

THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD

* * *

NEW KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECOND COMING

One of the most glorious events of the ages is soon to occur—the Second Coming of Christ, his coming in power, dominion, and glory to reign personally upon the earth.

Through the years the events to precede and surround this promised return of the Messiah have been but dimly glimpsed and tittle known in the world. But now, by the grace of God, a flood of new light and new knowledge has been poured out relative to the imminent return of our Lord.

This new knowledge directly affects the salvation of every person who hears of it, and so all are invited to come and see what the Lord hath wrought in our day.

When will Christ come? What guideposts has he set so that we may read the signs of the times? What specific events must take place before he comes?

And what is even more important to each of us individually: “*Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?*” (Malachi 3:2.) What preparation must we make so as to be able to abide the day?

Neither reason nor experience can give answer to such questions. These are the kinds of things that must be learned by revelation or remain forever unknown. They are part of the wisdom “which the Holy Ghost teacheth,” as Paul expressed it, for “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:9-16.) To learn about the Second Coming and how it will affect each of us individually, then, we must turn to the inspired records, the scriptures.

THE PROMISE OF CHRIST’S RETURN

First, we must be very express in specifying what is meant by the Second Coming. The scriptures detail the events to attend two different appearances of the Lord among men. One appearance came in the meridian of time when he descended below all things, ministered unto his fellowmen, and worked out the infinite and eternal atonement. The other is promised for the last days when, having ascended above all things, he will return in glory, to reign in the midst of his saints.

At his first coming, Christ was born of Mary; grew to maturity; ministered among men; bore record of his Father; called the Twelve and ordained them; organized his Church;

was crucified, died, and rose again the third day; appeared to his disciples as a tangible being having a body of flesh and bones which he invited them to feel and handle, lest they think him to be only a Spirit.

Finally, in the presence of his disciples,

. . . while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

Which also said, 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.* (Acts 1:9-11; emphasis added.)

From the time of this Ascension until now, whenever there have been congregations of saints on earth, they have rejoiced in the promised return of their Messiah. Paul held out hope to the Thessalonians by saying: “For tiae Lord himseff shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16.)

Later he also said to them:

You who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.)

From these revelations we learn:

1. The resurrected Christ, a glorified personage of flesh and bones, ascended into heaven.

2. This same Jesus—glorified, tangible being that he is--will descend from heaven, in his majesty and power, attended by his mighty angels.

3. When he returns, judgment awaits those who know not God, and who have not obeyed his gospel.

WHEN CHRIST WILL COME

When will Christ come to set up his kingdom again? Since the very day of his Ascension, all of his devout followers have hoped and longed for the day of his return. Foreseeing this he was most explicit in specifying that the express time of his return would not be known in advance.

Of that day and hour knoweth no man [he told his disciples], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 24:36, 42-44.)

Certainly the very indefiniteness of the time of his promised return is designed to encourage his disciples to keep themselves in readiness, by righteousness, for his promised advent. Yet to those having general knowledge of his plans and purposes there were to be certain indications as to the possible time of his coming.

Paul wrote further to the Thessalonians: "Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; emphasis added.)

What, then, is the conclusion as to when our Lord will come?

1. The day and hour are not revealed, and will not be.
2. Yet that day will not overtake the righteous as a thief in the night. The true saints of God, those who are the children of light will be able to read the signs of the times. They will know the events that are to transpire before Christ comes, and will know whether

those events have taken place—all this, without, of course, knowing the day and the hour. Those who treasure up the Lord's word will not be deceived relative to his coming.

Our first problem, then, is to search the scriptures and find what things have been revealed as events that must take place before Christ comes. Having found these great events, we will want to know whether they have taken place or are yet future.

So, what are the scriptural conditions that must be fulfilled precedent to the Second Coming of our Lord?

SEVEN CONDITIONS PRECEDENT

Without making any attempt to list all of the events which the scriptures say must happen between the first and Second Comings of our Lord, it may, nevertheless, be highly interesting to note briefly a few of the most important. Though these events are promised in the *Bible*, it will come as a considerable surprise to many Christian people to learn what they are, and what that sacred volume actually reveals about the Second Coming. For instance:

1. Did you know that the *Bible* teaches that between the first and Second Comings of Christ, there will be a complete falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints, that there will be a universal apostasy, one that is so complete that the way of salvation will not be found anywhere among any people?
2. Did you know that the *Bible* records that Christ cannot come the second time until a period of time known as the era of restoration has commenced?
3. Did you know that the *Bible* foretells that revelation will commence again, and that the fulness of the everlasting gospel will be restored by revelation and taught in all nations before the Second Coming?
4. Did you know that the *Bible* prophesies that another volume of scripture will come forth in the last days to go hand-in-hand with the *Bible* itself in proclaiming the truths of salvation?
5. Did you know that the *Bible* promises that the remnants of scattered Israel will be gathered and the kingdom of God set up among them in a day subsequent to New Testament times?
6. Did you know that the *Bible* preserves the ancient promise that Elijah the Prophet will come to earth again before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord?
7. Did you know that the *Bible* announces that a messenger will come before the face of the Lord to prepare the way before his Second Advent?

Why is it that Christian people generally have not had these Bible teachings pointed out to them? How much do you know of the promises, and of their fulfillment? Surely the wise man will want to make a fair and honest investigation of these startling claims.

UNIVERSAL APOSTASY

Before the Second Coming of Christ, as the scriptures specify, there was to be a universal falling away or apostasy from the faith first delivered to the saints. Darkness was to cover the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people until the earth would be “defiled under the inhabitants thereof.”

All this would come because men transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broke the everlasting gospel covenant. Universal darkness was to prevail. It would be “as with the people, so with the priest.” (Isaiah 24.)

Christ, himself, had warned his disciples about these conditions, telling them that before he should come again there would be false christs, false prophets, and false doctrines, deceiving, if it were possible, even the very elect. (Matthew 24.)

This departure from the plain and pure Christianity of the Master had already begun in the very days of the ancient apostles, in consequence of which they repeatedly warned the various branches of the primitive Church to avoid being led astray by false teachings.

Apparently the Thessalonians thought that conditions then were such as to justify a hope of an immediate return of their Lord. Paul, accordingly, felt impelled to caution them with this explanation:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and by our gathering together unto him,

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

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. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; emphasis added.)

This, then, is the promise: There will be no Second Coming of Christ until the abundantly predicted universal apostasy takes place!

What of the fulfillment of this condition precedent? Has darkness covered the earth until there has been a complete falling away from primitive and perfect Christianity?

Impartial investigators need but compare the so-called systems whereunder salvation is supposedly offered to men today with that which existed in New Testament times, for conclusive answer to these questions.

Where is there a church that has the same name as the Church did in New Testament times? Where is there a church claiming the same authority, the authority of the Aaronic and the Melchizedek Priesthoods?

Where do we find apostles, prophets, and all the officers that were had anciently and which were specified as being essential to the Church until a universal unity of the faith was attained?

What of the ordinances practiced in New Testament times—baptism by immersion, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, anointing the sick with oil, baptism for the dead, for instance—here do we find them today?

And what of the many New Testament doctrines—the personal nature of God, the pre-existence of all men, degrees of glory in the hereafter, salvation for the dead, continuous revelation to those presiding over the Church, to mention only a few—where are these found?

Finally, what of the gifts of the Spirit, those signs that Christ decreed should “follow them that believe”? What people rejoices in their enjoyment in this age of the world?

None can escape the conclusion that the predicted failing away did come. As far as this condition precedent is concerned, it has been fulfilled.

AN ERA OF RESTORATION

Dark and direful apostasy was to cover the earth before Christ's Second Coming, and then, according to divine decree, there was to be ushered in an era of restoration, a time when the truths of salvation, in their purity and perfection, were to be given to men by the opening of the heavens.

“Can this be *Bible* doctrine?” asks someone who has been trained in the thinking and philosophies of modern Christianity. It certainly can be, and is.

When Peter had occasion to preach to those who had brought about the crucifixion of Christ, he did not offer them baptism for the remission of sins and membership in the Church, as he had done to others shortly before. Rather he said something about possible forgiveness in a future age of the earth's history, an age to be known as “the times of restitution of all things.”

Long mysterious to most people, these are his words:

Repent ye therefore, and be convened, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21; emphasis added.)

Now, marvel of marvels, what has Peter taught? He has told these men who “killed the Prince of life” that if there is any hope for them, it will be in a far distant day, a day of refreshing, a day when Christ (whom they crucified and who already had been preached among them) would be sent again, a day which would be the Second Coming of our Lord.

But before that great day, something of transcendent import was to take place. A period of time was to commence which is called, “the times of restitution,” or in other words the era or age of restoration, and in that age all things were to be restored “which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

Let us try and catch the full vision of this. Here is a promise that there is to be an age of restoration, a time of restitution, a period in which God will give back again all the truths, powers, and authorities pertaining to salvation in his kingdom. All that he revealed anciently, he will reveal again. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and a soul is just as precious in his sight in latter-days as in former-days.

Now, when is this era of restoration to commence? Shortly before the Second Coming, for “the heaven must receive’ Christ “until the times of restitution of all things.” That is, there can be no Second Coming of Christ until an age in the earth’s history commences which age is the era of restoration. And in that age all things which were ever had before are to be given again. Note that the promise does not require the restoration of all things before Christ comes, but only that the age of restoration shall begin. Shortly we shall inquire as to what particular things must be restored.

Has the age of restoration commenced? If so, where is knowledge about it to be found?

Since the fore part of the nineteenth century the elders of Israel have been going forth with the proclamation that the heavens have been opened, that God has spoken again, that the era of restoration is upon us.

That era began in the spring of 1820 with the glorious appearance to Joseph Smith of the Father and the Son. That devout young man—prepared from eternity to accomplish the very mission which he did perform so valiantly—had gone to the Lord to gain wisdom as to which of all the churches was right and which he should join.

In answer, he received one of the greatest visions of all times.

. . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me [he recorded].

. . . 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!*

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.” (Joseph Smith 2:16-19; emphasis added.)

Thus opened the era of restoration, the dispensation of the fulness of times in which the Lord had promised to “gather together in one all things in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:10.)

And following this the young Prophet received line upon line, precept upon precept, until once again the Church of Jesus Christ was set up on earth in all its power, glory, and perfection.

So, we have seen the promise of a restoration to precede the Second Coming (and many other scriptures bear record of the same thing), and we have seen the promised fulfillment.

RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL

One of the things Joseph Smith was told in the First Vision was that if he remained true and faithful he would be the instrument in the Lord’s hand of restoring the gospel and setting up again on earth the true Church of Jesus Christ.

This, also, was an event which had been foreseen by the prophets of old, and had been specified by them as a thing that must take place before the Second Coming.

John the Revelator saw in vision this glorious latter-day event:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having 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. (Revelation 14:6-7.)

We have seen the opening of the era of restoration. Now John bears this additional testimony:

1. The everlasting gospel—the same gospel had of old, the same system of salvation that is made up of “all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began”—is to be restored in the latter-days.
2. This restoration is to take place by angelic ministration.
3. It is to come in, an age when the predicted universal apostasy prevails, for the gospel so brought is to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people on earth. If any of them already had it, it would not be necessary to send it to them as a result of angelic ministration.
4. This restoration is to take place just before the Second Coming, for a part of the message itself is to be that the hour of God’s judgment is come. In fact, in the vision, John sees the judgments fall on Babylon immediately after the gospel is restored.

In fulfillment Moroni and other angels came bringing the knowledge, authorities, and keys necessary to the establishment and perfection of the Church on earth.

Moroni revealed the plates from which the *Book of Mormon* record was translated, and that book, a record of the American continent, contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel. Other heavenly messengers, also, came bringing priesthood and keys until the vision seen by John had full fulfillment, and the Church of Jesus Christ was again established on earth.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

This *Book of Mormon* record brought to light by Moroni is of great significance. Not only is it a record of God’s dealings with an ancient people who had the fulness of the gospel, but its coming forth was foretold by such prophets as Isaiah and Ezekiel, and its present existence proves the divinity of the great latter-day restoration which must precede the Second Coming.

Two great themes run through the writings of Isaiah. One is the coming of the promised Messiah; the other, the glories to attend the great era of restoration in the last days. In one of his great prophecies, he linked together three prophetic events:

1. The great era of darkness and apostasy to precede the Second Coming;
2. The coming forth of the *Book of Mormon* in the last days; and
3. The marvelous and wonderful work that was to bring about the restoration of the gospel.

Stay yourselves, and wonder [he said]; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

For the Lord hath poured out upon you *the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*" (Isaiah 29:9-10; emphasis added.)

So, in his poetic imagery, he describes the apostasy, adding:

And the vision of all is become unto you as *the words of a book that is sealed*, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. (Isaiah 29:11-12; emphasis added.)

Fulfillment of these prophetic words of Isaiah is found in one of the significant events attending the coming forth of the *Book of Mormon*. The words of the *Book* were delivered to the learned who declined to read them because part of the record was sealed. Thereupon Joseph Smith, a young man unlearned in the scholarship of the world, by the gift and power of God translated the record into the English language.

Isaiah then foretells how the restoration will grow out of the apostasy, in these

words:

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. (Isaiah 29:13-14.)

Then in a setting indicative of the last days, he turns back to the promised *Book*, the *Book* which was itself part of the restoration.

And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. (Isaiah 29:18-19, 24.)

Ezekiel, also prophesying of the last days, said this:

The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying,

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, *the stick of Ephraim*, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

And join them one to another into *one stick*; and *they shall become one in thine hand*.

And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take *the stick of Joseph*, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the *stick of Judah*, and *make them one stick*, and they shall be one in mine hand. (Ezekiel 37:15-19; emphasis added.)

Then follows a prediction of the latter-day gathering of Israel, and of the setting up of the Lord's sanctuary "in the midst of them forevermore." (Ezekiel 37:28.)

The *Bible*, a volume of scripture that came forth by way of the Jews, is the stick of Judah. The stick of Ephraim is the *Book of Mormon*. And those two volumes of scripture, each bearing the same witness of Christ, each teaching the same truths of salvation, have now become one in the Lord's hand.

As the prophecy of John specified, the fulness of the gospel contained in the *Book of Mormon* is now going forth to all peoples as a Witness that the hour of God's judgment, the Second Coming of our Lord, is soon to come.

And that *Book*, containing as it does the evidence of its own divinity, is a witness to all the world that the gospel has been restored, and that the graces and gifts of God are once more found among men.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

A strange question, indeed! It sounds as though the questioner thought that Israel would be gathered in from her long dispersion, and receive again the kingdom, greatness, and glory that once was hers.

But what is even more strange is the time and circumstances under which the question was asked. The occasion was that of the Ascension of Christ into heaven to take his place on the right hand of the Majesty, on high. And those who sought the information were the apostles in whose hands he was leaving all the affairs of the Church on earth.

Yes, strange indeed, for when this question was asked, Christ had already completed his mortal ministry, had set up his Church among men, had worked out the infinite and eternal atonement, had gained the victory over the grace, had spent 40 days as a resurrected being teaching his chosen witnesses “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” and now he was going to ascend into heaven and leave them.

And yet they ask him about something that is yet future, something that is to take place after New Testament times! They wanted to know about the latter-day gathering of Israel, that glorious event which nearly all the ancient prophets had foretold.

He replied: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” Then he told them that after they received power from the Holy Ghost, their work was to take the gospel “unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:2-8.)

What is it that the prophets had said about the restoration of scattered Israel?

Israel was the Lord’s chosen people of old, and in keeping with the covenants made to their fathers, he set his hand to gather them together out of Egyptian bondage and lead them to a promised land. There they served him, with varying degrees of righteousness, for many hundreds of years. Finally and gradually because of rebellion and iniquity they were scattered among many nations and their identities were lost to the world. Only a remnant remained in Palestine when our Savior came to minister among men, and even these were thereafter scattered in all nations.

The prophets foretold both the scattering and the gathering of Israel. Many passages relate these events and much detail is revealed. For our purposes, however, we need only note that the promised gathering is to begin immediately preceding the Second Coming.

Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would set his hand *the second time* to “assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” (Isaiah 11.)

Again:

It shall come to pass *in the last days*, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, 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. (Isaiah 2:2-3; emphasis added.)

When is this gathering to be? In the last days, yes; but, more specifically, just before the Second Coming of Christ. Both of these prophecies, and many others of like nature, are in millennial settings, that is, they are to take place and then the great Millennium is to be ushered in by the coming of Christ.

Thus the very next words of Isaiah’s prophecy are that Christ, having come, “shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Without quoting further from the scores of prophecies about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, suffice it to say:

1. The kingdom is to be restored to Israel in a day subsequent to New Testament times, in a day after the day of the ancient apostles. And this, necessarily, means there would have to be revelation from the Lord in the day of that restoration.

2. This gathering of Israel to the Lord’s house in the tops of the mountains is to begin “in the last days” and immediately before the Second Coming.

3. Then Christ will come and the promised millennial era of peace on earth will commence.

Has the kingdom been restored to Israel?

Indeed it has. It is part of the restitution of all things. The ecclesiastical kingdom of God on earth, the Church, was organized again on the 6th of April in 1830; the Lord’s house has been established in the tops of the mountains; and people from all nations are flowing unto it. And soon, with the glorious return of the Messiah, the political kingdom itself

will be fully established, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

THE COMING OF ELIJAH

Another event of transcendent importance that was to precede the great and dreadful day of the Lord, was the promised return of Elijah. Few prophecies have been more confusing to uninspired commentators than this prediction of Malachi:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5-6.)

How is this to be interpreted?

Simply this: The great and dreadful day of the Lord is the Second Coming of our Lord, the day when, as Paul described it, he will come to be admired by his saints, and to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel.

Before that day comes, Elijah is to return to perform a great mission, a mission involving the salvation of the living and the dead, a mission involving the keys of the sealing power.

And Elijah has come!

. . . Elijah the prophet [records the Prophet Joseph Smith], 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. (D&C 110:13-16.)

MESSENGER BEFORE HIS FACE

When our Lord made his first appearance, he sent his messenger, John the Baptist, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, to prepare the way before him. In keeping with this

merciful desire to save from wrath and vengeance all who will forsake their sins and turn to him, we might logically expect messengers to come again raising the warning voice before his second appearance. And such is the promise.

‘Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me,’ the Lord decreed through Malachi. “And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Then lest any confuse this promised appearance with that of his first coming, he goes on to say: “But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” (Malachi 3.)

Thus before the day when the Lord comes in power and judgment, even as in the former day when he came as the meek and lowly Nazarene, his messenger will prepare the way before him. And, again, this condition precedent has been fulfilled.

By revelation in modern times the Lord has said: “I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me.” (D&C 45:9.)

Joseph Smith was the agent and ambassador of truth through whom this everlasting gospel covenant was restored. Both he and the message are, accordingly, messengers to prepare the way before the Lord.

WATCH AND BE READY

This brief survey of some of the events that must happen in the world before Christ comes, leaves us with this summary:

1. Between the first and Second Comings of Christ there was to be a falling away, a universal apostasy, a time when every living being would have lost the truths of salvation. This requirement has been fulfilled abundantly.
2. Before the Second Coming there was to be an era of restoration, the commencement of a period in which God promised to restore all things that he had spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, a period to be known as the dispensation of the fulness of times. This era commenced in the spring of 1820.
3. The fulness of the everlasting gospel was to be restored by angelic ministrations. This is fulfilled.

4. A volume of latter-day scripture, a *Book* that would go hand-in-hand with the *Bible* in leading men along the path of salvation was to come forth as part of the restoration of the gospel. The *Book of Mormon* fulfills completely all of the predictions concerning this event.

5. The kingdom was to be restored to Israel, and her scattered remnants were to begin to gather from their long dispersion. The kingdom has been restored, Israel has been gathered to an appreciable extent, and this mighty work still continues.

6. Elijah of old was to return bringing keys and authorities affecting the salvation of the living and the dead. Elijah came and the sealing keys and powers which he restored are now being used in the temples of the Lord.

7. A messenger was to come, preparing the way before the face of the Lord. The messenger has come, the major part of the preparation is completed, and still the Work continues so that when that glorious day arrives there will be a people prepared for the return of their God.

Now these prerequisites to the Second Coming are all taken from the Christian *Bible*. Their fulfillment is all tied in with Joseph Smith and the restoration of the gospel. If they have not been fulfilled in Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, when and where will they be fulfilled?

Obviously none of them, except the great apostasy, can be brought to pass without revelation. If Joseph Smith and his associates did not receive the revelations concerned, then who has received them, or who will? And if someone must receive them to fulfill the scriptures, why not Joseph Smith as well as any man?

The fact is—and it should be evident to every informed and right thinking person--that the Almighty has begun to fulfill the covenants made to the fathers. He has set up again on earth his one true Church, and the invitation is going forth from him by the mouths of his servants to all who will hear to come unto Christ, repent of their sins, obey the gospel of salvation, and become heirs of eternal life.

This is a day of warning and not of many words. This is a day when every man must make the choice whether, at the Second Coming, he will be one of the saints called to glorify God at his Second appearance, or whether he will be subject to the vengeance of the Lord because he is numbered with “them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel” which has been restored for the last time.