, 1829, Joseph Smith and his scribe in the work of translating the Nephite record, Oliver Cowdery, retired to a secluded glade to pray. Their special purpose was to inquire of the Lord concerning the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins, some account of which they had found on the plates. Joseph writes:

**"While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:**

***"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the Gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."***[1531]

The angelic visitor stated that his name was John, the same who is designated in the New Testament, John the Baptist; and that he had acted in ordaining the two under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Higher or Melchizedek

Priesthood. He explained that the Aaronic Priesthood did not comprise "**the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost**";[1532] but he predicted that the Higher Priesthood, having this power, would be conferred later. By his express direction, Joseph baptized Oliver, and the latter in turn baptized Joseph, by immersion in water.

*Joseph was given authority (the Aaronic Priesthood) from John the Baptist and then Joseph baptized Oliver. Oliver, who was also given authority by John the Baptist, then baptized Joseph.*

## **THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD CONFERRED BY PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN**

Shortly after their ordination to the Lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were visited by the presiding apostles of old, Peter, James, and John, who conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood and ordained them to the Holy Apostleship. In a later revelation the Lord Jesus thus specifically acknowledges the respective ordinations as having been done by His will and commandment:

**"Which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, jun., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto this first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained even as Aaron.... And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry, and of the same things which I revealed unto them: Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth."**[1533]

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**

On the sixth day of April A.D. 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was formally organized, at Fayette, Seneca county, New York, in accordance with the secular law governing the establishment of religious associations. The persons actually participating in the organization numbered but six, such being the minimum required by law in such an undertaking; many others were present however, some of whom had already received the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins. By revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord had previously specified the day on which the organization was to be effected, and had made known His plan of Church government – with detailed instructions as to the requisite conditions for membership; the indispensability of baptism by immersion, and the precise manner in which the initiatory ordinance was to be administered; the manner of confirming baptized believers as members of the Church; the duties of elders, priests, teachers, and deacons in the Church; the exact

procedure to be followed in the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the order of Church discipline, and the method of transferring members from one branch to another.[1534] The baptized converts present at the organization were called upon to express their acceptance or rejection of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as elders in the Church; and in accordance with the unanimous vote in the affirmative the ordination or setting apart of these two men as respectively first and second elder in the new organization was performed.[1535]

While the Book of Mormon had been in course of translation, particularly during the two years immediately preceding the organization of the Church, several revelations had been given through Joseph the prophet and seer, relating to the work of translation and to the preparatory labor necessary to the establishment of the Church as an institution among men. The Author of these several revelations declared Himself definitely to be Jesus Christ, God, the Son of God, the Redeemer, the Light and Life of the World, Alpha and Omega, Christ the Lord, the Lord and Savior.[1536] As early as A.D. 1829, the calling of the Twelve Apostles was indicated, and appointment was made for the searching out of the Twelve who should stand before the world as special witnesses of the Christ; these were subsequently ordained to the Holy Apostleship, and the council or quorum of the Twelve has been recognized, and instructions concerning their exalted duties have been given, in numerous revelations of later dates.[1537]

In such manner has the Church of Jesus Christ been reestablished upon the earth, with all the powers and authority pertaining to the Holy Priesthood as committed by the Lord Jesus to His apostles in the period of His personal ministry. The inauguration of a new dispensation of the gospel, with a restoration of the Priesthood, was absolutely necessary; since through the apostasy of the Primitive Church there lived not a man empowered to speak or administer in the name of God or His Christ. John the Revelator saw in his vision of the last days an angel bringing anew "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."[1538]

Such an angelic embassy would have been but a needless and empty display, and therefore an impossibility, had the everlasting gospel remained upon the earth with its powers of priesthood perpetuated by succession. The scriptural assurances of a restoration in the last days through direct bestowal from the heavens is conclusive proof of the actuality of the universal apostasy. Moroni came to Joseph Smith as "a messenger sent from the presence of God," and delivered a record containing "the fulness of the everlasting gospel," as it had been imparted to the Lord's people in ancient times; and the world-wide distribution of the Book of Mormon, and of other publications embodying the revealed word in modern times, and the ministry of thousands who labor in the authority of the Holy Priesthood combine as the loud voice

addressed to every nation, crying: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come."

## FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HEAVENS TO MAN

Following the organization of the Church as heretofore described, direct communication between the Lord Jesus Christ and His prophet Joseph was frequent, as the needs of the Church required. Numerous revelations were given, and these are accessible to all who will read.[1539] A marvelous manifestation was granted to the prophet and his associate in the presidency of the Church, Sidney Rigdon, the record of which appears as follows:

**"We, Joseph Smith, jun., and Sidney Rigdon, being in the Spirit on the sixteenth of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two, by the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God – even those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his Only Begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning, of whom we bear record, and the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision; For while we were doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed unto us, we came to the twenty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter of John, which was given unto us as follows. Speaking of the resurrection of the dead, concerning those who shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; they who have done good in the resurrection of the just, and they who have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust. Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given unto us of the Spirit; and while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about; and we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness; and saw the holy angels, and they who are sanctified before his throne, worshipping God, and the Lamb, who worship him for ever and ever. And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony last of all, which we give of him, that he lives; for we saw him, even on the right hand of God, and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father – that by him and through him, and of him the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God."**[1540]

The vision was followed by further revelation both through sight and hearing; and the Lord showed unto His servants and proclaimed aloud the fate of the wicked and the characteristic features of the varied degrees of glory provided for the souls of mankind in the hereafter. The several states of graded honor and exaltation pertaining to the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial kingdoms were revealed, and the ancient

scriptures relating thereto were illumined with the new light of simplicity and literalness.[1541]

## **PERSONAL APPEARING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE**

In less than three and a half years after its organization the Church began the erection of the first temple of modern times at Kirtland, Ohio. The work was undertaken in compliance with a revelation from the Lord requiring this labor at the hands of His people. The Church membership was small; the people were in poverty; the period was one of determined opposition and relentless persecution.[1542] Be it understood that to the Latter-day Saints a temple is more than chapel, church, tabernacle, or cathedral; it is no place of common assembly even for purposes of congregational worship, but an edifice sacred to the ordinances of the Holy Priesthood – distinctively and essentially a House of the Lord. The temple at Kirtland stands today, a substantial and stately building; but it is no longer in possession of the people who reared it by unmeasured sacrifice of time, substance, and effort extending through years of self-denial and suffering. Its corner-stones were laid July 23, 1833, and the completed structure was dedicated March 27, 1836. The dedicatory service was made ever memorable by a Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord accompanied by the visible presence of angels. In the evening of the same day the several quorums of priesthood assembled in the house, and a yet greater manifestation of divine power and glory was witnessed. On the succeeding Sunday – April 3, 1836 – after a service of solemn worship, including the administration of the Lord's Supper, the prophet Joseph and his counselor, Oliver Cowdery, retired for prayer within the veils enclosing the platform and pulpit reserved for the presiding authorities of the Melchizedek Priesthood. They bear this solemn testimony to the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ at that time and place:

**"The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breast work of the pulpit, before us, and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire, the hair of his head was white like the pure snow, his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun, and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying – I am the first and the last, I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain, I am your advocate with the Father. Behold, your sins are forgiven you, you are clean before me, therefore lift up your heads and rejoice, let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name. For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here, and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house, Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house, Yea the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the**

**endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house; and the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands, and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen."**[1543]

After the Savior's withdrawal, the two mortal prophets were visited by glorified beings, each of whom had officiated on earth as a specially commissioned servant of Jehovah, and now came to confer the authority of his particular office upon Joseph and Oliver, thus uniting all the powers and authorities of olden dispensations in the restored Church of Christ, which characterizes the last and greatest dispensation of history. This is the record:

**"After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us, and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying, that in us, and our seed, all generations after us should be blessed. After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us, for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said – Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi, testifying that he (Elijah) should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse. Therefore the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands, and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors."**[1544]

## **JESUS THE CHRIST IS WITH HIS CHURCH TODAY**

Right gloriously has the Lord brought about a fulfillment of the promises uttered through the mouths of His holy prophets in by-gone ages – to restore the gospel with all its former blessings and privileges; to bestow anew the Holy Priesthood with authority to administer in the name of God; to reestablish the Church bearing His name and founded upon the rock of divine revelation; and to proclaim the message of salvation to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. In spite of persecution both mobocratic and judicially sanctioned, in spite of assaults, drivings, and slaughter, the Church has developed with marvelous rapidity and strength since the day of its organization. Joseph, the prophet, and his brother Hyrum, the patriarch of the Church, were brutally slain as martyrs to the truth at Carthage, Illinois, June 27, 1844. But the Lord raised up others to succeed them; and the world learned in part and yet shall know beyond all question that the Church so miraculously established in the last days is not the church of Joseph Smith nor of any other man, but in literal verity, the Church of Jesus Christ. The Lord has continued to make known His mind and will through prophets, seers, and revelators whom He has successively chosen and appointed to lead His people; and the voice of divine revelation is heard in the Church today. As provided for in its revealed

plan and constitution, the Church is blessed by the ministry of prophets, apostles, high priests, patriarchs, seventies, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons.[1545] The spiritual gifts and blessings of old are again enjoyed in rich abundance.[1546] New scriptures, primarily directed to present duties and current developments in the purposes of God, yet which illuminate and make plain in simplicity the scriptures of old, have been given to the world through the channel of the restored priesthood; and other scriptures shall yet be written. The united membership of the Church proclaims:

**"We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."**[1547]

*After the Church was organized, in May 1830, there were 27 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In May 2011 there are over 14.1 million members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*

The predicted gathering of Israel from their long dispersion is in progress under the commission given by the Lord through Moses. The "mountain of the Lord's house" is already established in the top of the mountains, and all peoples flow unto it; while the elders of the Church go forth among the nations, saying: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."[1548]

Within sacred temples, the living are officiating vicariously in behalf of the dead; and the hearts of mortal children are turned with affectionate concern toward their departed ancestors, while disembodied hosts are praying for the success of their posterity, yet in the flesh, in the service of salvation.[1549] The saving gospel is offered freely to all, for so hath its Author commanded. Through the medium of the press, and by the personal ministrations of men invested with the Holy Priesthood whom the Church sends out by thousands, this Gospel of the Kingdom is today preached throughout the world. When such witness among the nations is made complete, "then shall the end come"; and the nations "shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."[1550]

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 41

**1. The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times** – "Now the thing to be known is, what the fulness of times means, or the extent and authority thereof. It means this, that the dispensation of the fulness of times is made up of all the dispensations that ever have been given since the world began, until this time. Unto Adam first was given a dispensation. It is well known that God spake to him with His own voice in the garden, and gave him the promise of the Messiah. And unto Noah also was a dispensation given; for Jesus said, '**As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the coming of the Son of Man;**' and as the righteous were saved then, and the wicked destroyed, so it will be now. And from Noah to Abraham, and from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to Elias, and from Elias to John the Baptist, and from then to Jesus Christ, and from Jesus Christ to Peter, James, and John, the Apostles all having received in their dispensation by revelation from God, to accomplish the great scheme of restitution, spoken by all the holy Prophets since the world began; the end of which is, the dispensation of the fulness of times, in which all things shall be fulfilled that have been spoken of since the earth was made." – See *Millennial Star*, vol. 16, p. 220.

**2. Limitations of the Aaronic Priesthood** – After conferring the Lesser or Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, the officiating angel, who had been known while a mortal being as John the Baptist, explained that the authority he had imparted did not extend to the laying-on of hands for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, the latter ordinance being a function of the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood. Consider the instance of Philip, (not the apostle Philip), whose ordination empowered him to baptize, though a higher authority than his was requisite for the conferring of the Holy Ghost; and consequently the apostles Peter and John went down to Samaria to officiate in the case of Philip's baptized converts (Acts 8:5, 12-17). See Doc. and Cov. 20:41, 46.

*The authority to baptize is not the same authority for the Laying on of Hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Conferring the Holy Ghost is a Higher authority.*

**3. Priesthood and Office Therein** – It is important to know that although Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had been ordained to the Holy Apostleship, and therefore to a fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, by Peter, James, and John, it was necessary that they be ordained as elders in the Church. When they received the Melchizedek Priesthood from the three ancient apostles, there was no organized Church of Jesus Christ, and consequently no need of Church officers, such as elders, priests, teachers, or deacons. As soon as the Church was established, officers were chosen therein and these were ordained to the requisite office or grade in the Priesthood. Moreover, the principle of common consent in the conduct of Church affairs was observed in this early action of the members in voting to sustain the men nominated for official positions, and has continued to be the rule of the Church to this day. It is pertinent to point out further that in conferring upon Joseph and Oliver the Aaronic Priesthood, John the Baptist did not

ordain them to the office of priest, teacher, or deacon. These three offices are included in the Aaronic, as are the offices of elder, seventy, high priest, etc., in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Read Doc. and Cov. 20:38-67; *The Articles of Faith*, xi.

**4. Modern Temples** – The Lord's gracious promise given in the Kirtland Temple – to appear unto His servants at times then future, and to speak unto them with His own voice, provided the people would keep His commandments and not pollute that holy house – has been in no wise abrogated nor forfeited through the enforced relinquishment of the Kirtland Temple by the Latter-day Saints. The people were compelled to flee before the fury of mobocratic persecution; but they hastened to erect another and yet more splendid sanctuary at Nauvoo, Illinois, and were again dispossessed by lawless mobs. In the valleys of Utah the Church has erected four great temples, each more stately than the last; and in these holy houses the sacred ordinances pertaining to salvation and exaltation of both the living and the dead are in uninterrupted progress. The temples of the present dispensation, at the time of the present writing designated according to location, are those of Kirtland, Ohio; Nauvoo, Illinois; St. George, Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake City, Utah; Cardston, Canada, and Laie, Hawaii. See *The House of the Lord*, pp. 63-232.

*There are now many more Temples in Utah and going on 200 Temples throughout the world, built, announced or being built.*

**5. Consistency of the Church's Claim to Authority** – The proofs of order and system in the restoration of authority to officiate in particular functions pertaining to the priesthood are striking, and go to prove the continued validity, beyond the grave, of authoritative ordination on earth. The keys of the Aaronic order, comprising authority to baptize for the remission of sins, were brought by John the Baptist, who had been especially commissioned in that order of priesthood in the time of Christ. The apostleship, comprising all powers inherent in the Melchizedek Priesthood, was restored by the presiding apostles of old, Peter, James, and John. Then, as has been seen, Moses conferred the authority to prosecute the work of gathering; and Elijah, who, not having tasted death, held a peculiar relation to both the living and the dead, delivered the authority of vicarious ministry for the departed. To these appointments by heavenly authority should be added that given by Elias, who appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and "**committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham.**" It is evident, then, that the claims made by the Church with respect to its authority are complete and consistent as to the source of the powers professed and the channels through which such have been delivered again to earth. Scripture and revelation, both ancient and modern, support as an unalterable law the principle that no one can delegate to another an authority which the giver does not possess.

**6. Cessation of the Melchizedek Administration in Ancient Times** – The Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood was held by the patriarchs from Adam to Moses. Aaron was

ordained to the priest's office, as were his sons; but that Moses held superior authority is abundantly shown (Numb. 12:1-8). After Aaron's death his son Eleazar officiated in the authority of the Lesser Priesthood; and even Joshua had to take counsel and authority from him (Numb. 27:18-23). From the ministry of Moses to that of Jesus Christ, the Lesser Priesthood alone was operative upon the earth, excepting only the instances of specially delegated authority of the higher order such as is manifest in the ministrations of certain chosen prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. It is evident that these prophets, seers, and revelators were individually and specially commissioned; but it appears that they had not authority to call and ordain successors, for in their time the Higher Priesthood was not existent on earth in an organized state with duly officered quorums. Not so with the Aaronic and Levitical Priesthood, however. The matter is made particularly plain through latter-day revelation. See Doc. and Cov. 84:23-28; read the entire section; also *The House of the Lord* pp. 235-238.

## FOOTNOTES

[1523] P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 2:5-26; also "History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," vol. 1, pp. 2-8.

[1524] Eph. 1:9, 10. Note 1, end of chapter.

[1525] See notes for chapter 11 herein; Note 5, end of chapter.

[1526] For earlier instances, see chapter's 10, 23 and 39 herein.

[1527] P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 2:29-54, 59; also "History of the Church," vol. 1, pp. 10-16, 18.

[1528] P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 2:28.

[1529] P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 2:36-41; and "History of the Church," vol. 1, pp. 12, 13.

[1530] See B. of M., Mormon 6:6; Moroni 10:2.

[1531] P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 2:68, 69; Doc. and Cov. sec. 13; "History of the Church," vol. 1, p. 39.

[1532] Notes 2 and 6, end of chapter.

[1533] Doc. and Cov. 27: 8, 12, 13.

[1534] Doc. and Cov. sec. 20.

[1535] Doc. and Cov. 20:2, 3; compare 21:11; see also "History of the Church." vol. 1, pp. 40, 41. Note 3, end of chapter.

[1536] Doc. and Cov. sections 5, 6, 8, 10-12, 14-20.

[1537] Doc. and Cov. 18:27, 31-36; 20:38-44; 84:63, 64; 95:4; 107:23-25; 112:1, 14, 21; 118; 124:127-130.

[1538] Rev. 14:6, 7.

[1539] See Doctrine and Covenants, and "History of the Church."

[1540] Doc. and Cov. 76:11-24; also "History of the Church" under date specified.

[1541] See Doc. and Cov. 76:25-119; also "The Articles of Faith," iv:29; and xxii:18-27.

[1542] See "The House of the Lord," pages 114-123.

[1543] Doc. and Cov. 110:1-10; also "History of the Church" under date specified. Note 4, end of chapter.

[1544] Doc. and Cov. 110:11-16. Note 5, end of chapter.

[1545] See "Plan of Government in the Restored Church," in "The Articles of Faith," xi:13-32.

[1546] See "Spiritual Gifts" in "The Articles of Faith," xii.

[1547] No. 9 of "The Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

[1548] Isa. 2:2, 3; compare Micah 4:1, 2; see also Doc. and Cov. 29:8.

[1549] See "The House of the Lord," pp. 63-109.

[1550] P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 1:31, 36; compare Matt 24:14, 30.

# 42

## JESUS THE CHRIST TO RETURN THE LORD'S SECOND ADVENT PREDICTED IN ANCIENT SCRIPTURE

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." [1551] So spake the white-robed angels to the eleven apostles as the resurrected Christ ascended from their midst on Olivet. The scriptures abound in predictions of the Lord's return.

By the "second advent" we understand not the personal appearing of the Son of God to a few, such as His visitation to Saul of Tarsus, to Joseph Smith in 1820, and again in the Kirtland Temple in 1836; nor later manifestations to His worthy servants as specifically promised; [1552] but His yet future coming in power and great glory, accompanied by hosts of resurrected and glorified beings, to execute judgment upon the earth and to inaugurate a reign of righteousness.

The prophets of both hemispheres, who lived prior to the meridian of time, said comparatively little concerning the Lord's second coming; their souls were too full of the merciful plan of redemption associated with the Savior's birth into mortality to permit them to dwell upon the yet more distant consummation appointed for the last days. Certain of them, however, were permitted to behold in vision the working out of the divine purposes even to the end of time; and these testified with unsurpassed fervency concerning the glorious coming of Christ in the final dispensation. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, "**Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all.**" [1553] In a more extended account of the Lord's revelations to Enoch than is included in the Bible, we read that after this righteous prophet had been shown the scenes of Israel's history, down to and beyond the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, he pleaded with God, saying: "I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth. And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah.... And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years." [1554] Isaiah, in rapturous contemplation of the eventual triumph of righteousness, exclaimed: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you"; and

again: "**Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.**"[1555] The conditions specified were not realized in the earthly life of the Redeemer; moreover the context clearly shows that the prophet's words are applicable to the last days only – the time of the ransomed of the Lord, the time of restitution, and of the triumph of Zion.

Of all Biblical scriptures relating to our subject, the utterances of the Christ Himself in the course of His earthly ministry are most direct and certain. Many of these we have already considered in the narrative of the Savior's life; the few following are sufficient for present demonstration. "**For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.**"[1556] To the apostles and the people generally He proclaimed: "**Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.**"[1557] When a bound prisoner before proud Caiaphas, Jesus answered the unlawful adjuration of the corrupt high priest, by affirming: "**I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.**"[1558]

The apostles had been so impressed with the Master's assurance that He would return to earth in power and glory, that they eagerly questioned as to the time and signs of His coming.[1559] He stated explicitly, though at the time they failed to comprehend Him, that many great events would intervene between His departure and return, including the long era of darkness associated with the apostasy.[1560] But as to the certainty of His advent in glory, as Judge, and Lord, and King, Jesus left no excuse for dubiety in the minds of His apostles. After the ascension, throughout the course of apostolic administration, the future coming of the Lord was preached with earnest emphasis.[1561]

Book of Mormon prophecies concerning the advent of the Lord in the last days are specific and definite. On the occasion of His appearing to the Nephites on the American continent shortly after His ascension from the Mount of Olives, Christ preached the gospel to assembled multitudes; "**And he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory"; and the events to follow, "even unto the great and last day.**"[1562] In granting the wish of the three Nephite disciples who desired to continue their ministry in the flesh throughout the generations to come, the Lord said unto them:

**"Ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father, unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled, according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory, with the powers of heaven; And ye shall never endure the pains of death; but when I shall come in my glory, ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an**

**eye from mortality to immortality: and then shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father.**"[1563]

## **THE COMING OF THE LORD PROCLAIMED THROUGH MODERN REVELATION**

To the Church of Jesus Christ, restored and reestablished in these the last days, the word of the Lord has come repeatedly, declaring the actuality of His second advent and the nearness of that glorious yet dreadful event. But a few months after the Church was organized, the voice of Jesus Christ was heard, admonishing the elders to vigilance and proclaiming as follows:

**"For the hour is nigh, and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe: and all the proud, and they that do wickedly, shall be as stubble, and I will burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth; for the hour is nigh, and that which was spoken by mine apostles must be fulfilled; for as they spoke so shall it come to pass; for I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand."**[1564]

In the month following, the Lord gave instructions to certain elders, concluding with these portentous words:

**"Wherefore, be faithful, praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom: for behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that I come quickly. Even so. Amen."**[1565]

Again we read in a later revelation:

**"And blessed are you because you have believed; and more blessed are you because you are called of me to preach my gospel, to lift up your voice as with the sound of a trump, both long and loud, and cry repentance unto a crooked and perverse generation, preparing the way of the Lord for his second coming; for behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, the time is soon at hand, that I shall come in a cloud with power and great glory, and it shall be a great day at the time of my coming, for all nations shall tremble."**[1566]

The Lord Jesus addressed a general revelation to His Church in March 1831, through which His earlier predictions uttered to the Twelve shortly before His betrayal were made plain, and the assurances of His glorious coming were thus reiterated:

**"Ye look and behold the fig-trees, and ye see them with your eyes, and ye say when they begin to shoot forth, and their leaves are yet tender, that summer is now nigh at**

hand; even so it shall be in that day when they shall see all these things, then shall they know that the hour is nigh. And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the Son of man: And they shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath; and they shall behold blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke; and before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and stars fall from heaven; and the remnant shall be gathered unto this place, and then they shall look for me, and, behold, I will come; and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory, with all the holy angels; and he that watches not for me shall be cut off."<sup>[1567]</sup>

So near is the consummation that the intervening period is called "today"; and, in applying this time designation in the year 1831, the Lord said:

"Behold, now it is called today (until the coming of the Son of man), and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned (at his coming); For after today cometh the burning: this is speaking after the manner of the Lord; for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of hosts: and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon. Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today."<sup>[1568]</sup>

## THE TIME AND ACCOMPANIMENTS OF THE LORD'S COMING.

The date of the future advent of Christ has never been revealed to man. To the inquiring apostles who labored with the Master, He said: "**But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.**"<sup>[1569]</sup> In the present age, a similar declaration has been made by the Father: "**I, the Lord God, have spoken it, but the hour and the day no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor shall they know until he comes.**"<sup>[1570]</sup> Only through watchfulness and prayer may the signs of the times be correctly interpreted and the imminence of the Lord's appearing be apprehended. To the unwatchful and the wicked the event will be as sudden and unexpected as the coming of a thief in the night.<sup>[1571]</sup> But we are not left without definite information as to precedent signs. Biblical prophecies bearing upon this subject we have heretofore considered.<sup>[1572]</sup> As later scriptures affirm: "**Before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed.**"<sup>[1573]</sup> War shall become so general that every man who will not take arms against his neighbor must of necessity flee to the land of Zion for safety.<sup>[1574]</sup> Ephraim shall assemble in Zion on the western continent, and Judah shall be again established in the east; and the cities of Zion and Jerusalem shall be the capitals of the world empire,

over which Messiah shall reign in undisputed authority. The Lost Tribes shall be brought forth from the place where God has hidden them through the centuries and receive their long deferred blessings at the hands of Ephraim. The people of Israel shall be restored from their scattered condition.[1575]

*If anyone sets a date for the "end of the world", that person has not read the scriptures and is a false leader and a fool.*

In addressing the elders of His Church in 1832, the Lord urged upon them the imperative need of devoted diligence, and said:

**"Abide ye in the liberty wherewith ye are made free; entangle not yourselves in sin but let your hands be clean, until the Lord come; For not many days hence and the earth shall tremble and reel to and fro as a drunken man, and the sun shall hide his face, and shall refuse to give light, and the moon shall be bathed in blood, and the stars shall become exceeding angry, and shall cast themselves down as a fig that falleth from off a fig tree. And after your testimony cometh wrath and indignation upon the people; For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground, and shall not be able to stand. And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunders, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea, heaving themselves beyond their bounds. And all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people; And angels shall fly through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, sounding the trump of God, saying, Prepare ye, prepare ye, O inhabitants of the earth; for the judgment of our God is come: behold, and lo! the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."**[1576]

A characteristic of present-day revelation is the reiteration of the fact that the event is nigh at hand, "even at the doors." The fateful time is repeatedly designated in scripture, **"the great and dreadful day of the Lord."**[1577] Fearful indeed will it be to individuals, families, and nations, who have so far sunk into sin as to have forfeited their claim to mercy. The time is not that of the final judgment – when the whole race of mankind shall stand in the resurrected state before the bar of God – nevertheless it shall be a time of unprecedented blessing unto the righteous and of condemnation and vengeance upon the wicked.[1578] With Christ shall come those who have already been resurrected; and His approach shall be the means of inaugurating a general resurrection of the righteous dead, while the pure and just who are still in the flesh shall be instantaneously changed from the mortal to the immortal state and shall be caught up with the newly resurrected to meet the Lord and His celestial company, and shall descend with Him. To this effect did Paul prophesy: **"Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.... For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up**

**together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.**"[1579] Compare the promise made to the Three Nephites: "And ye shall never endure the pains of death; but when I shall come in my glory, ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality."[1580] Of the superlative glories awaiting the righteous when the Lord shall come, we have received in this day a partial description as follows: **"And the face of the Lord shall be unveiled; and the saints that are upon the earth, who are alive, shall be quickened, and be caught up to meet him."**[1581] **The heathen nations shall be redeemed and have part in the first resurrection.**[1582]

## **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO COME.**

The coming of Christ in the last days, accompanied by the apostles of old[1583] and by the resurrected saints, is to mark the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. The faithful apostles who were with Jesus in His earthly ministry are to be enthroned as judges of the whole house of Israel;[1584] they will judge the Nephite Twelve, who in turn will be empowered to judge the descendants of Lehi, or that branch of the Israelitish nation which was established upon the western continent.[1585]

While the expressions "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven" are used in the Bible synonymously or interchangeably, later revelation gives to each a distinctive meaning. The Kingdom of God is the Church established by divine authority upon the earth; this institution asserts no claim to temporal rule over nations; its sceptre of power is that of the Holy Priesthood, to be used in the preaching of the gospel and in administering its ordinances for the salvation of mankind living and dead. The Kingdom of Heaven is the divinely ordained system of government and dominion in all matters, temporal and spiritual; this will be established on earth only when its rightful Head, the King of kings, Jesus the Christ, comes to reign. His administration will be one of order, operated through the agency of His commissioned representatives invested with the Holy Priesthood. When Christ appears in His glory, and not before, will be realized a complete fulfillment of the supplication: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The Kingdom of God has been established among men to prepare them for the Kingdom of Heaven which shall come; and in the blessed reign of Christ the King shall the two be made one. The relationship between them has been revealed to the Church in this wise:

**"Hearken, and lo, a voice as of one from on high, who is mighty and powerful, whose going forth is unto the ends of the earth, yea, whose voice is unto men – Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall**

roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth; Yea, a voice crying—Prepare ye the way of the Lord, prepare ye the supper of the Lamb, make ready for the Bridegroom; Pray unto the Lord, call upon his holy name, make known his wonderful works among the people; Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth; Wherefore may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thy enemies may be subdued for thine is the honour, power and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."[1586]

## THE MILLENNIUM

The inauguration of Christ's reign on earth is to be the beginning of a period that shall be distinct in many important particulars from all precedent and subsequent time; and the Lord shall reign with His people a thousand years. The government of individuals, communities and nations throughout this Millennium is to be that of a perfect theocracy, with Jesus the Christ as Lord and King. The more wicked part of the race shall have been destroyed; and during the period Satan shall be bound "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled"; while the just shall share with Christ in rightful rule and dominion. The righteous dead shall have come forth from their graves, while the wicked shall remain unresurrected until the thousand years be past.[1587] Men yet in the flesh shall mingle with immortalized beings; children shall grow to maturity and then die in peace or be changed to immortality "in the twinkling of an eye."[1588] There shall be surcease of enmity between man and beast; the venom of serpents and the ferocity of the brute creation shall be done away, and love shall be the dominant power of control. Among the earliest revelations on the subject is that given to Enoch; and in this the return of that prophet and his righteous people with Christ in the last days was thus assured:

**"And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest. And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years."**[1589]

In these latter days the Lord has thus spoken, requiring preparation for the Millennial era, and describing in part the glories thereof:

**"And prepare for the revelation which is to come, when the veil of the covering of my temple, in my tabernacle, which hideth the earth, shall be taken off, and all flesh shall see me together. And every corruptible thing, both of man, or of the beasts of the field, or of the fowls of the heavens, or of the fish of the sea, that dwell upon all the face of the earth, shall be consumed; And also that of element shall melt with fervent heat; and all things shall become new, that my knowledge and glory may dwell upon all the earth. And in that day the enmity of man, and the enmity of beasts, yea, the enmity of all flesh, shall cease from before my face. And in that day whatsoever any man shall ask, it shall be given unto him. And in that day Satan shall not have power to tempt any man. And there shall be no sorrow because there is no death. In that day an infant shall not die until he is old, and his life shall be as the age of a tree, and when he dies he shall not sleep, (that is to say in the earth,) but shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and shall be caught up, and his rest shall be glorious. Yea, verily I say unto you, in that day when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things."**[1590]

The Millennium is to precede the time designated in scriptural phrase "the end of the world." When the thousand years are passed, Satan shall be loosed for a little season, and the final test of man's integrity to God shall ensue. Such as are prone to impurity of heart shall yield to temptation while the righteous shall endure to the end.[1591] A revelation to this effect was given the Church in 1831, in part as follows:

*Note: The Millennium will come BEFORE "the end of the world".*

**"For the great Millennium, of which I have spoken by the mouth of my servants, shall come; For Satan shall be bound, and when he is loosed again, he shall only reign for a little season, and then cometh the end of the earth; And he that liveth in righteousness shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and the earth shall pass away so as by fire; And the wicked shall go away into unquenchable fire, and their end no man knoweth on earth, nor ever shall know, until they come before me in judgment. Harken ye to these words: Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds."**[1592]

*Some people call it the "Rapture" (which is never mentioned in the Bible), but the closest thing to a rapture would be this statement – "And he that liveth in righteousness shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and the earth shall pass away so as by fire;" ...So the righteous will be "twinkled".*

## **THE CELESTIAL CONSUMMATION**

The vanquishment of Satan and his hosts shall be complete. The dead, small and great, all who have breathed the breath of life on earth, shall be resurrected – every soul that has tabernacled in flesh, whether good or evil – and shall stand before God, to be

judged according to the record as written in the books.[1593] So shall be brought to glorious consummation the mission of the Christ. **"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet."**[1594] Then shall the Lord Jesus "deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father spotless, saying – I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign for ever and ever."[1595] The earth shall pass to its glorified and celestialized condition, an eternal abode for the exalted sons and daughters of God.[1596] Forever shall they reign, kings and priests to the Most High, redeemed, sanctified, and exalted through their Lord and God **JESUS THE CHRIST.**

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 42

1. **Enoch**, spoken of by Jude as **"the seventh from Adam."** was the father of Methuselah. In Genesis 5:24 we read: "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." From the Lord's revelation to Moses we learn that Enoch was a mighty man, favored of God because of his righteousness, and a leader of and revelator to his people. Through his agency a city was built, the inhabitants of which excelled in righteous living to such an extent that they were of one heart and one mind and had no poor among them. It was called the City of Holiness or Zion. The residue of the race were all corrupt in the sight of the Lord. Enoch and his people were taken from the earth and are to return with Christ at His coming. (P. of G.P., Moses 7:12-21, 68, 69; compare Doc. and Cov. 45:11, 12.)

2. **Heathen in the First Resurrection** – **"And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection; and it shall be tolerable for them."** (Doc. and Cov. 45:54.) Such is the word of the Lord with respect to those benighted peoples who live and die in ignorance of the laws of the gospel. This affirmation is sustained by other scriptures, and by a consideration of the principles of true justice according to which humanity is to be judged. Man shall be accounted blameless or guilty according to his deeds as interpreted in the light of the law under which he is required to live. It is inconsistent with our conception of a just God to believe Him capable of inflicting condemnation upon any one for non-compliance with a requirement of which the person had no knowledge. Nevertheless, the laws of the gospel cannot be suspended even in the case of those who have sinned in darkness and ignorance; but it is reasonable to believe that the plan of redemption shall afford such benighted ones an opportunity of learning the laws of God; and, as

fast as they so learn, will obedience be required on pain of the penalty. See *Articles of Faith*, xxi:33.

**3. Regeneration of the Earth**— In speaking of the graded and progressive glories provided for His creations, and of the laws of regeneration and sanctification, the Lord has thus spoken through revelation in the present dispensation: "**And again, verily I say unto you, the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law. Wherefore it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it.**" (Doc. and Cov. 88:25, 26.) This appointed change, by which the earth shall pass to the condition of a celestialized world, is referred to in numerous scriptures as the institution of "**a new heaven and a new earth**" (Rev. 21:1, 3, 4; B. of M., Ether 13:9; Doc. and Cov. 29:23).

## FOOTNOTES

[1551] Acts 1:11.

[1552] See chapters 38 and 41 herein; see also Doc. and Cov. 110:8; compare 36:8; 42:36; 97:15, 16; 109:5; 124:27; 133:2.

[1553] Jude 14, 15; compare Gen. 5:18; see next reference following.

[1554] P. of G.P., Moses 7:59, 60, 65. Note 1, end of chapter.

[1555] Isa. 35:4; and 40:10; see also Psalms 50:3; Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6; compare Note 1 in chapter 11 herein.

[1556] Matt. 16:27.

[1557] Mark 8:38; compare Luke 9:26.

[1558] Matt. 26:64.

[1559] Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:7; Acts 1:6; compare chapter 11 herein.

[1560] Matt. 24; see chapters 32 and 40 herein.

[1561] See Acts 3:20, 21; 1 Cor. 4:5; 11:26; Philip. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-18; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8; 1 Tim. 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13; James 5:7, 8; 1 Peter 1:5-7; 4:13; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14, etc.

[1562] B. of M., 3 Nephi 26:3, 4.

[1563] B. of M., 3 Nephi 28:7, 8; see also 29:2.

[1564] Doc. and Cov. 29:9-11.

[1565] Doc. and Cov. 33:17, 18.

[1566] Doc. and Cov. 34:4-8.

[1567] Doc. and Cov. 45:37-44; compare this section with Matt. 24, and Luke 21:5-36. See also Doc. and Cov. 49:23-28.

[1568] Doc. and Cov. 64:23-25.

[1569] Matt. 24:36; compare Mark 13:32-37; see chapters 32 and 37 herein.

[1570] Doc. and Cov. 49:7; the context shows that the words are those of the Father.

[1571] Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10; compare Matt. 24:43, 44; 25:13; Luke 12:39, 40; see chapter 32 herein.

[1572] See chapter 32 herein.

[1573] Doc. and Cov. 49:24, 25.

[1574] Doc. and Cov. 45:68-71.

[1575] Doc. and Cov. 133:7-14, 21-35; "Articles of Faith," xviii and xix.

[1576] Doc. and Cov. 88:86-92.

[1577] Doc. and Cov. 110:14, 16; compare Joel 2:31; Mal. 4:5; B. of M., 3 Nephi 25:5.

[1578] Doc. and Cov. 29:11-17.

- [1579] 1 Thess. 4:14-17.
- [1580] B. of M., 3 Nephi 28:8; see chapter 39 herein.
- [1581] Doc. and Cov. 88:95-98.
- [1582] Note 2, end of chapter.
- [1583] Doc. and Cov. 29:12.
- [1584] Doc. and Cov. 29:12; compare Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; See chapter 27 herein.
- [1585] B. of M., 3 Nephi 27:27; compare 1 Nephi 12:9, 10; Mormon 3:18, 19.
- [1586] Doc. and Cov. 65. For a fuller treatment of this subject as also the distinction between Church and Kingdom, see "Articles of Faith," xx:16-26.
- [1587] Rev. 20:1-6; compare Doc. and Cov. 43:18.
- [1588] Doc. and Cov. 63:50-51; 101:30; compare 1 Cor. 15:51-57.
- [1589] P. of G.P., Moses 7:63-65.
- [1590] Doc. and Cov. 101:23-32; compare Isa. 65:17-25 and 11:6-9; see also Doc. and Cov. 29:11, 22; 43:30; 63:51.
- [1591] Rev. 20:7-15.
- [1592] Doc and Cov. 43:30-34. See also "Articles of Faith," xx:27-31.
- [1593] Rev. 20:11-15.
- [1594] 1 Cor. 15:24-27.
- [1595] Doc. and Cov. 76:107, 108.
- [1596] Note 3, end of chapter.