

Prophecies of Joseph Smith and Their Literal Fulfillment—The Rise of the Church and the Gathering—Martyrdom of the Saints and Flight of the Church to the Rocky Mountains—The Great United States Rebellion—The Gospel to Be Preached to the Gentiles; Then to the Jews—Plagues of the Last Days—Millennial Reign

Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, Aug. 26, 1876.

A little upwards of forty-six years ago, the Lord our God, through the administration of holy angels, organized his Church in the State of New York, and called men to the ministry, commanding them to go forth as missionaries, and preach to the people of the United States. They, in obedience to the command, went forth in their weakness, commencing their labors in the State of New York, and succeeded in baptizing believers, and organizing branches of the Church. From that day to the present, the Lord has been with his servants, and with the people who have embraced the message they proclaim.

In connection with the establishing of this Church, the Lord inaugurated the Gathering, which is peculiar to the dispensation in which we live. This work of gathering of the people, has continued for forty-six years, and we can behold its results—a people settled throughout these mountain valleys, numbering a hundred and fifty thousand.

I have often reflected upon the early prophecies that were given through our Prophet, Joseph Smith, whom the Lord called to organize his Church in this last dispensation, and have often marveled at their literal fulfillment. I will refer to some of them.

It is well known that the Book of Mormon was translated by Joseph Smith, from certain plates which he discovered, deposited in a certain hill, anciently called Cumorah, which is situated in Ontario County, State of New York, having previously been shown the place in open vision. This book was translated, and its first edition of five thousand copies was published, before the organization of this Church. It was stated in that book, that a Church should arise, and the people who should embrace the Gospel which it contained, should be gathered together into one body. For the fulfillment of this, I have only to refer you to the people, the body of this Church, inhabiting these mountain vales. This prophecy also speaks of the extent of this future work—it should not only be preached to the people of this American Continent, but it should be proclaimed to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, under heaven, and the gathering should be from all these nations.

An impostor may prophesy, but he cannot fulfill his own prophecies. If Joseph Smith was an impostor, as the world say he was, how could he know beforehand of the rise of this Church, and that the Gospel would be preached in all parts of this nation? Still more, how could he know, that it would go to every land, and be proclaimed throughout every nation of the earth, and even to those inhabiting the islands of the sea? Has this been fulfilled? All you have to do is to make yourselves acquainted with the fact. You will find that the Gospel message has been carried out by our missionaries to the nations of Great Britain and Ireland, to France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and the countries of Scandinavia, to Austria and Russia, to Asia and Africa, to Australia and the island of New Zealand, and the various islands of the South Pacific Ocean, as well as to the Sandwich and Society Islands. Among all these nations, this work has gone in fulfillment of prophecy, published before there was any Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Joseph Smith, therefore, so far as the fulfillment of his prophecies is concerned, has so much to establish the divinity of his mission.

Let us refer still further to the prophecies contained in the Book of Mormon. We read in that book, that not only a Church should arise, etc., but that the blood of the Saints who should embrace its faith, should cry from the ground to the God of heaven, against the inhabitants of this nation. How unlikely a thing to be fulfilled! Here, upon this land, is one of the most free governments given to man, bestowing upon all, civil and religious liberty. In other lands, persecution existed in consequence of men's religious convictions; here all religious societies enjoyed the freedom of religious liberty to the fullest extent. If an impostor were going to prophesy, would he not be most likely to predict something that would suit the popular feeling of the people, something that would naturally come to

pass? But for him to prophesy that the blood of the Saints, who were yet unconverted, should cry unto God for vengeance, against a people who glorified in their freedom, who could believe it? The people said such a thing never could come to pass; Joseph Smith must be an impostor. But how long was it before this met with its fulfillment? History shows that three years after the rise of this Church, the Latter-day Saints, numbering some twelve hundred persons, were settled in Jackson, one of the western counties of Missouri, where they possessed flourishing homes, which they had made out of the lands they had bought of the United States Government, and which they had paid for, and where, in consequence of their having preached the ancient Gospel, which had been restored to the earth through the ministration of angels, they met with serious opposition, insomuch that they were finally driven *en masse* from their possessions, their homes were torn down and destroyed, their animals were shot down as you would shoot the wild beasts of the forest, their hay stacks were burned, and their corn fields despoiled, and many of the Saints were also shot dead by the hands of their persecutors. What for? Was it because they had committed crimes that merited this treatment? No, their court records do not show a single instance of our people having broken the laws. Was it polygamy? No, for the principle of plural marriage was not known among us then. They said, "You proclaim that God is a God of revelation. We do not believe it. You say that God has reorganized his Church on the earth, according to the ancient pattern. We do not believe it. We do not wish such doctrines, we do not wish our families corrupted by believing in them, for prophets, and new revelation, and miracles are all done away with; therefore you must leave us. We have pledged ourselves, our lives, and all we possess, to drive you from our midst." Perhaps you strangers may think I am telling you that which is false. It is written and printed by our enemies, and forms part of history; and it furnishes another testimony proving the divine calling of the boy who was inspired of the Lord to translate that book.

After we had again established ourselves in a new country, and built up a beautiful city, and when all was peaceful and prosperity attending us, this same Prophet, on assembling the Elders of this Church on a certain occasion at Nauvoo, told us that we would have to flee to the Rocky Mountains for safety. The fulfillment of this prediction is apparent to all. I might mention scores of others, and in no instance has that man uttered a single prophecy that either has not already been fulfilled, to the very letter, or will not have its fulfillment in the due time of the Lord. I will mention another prophecy, which was printed in several languages, and published among the various nations in whose languages it was printed, which was twenty-eight years reaching its fulfillment. The Lord revealed to the Prophet, Joseph Smith, that there would be a great rebellion between the Northern and Southern States, commencing in the State of South Carolina, and that it should terminate in the death and misery of many souls. This, as you all know, has been literally fulfilled. When I was a boy, I traveled extensively in the United States and the Canadas, preaching this restored Gospel. I had a manuscript copy of this revelation, which I carried in my pocket, and I was in the habit of reading it to the people among whom I traveled and preached. As a general thing the people regarded it as the height of nonsense, saying the Union was too strong to be broken; and I, they said, was led away, the victim of an impostor. I knew the prophecy was true, for the Lord had spoken to me and had given me revelation. I knew also concerning the divinity of this work. Year after year passed away, while every little while some of the acquaintances I had formerly made would say, "Well, what is going to become of that prediction? It's never going to be fulfilled." Said I, "Wait, the Lord has his set time." By and by it came along, and the first battle was fought at Charleston, South Carolina. This is another testimony that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of the Most High God; he not only foretold the coming of a great civil war at a time when statesmen even never dreamed of such a thing, but he named the very place where it should commence.

I have not time now to notice any others. I wish, however, to say more particularly to the strangers present, that God informed us immediately after the organization of this Church, that this Gospel should be preached first to the nations of the Gentiles, and then the Lord would call in his servants and give them a special mission to the scattered remnants of the house of Israel, that are among the Gentile nations. You have not heard of our trying to convert the Jews. Why? Because God has decreed and determined that he will fulfill the times of the Gentiles first, in accordance with ancient prophecy. When that time arrives, the Lord will have prepared some of the Jewish nation to receive the Gospel, and then they will gather to their own land, and rebuild their city upon its former site. You doubtless will remember those words of the Savior referring to the Jewish nation, which can be found in the 21st chapter of St. Luke—"For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down

of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." How and in what way will the Lord fulfill the times of the Gentiles? There must first be a revealed message, a Gospel message, sent to them. The preaching of this message is referred to in the 14th chapter of Revelation, by the Apostle John, who in vision saw the angel in the act of bringing it to the earth. And we are told it was to be preached to all nations which may be said to be composed of the two peoples known as the Gentiles and the Jews. But the Lord has said that "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last." Jesus came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but they rejected him, and the Apostles were moved upon to say, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles;" and they did so, the Jews having proved themselves unworthy of eternal life, "and the kingdom of God shall be taken from you," says the Savior, "and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The Gentiles, to whom the Gospel was to be given, received it, and the gifts and graces of the Church, which were before enjoyed by Israel, were now manifested among the Gentiles. But behold, they corrupted themselves, after having received the kingdom, and Paul perceived the decline of their faith, which was the beginning of the great "falling away," which he, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, said must be before the day of the Lord came. Also in the 11th chapter of Romans, Paul speaks of the Gentiles who had received the Gospel as the wild olive tree, having been grafted into the tame olive tree, and cautions them in this language—"Because of unbelief, they (Israel), were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." This, with other prophetic warnings of a similar character, was disregarded.

I will refer you to another ancient prophecy contained in the 4th chapter of the second of Timothy—"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables;" and who, he says, in the previous chapter, shall "have a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." It seems, then, that this people, whom Paul speaks of, were to have a form of godliness; they were, in other words, to be a pious people, professedly a very religious people, but were only to possess a form, lacking all power; to be destitute, therefore, of Apostles and Prophets, miracles, etc. How long was the people to continue in this state? John informs us that this state of things would continue a long time; that, instead of the Church, another great power should arise, to be called "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and abominations of the earth, presenting in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications; which should be drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." And this power was to prevail against the Saints and destroy them. How long was it to exist? Until another angel should fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to commit to the earth, with power to again administer its ordinances. To whom is the angel to bring the Gospel? The Scriptures say, the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. The Gentiles were the last to receive the Gospel in ancient times, but on its restoration by the angel in the last days, they are to receive it first, and then the Jews. But before the Jews receive it, the following words of the Savior must be fulfilled—"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," when the Gospel again will revert to that people. What do you think will bring about the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles? It must be the promulgation of the Gospel, which the angel brings, which is to be sounded in the ears of the Gentile nations; all those receiving it are to gather out from this spiritual wickedness called Babylon the Great, because God has decreed her downfall. The overthrow of Babylon is spoken of in connection with the bringing of the Gospel by the angel, who declares also, "the hour of his judgment is come." Judgment upon whom? First, upon the Gentile nations, when their times are fulfilled. In what way? By visiting upon them famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes; nation rising against nation in war, etc., until the Gentile nations are overthrown. Or, to speak in the language of John, who declared that after the angel shall bring the Gospel, another angel shall follow, crying with a loud voice, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication; she is fallen like a great millstone, cast into the depths of the sea, and no more place found for her.

How long will it be before the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled? This is a question I cannot fully answer. It will be in the generation that the angel comes. Forty-six years have already transpired, since the Lord sent his Gospel message to the Gentile nations; and for upwards of forty years the Saints have been gathering out from the midst of Babylon, in fulfillment of another prophecy of John—"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have

reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Remember, strangers and all, that this gathering of the people was not to result from a cunningly devised fable, or the natural scheming of man; but it should be in consequence of new revelation—a voice from heaven, commanding the people to come out from those nations where the Mother of Harlots has her seat. For it is written in the Revelation of John, that the great waters upon which the millions called Babylon sit, are nations, and multitudes, and tongues, and people. "Come out of her my people." Why? That ye be not partakers of her sins. How great are her sins? "Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Come out from Babylon, lest you be made partakers of her plagues. Death and mourning, lamentation and distress, will be visited upon all the inhabitants of the earth. But blessed are they who come out from Babylon, for they shall stand in holy places and not be moved, having kept the commandments of the Most High.

But if you Latter-day Saints who have received the message of the everlasting Gospel, and who have, in obedience to the voice from heaven, gathered out of Babylon, if you pollute yourselves by turning again to the vanities, wickedness, and corruptions of the people from whose midst you have been delivered, then, says the Lord, "Behold, judgment shall begin at the house of God," it shall begin with you Latter-day Saints, and then will go forth to the nations and kingdoms of the earth, weeping, wailing and lamentations among all people, which will come to pass just as literally as that foretold by the Prophet Joseph Smith, concerning what should take place between the North and the South.

These plagues named in John's revelations, will take place literally—"The Lord God will curse the waters of the great deep, and they shall be turned into blood." "The sea shall become as the blood of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea shall be destroyed." And the time will come, when the seven angels having the seven last trumpets will sound their trumpets literally, and the sound thereof will be heard among the nations, just preparatory to the coming of the Son of man; and all the judgments foretold by John, which are to succeed the sound of each of the seven trumpets, will be fulfilled literally upon the earth in their times and seasons. And the wicked will gnaw their tongues for peace, and will curse God, wishing to die because of their pain. These are they who repented not when the gospel was preached to them, and who became hardened in their iniquities, which were overflowing, in order that God might visit them according to all that had been spoken by the mouths of his ancient Prophets.

What will become of the Latter-day Saints? When the judgments shall have ceased, which will be visited first on the house of the Lord, they who remain will spread forth, increase and multiply; and they will build upon this continent a great and magnificent city, called Zion, or the New Jerusalem. And they will build a Temple within that city, upon which a cloud will rest by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; and upon all the assemblies of the people of Zion the Lord will create this glorious appendage, and will shed forth his loving kindness. This is the destiny of Zion, as foreseen by Isaiah and David, and many of the Prophets who have predicted concerning her.

Says one, I will wait to see if God will do these things. But peradventure, while waiting, you may be cut asunder, and your portion appointed among the unbelievers, where there are weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Woe unto them who wait to see if God will really fulfill the prophecies of his servants, and who repent not of their sins! But, blessed are they who repent as soon as they hear the sound of the message, and who turn unto the Lord their God with all their hearts, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, which bears record of the Father and the Son, and they shall be prepared for the dispensation of his providences, and hail his coming with great joy. The people of the antediluvian world waited one day too long; they waited until the flood came, when it was too late, and they were swept away, eight persons only escaping. The Savior, speaking of his second coming, said—"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Did the Lord raise up a Prophet and warn the antediluvians by new revelation? He did: and he did the same in the case of the people in the days of Lot. Will he do the same prior to his second coming? He will. He is doing it by means of his Gospel; revealed for the purpose of saving all who receive it, who gather to a place of safety, as Noah and those who

believed his message did. But the day will come when the Lord will not spare any who remain in Babylon; that will be, however, when this prophecy of Isaiah is completely fulfilled—"I will gather them from the east, and from the west; I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by name." All this is to take place in the very dispensation in which the angel should bring the Gospel, which is the dispensation of the fullness of times. The Apostle Paul also refers to the same great event, in the following language: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him." It is the purpose of God then, not to confine the gathering to earthly Saints alone. "What," says one, "are immortal beings coming down from heaven to live on this earth?" Certainly, and thus fulfill numerous prophecies in the Scriptures; one of which is, "They shall reign on the earth." Who are these persons? They are they whom John heard singing in heaven about it. They said, "Thou hast redeemed us out of every nation, kindred, tongue and people, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." What a glorious song! While we are singing about going to heaven, all heavenly beings are singing about coming back to earth to live and to reign. Why? Because this is their inheritance, they have been made worthy through the blood of the lamb, and their Redeemer will be their King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and to his dominion there shall be no end. When this takes place, then will be fulfilled the saying, that all things which are in Christ, both in heaven and on earth, shall be gathered together. The wicked, too, shall be gathered, but in bundles ready for the burning.

Marvel not, therefore, Latter-day Saints, that you have been exalted out from among the Gentile nations! Marvel not that the Lord has said to the North, give up, and to the south, keep not back, bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth! Marvel not at the Savior's parable of the gathering of all kinds of fish and bringing them to the shore! By and by, angels will come among the Latter-day Saints who have been gathered from the nations, and they will pluck out one here, and another there, putting them into their place. The separation of the fish will take place; the bad will be cast away, while the good will be reserved in vessels for the Master's use.

May the Lord who has redeemed us from among the nations bestow upon us the rich blessings of his kingdom, which he has decreed to bestow upon his people in the latter days! And may this people spread forth on the right hand and on the left; may they enlarge the place of their dwelling, and stretch forth the curtains of their habitation, until they shall become a great mountain, as the Prophet Daniel has predicted, and fill the whole earth, until the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heavens; shall be given to the Saints of the Most High God! Amen.