

Restoration

03/06

“It has been bourne in upon my soul that one of my descendants will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith.” Asael Smith; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:4)

Restoration Defined

(Acts 3:19-21; Ephesians 1:10; Ephesians 4:5)

“If it is true that these New Testament authors foretold both an apostasy and a restoration, then the traditional concept of many equally true Christian sects must give way to the stern reality that there is and can be but one true Church on earth, one place where legal administrators chart the true course to salvation.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *CR*, October 1967, pg. 42-43)

“We know that all truth does emanate from God and is therefore unchangeable, consistent, and unified. Consequently, not all Christian churches with their dissimilar teachings can provide a fulness of truth. My intent is to assert with testimony and persuasion of scripture the reasons there can be only one Lord, one acceptable faith, one baptism, and one true church. Then if any of you are convinced you are mistaken in your present beliefs, you should have the courage to investigate and the faith to change and follow the true path Christ has outlined that assures one’s eternal happiness.” (Delbert L. Stapley, *Ensign*, May 1977, pg. 21)

Some may argue that there was no formal Church organization in New Testament times since the King James translation of Luke 17:21 says that the ‘kingdom of God is within you.’ Yet the JST and numerous other translations correct the obvious tampering of the text with words like ‘among you’, ‘here with you’, or ‘in the midst of you’.

The New Testament clearly indicates that the Christians in Christ’s day belonged to a formal organization. Both Ephesians 1 17-22 and Ephesians 5:23 indicates that God the Father assigned Jesus Christ to be the ‘head’ of ‘the church’ [*ekklesia*]. We find the Savior referring to ‘my church’ [*ekklesia*] in Matthew 16:18 and New Testament scholars admitting that at least in this case the term *ekklesia* certainly means the Church was a visible structure and society, having authoritative officials and functions. Lastly the community of saints is referred to as ‘the church of God’ in Acts 20:28, Galatians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 10:32, 11:22, and 15:9.

In fact the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ is that a formal organization or church has always existed since the beginning. Joseph Smith declared:

‘We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.’ (A of F 1:6) **Webster’s 1828 dictionary define ‘primitive’ as beginning, original, or first.** The fact is that the ‘church’ of God has existed in all generations (D&C 84:17), and was not only a formal organization in the New Testament, but also in the Old Testament. (1 Nephi 4:26; Mosiah 18:17, 21:30, 23:16, 25:18-22, etc.)

Recognizing a Restoration

(1Nephi 13:12-19; D&C 101:80; Joel 2:28-29; D&C 20:5-8)

“The restoration of the gospel should be viewed through a perspective of two thousand years.

It was not a sudden thing. Neither was it ‘done in a corner,’...

In its preparation it was a world movement requiring centuries of time. It involved the discovery of a new continent and its colonization by selected peoples.

It encompassed wars between world powers of two centuries ago. Even the renaissance of medieval Europe was a part of this mighty drama, for an awakening of mankind was stimulated in the Dark Ages.

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The fundamental element of freedom in the world—the fight for both religious and political liberty—the firm establishment of human rights beginning with the Magna Charta were all involved. (Mark E. Petersen, *The Great Prologue*, pg. 1)

“When Joel by inspiration stated that the Lord would pour out his spirit upon all flesh, he did not mean that this Spirit which should be poured in such abundance, was to be the Holy Ghost. That the Holy Ghost would be received by some is evident, but it was to be the Light of Christ that was to be so universally received. The many remarkable events, discoveries, and inventions of the later centuries, particularly since the restoration of the gospel, that have been poured out prove this thesis to be true. The time of preparation for the restoration of the gospel commenced several hundred years ago, when there was no one on the earth to perform legal baptisms or bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost. The inspiration given to the so-called reformers, the invention of printing and the making of books that could be placed in the hands of the multitude, the discovery of the western hemisphere and a thousand other things were the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2:155)

1492 - *Columbus* Discovers America (1 Nephi 13:12)

“We interpret [1 Nephi 13:12] to refer to Columbus. It is interesting to note that the Spirit of God wrought upon him. After reading that long biography, a Pulitzer winner of forty years ago, titled *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*—I have no doubt that Christopher Columbus was a man of faith, as well as a man of indomitable determination.

I recognize that in this anniversary year a host of critics have spoken out against him. I do not dispute that there were others who came to this Western Hemisphere before him. But it was he who in faith lighted a lamp to look for a new way to China and who in the process discovered America. His was an awesome undertaking—to sail west across the unknown seas farther than any before him of his generation. He it was who, in spite of the terror of the unknown and the complaints and near mutiny of his crew, sailed on with frequent prayers to the Almighty for guidance. In his reports to the sovereigns of Spain, Columbus repeatedly asserted that his voyage was for the glory of God and the spread of the Christian faith. Properly do we honor him for his unyielding strength in the face of uncertainty and danger.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 1992, pg. 52)

1517 - *Martin Luther's 95 item* Thesis was nailed to the door of the Wittenburg Chapel (October 31)

1517-1648 - Period in Church History known as '*The Reformation*'

REFORMERS PREPARED WAY FOR RESTORATION

“In preparation for this restoration the Lord raised up noble men, such as Luther, Calvin, Knox and others whom we call reformers, and gave them power to break the shackles which bound the people and denied them the sacred right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. The Almighty gave men their agency, or the power to act for themselves in choosing good or evil, before the foundation of the earth was laid; but the dragon, from the beginning when he was cast out of heaven, has endeavored to deprive men of this great gift of God....

Saints pay all honor to these great and fearless reformers, who shattered the fetters which bound the religious world. The Lord was their Protector in this mission, which was fraught with many perils. In that day, however, the time had not come for the restoration of the fulness of the gospel. The work of the reformers was of great importance, but it was a preparatory work, and they shall in no wise lose their well earned reward.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *DS*, 1:174-175)

“I have a great many misgivings about the intelligence that men boast so much of in this enlightened day. There were men in those dark ages who could commune with God, and who, by the power of faith, could draw aside the curtain of eternity and gaze upon the invisible world. There were men who could tell the destiny of the human family, and the events which would transpire throughout every subsequent period of time until the final winding-up scene. There were men who could gaze upon the face of God, have the ministering of angels, and unfold the future destinies of the world. If those were dark ages I pray God to give me a little darkness, and deliver me from the light and intelligence that prevail in our day;” (John Taylor, *JD*, 16:197-198)

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“We are indebted to the men and women who kept the light of faith and learning alive through the centuries to the present day. We have only to contrast the lesser light that exists among peoples unfamiliar with the names of God and Jesus Christ to realize the great contribution made by Christian teachers through the ages. We honor them as servants of God.” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 1995, pg. 85)

1620 - *Pilgrims/Puritans* come to America seeking religious freedom (1 Nephi 13:13)

“This restoration was preceded by a long period of preparation. The Pilgrims and other Europeans were inspired to find this American haven of refuge and thus people this land with honest and God-fearing citizens. Washington and his fellows were inspired to revolt from England and bring political liberty to this land, along with the more valuable treasure of religious liberty so that the soil might be prepared for the seed of the truth when it should again be sown. (Spencer W. Kimball, *BYU Speeches* 1977, Absolute Truth, pg. 141)

1776 - *Declaration of Independence* (1 Nephi 13:17-19)

“I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it again in my life, that those men who laid the foundation of this American government and signed the Declaration of Independence were the best spirits the God of heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men. General Washington and all the men that labored for the purpose were inspired of the Lord.”(Wilford Woodruff, *CR*, April 1898, pg. 89-90)

“No People can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men more than the People of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.” (George Washington; William Bennett, *Our Sacred Honor: Words of Advice from the Founders in Stories, Letters, Poems, and Speeches*, pg. 381-382)

1787/1791 - *Constitution of the United States* (April 6) /*Bill of Rights* (D&C 101:80)

“God, the Father of us all, uses the men of the earth, especially good men, to accomplish his purposes. It has been true in the past, it is true today, it will be true in the future.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, July 1972, pg. 59)

1790 - *Palmyra* Established

1805 - *Birth of Joseph Smith Jr.* (December 23) Sharon, Vermont [JS-History 1:3]

1811 - Joseph Smith Sr. family moves to Lebanon, New Hampshire [JS-History 1:3]

1812 - War of 1812

1816 - Joseph Smith Sr. family moves to Palmyra, New York [JS-History 1:4]

1820 - Joseph Smith Jr. has his ‘*First Vision*’ (April 6) [JS-History 1:14]

1823 - Joseph Smith Jr. is visited by the angel Moroni [JS-History 1:29]

1827 - Joseph Smith Jr. obtains the ‘golden plates’ [JS-History 1:59]

1829 - Joseph Smith Jr. is visited by the angel John the Baptist who restores the Aaronic Priesthood (May 15) [JS-History 1:72; D&C 13:1]

1829 - Joseph Smith Jr. is visited by the angels Peter, James and John who restore the Melchizedek Priesthood (May 15 - May 29)[D&C 13 heading]

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1829 - Joseph Smith Jr. completes the translation of the ‘golden plates’ (June)

1830 - Joseph Smith Jr. publishes The Book of Mormon (March)

1830 - The Official Organization and Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ in these last-days (April 6)

“When the Lord poured out His spirit things began to happen, until we can hardly keep track of them....back in 1830 the head of the United States Patent Office suggested his office be closed because there was so little use made of it. It had only had a few applications up to that time. Since then more than two and one-half million patents have been issued because the Lord has been pouring out His spirit upon all flesh.” (Legrand Richards, *BYU Speeches*, February 10, 1960)

The most important part of this great restoration of all things is, of course, the restoration of the gospel, but in the eternal sense all of the Lord’s dealings are part of his gospel plan. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Restoration of All Things*, pg. 6-319)

The Unmistakable Signs of a Restoration of All Things:

- 1 - 1830 - The world population passed One Billion.
- 2 - 1830 - Changes in Politics. (The words ‘Socialism’ & ‘Conservative’ first appear)
- 3 - 1830 - Changes in Science. (The words ‘Sociology’ - the science of man & ‘Scientist’ - a declining subject, first appear)
- 4 - 1830 - Sir Charles Lyall challenges traditional beliefs by the publishing of ‘Principles of Geology.’
- 5 - 1830 - The emergence of the Railways spreading industrial revolution.
- 6 - 1830 - The invention of the steam-powered printing press beginning the era of mass media.
- 7 - 1830 - Joseph Henry invented the first practical telegraph. [Sending an induced current more than one mile long] while Michael Faraday did the same thing, providing the experimental foundation upon which James Clark Maxwell erected classical electromagnetic field theory.
- 8 - 1830 - Charles Babbage dreamed of an ‘analytical engine’ based on data and sequential control through branching and looping. In other words, a hundred years ahead of time, the invention of the modern computer.

“Do you understand the steps that were taken? There was the great apostasy, then the preservation of the Western Hemisphere, next Columbus and the colonization movement, the Revolutionary War to set the colonists free, and then a constitutional form of government which guaranteed free speech and free religion, free assembly and free press.

All of these events were acts of God leading up to one thing—the restoration of the gospel. It was only half a dozen years or so after America was established as a free constitutional nation that one of the great spirits in the preexistence was sent to earth to be born on December 23, 1805, in a little farmhouse; and he was named Joseph Smith. (Mark E. Petersen, *BYU Speeches*, 1974, The Great Prologue, pg. 468)

Marks of a Restoration

(JST Revelation 12:14-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, JST 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9; D&C 52 heading; Daniel 2:44-45)

NOTE - The God of Nature (1 Nephi 19:12) calls for help and the earth answers the call (Moses 7:62) as in the days of Moses. (Numbers 16:32)

“...the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah

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shall say the work is done.” (Joseph Smith, *HC*, 4:540)

Important Conference of June 3rd-6th, at Kirtland.

“On the 3rd of June, the Elders from the various parts of the country where they were laboring, came in; and the conference before appointed, convened in Kirtland; **and the Lord displayed His power to the most perfect satisfaction of the Saints. The man of sin was revealed, and the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood was manifested and conferred for the first time upon several of the Elders.** It was clearly evident that the Lord gave us power in proportion to the work to be done, and strength according to the race set before us, and grace and help as our needs required.”

Footnote 2 - The manner in which the man of sin was revealed and the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood manifested, is related by John Whitmer, in his *History of the Church* (ch. 7). **After giving the names of those who were ordained High Priests the day on which the two powers were manifested, he says: ‘Joseph Smith, Jun., prophesied the day previous that the man of sin would be revealed. While the Lord poured out His Spirit upon His servants, the devil took a notion to make known his power. He bound Harvey Whitlock and John Murdock so that they could not speak, and others were affected but the Lord showed to Joseph, the seer, the design of the thing; he commanded the devil in the name of Christ, and he departed, to our joy and comfort.’** (Joseph Smith, *HC*, 1: 175)

Revealing a Restoration

(Isaiah 29:13-14; D&C 1:30)

“Well, the Lord be praised. Surely this is ‘a marvelous work and a wonder,’ is it not? You cannot improve that definition? There is no use trying to elaborate upon it. You might speak for a month about ‘Mormonism,’ and you could not get beyond saying, it is a ‘marvelous work and a wonder,’ almost beyond human understanding and quite beyond full explanation.” (Rudger Clawson, *CR*, April 1920, pg. 65-66)

- Doctrines (Godhead, Satan, Premortal Life, Creation, Fall, Resurrection, Three Degrees of Glory)
- Gifts of the Spirit (Miracles, Prophecy, Revelation, Visions and Dreams, Raising the Dead)
- Ordinances (Baptism, Gift of the Holy Ghost, Endowments, Prayer Circles, Eternal Marriage)
- Practices (Tithing, Fasting, Missionary Work, Word of Wisdom, Work for the Dead)
- Priesthood and its Offices (Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood with all its Keys, Patriarch, Apostle)
- Scripture (Restoration of the Bible (JST), Book of Mormon, Modern Scripture)

“There is no more self-evident truth in this world, there is nothing in all eternity more obvious than that there is and can be only one true Church. A true Church does not create itself any more than man creates God, or resurrects himself, or establishes for himself a celestial heaven. All churches may be false, but only one can be true, simply because religion comes from God, and God is not the author of confusion.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *DNTC*, 2:506-507)

“If God had a Church it would not be split up into factions, and that if He taught one society to worship one way, and administer in one set of ordinances, He would not teach another, principles which were diametrically opposed.” (Joseph Smith, *HC*, 4:536)

“We did not invent the doctrine of the only true church. It came from the Lord. Whatever perception others have of us, however presumptuous we appear to be, whatever criticism is directed to us, we must teach it to all who will listen.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, November 1985, pg. 82)