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## THE RESTORATION

We have seen the history of Christ's Church has included its organization and movement in the early centuries and its fall into apostasy. We have briefly examined the work of the men of the Reformation as they sought to bring the Church back to God. However, the real hope is to be found in the Restoration of the Church and the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

In order for us to understand the meaning of the Restoration, we need to examine the prophecies relating to it. We need to know that God prophetically promised that this would happen. These prophecies in the Scriptures call for a fulfillment of the promises of God: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing until he revealeth the secret unto his servants, the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Jesus also said, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).

Forces opposing the Restoration have argued that the Restoration Movement has sought to destroy the good works of other organizations. This is untrue. Jesus said, regarding His own ministry, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:19). Likewise, the Restoration Movement has not come to destroy any good works, but it has come in direct fulfillment of prophecy. Many of the prophets of the Old Testament spoke with reference to the last days and the work of restitution that would take place.

### PROPHETIC BACKGROUND

Isaiah told of a time when the Word of the Lord could not be heard for there would be no prophets (see Isaiah 29:9-10). Micah predicted the same (see Micah 3:6-7), and Amos foretold of the great famine of hearing God's Word that was to come (see Amos 8:11-12). Such a time would indeed be a time of darkness. Isaiah boldly stated, "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isaiah 60:2-3). The light of God would shine forth again in the Restoration, when God would "proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder" (Isaiah 29:26).

One part of the marvelous work was to be the coming forth of a book containing "a revelation from God" (Isaiah 29:12). The deaf would hear the words of the book; and the eyes of the blind would see out of obscurity (see Isaiah 29:30). They that "erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine" (Isaiah 29:32). The Book of Mormon came forth to restore the plain and precious things that had been taken away from the Bible during the dark ages and to bear witness of the divinity of Christ and the truthfulness of the records of the twelve apostles (see 1 Nephi 3:165). Indeed, this was Restoration!

John the Revelator saw into the future and related a vision in which he saw an angel come to the earth with the everlasting gospel to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (see Revelation 14:6). This was to happen after his day and after the time of the apostasy. Then, "The hour of his [Christ's] judgment is come" (Revelation 14:7).

### THE TIME OF THE RESTORATION

While it is difficult to time the Restoration to the point of giving the exact day it was to begin, it is good for us to give consideration to such indications as are set forth in prophecy. We have already discussed the indications found in Isaiah 29. In this it appears clear that the 19th century was the century of the Restoration. However, let us look at others.

Daniel told the king, "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Daniel 2:28). Daniel saw the image in the king's dream and its division into ten parts with ten kings as represented by the ten toes. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed"

(Daniel 2:44). History shows that 1829-30 was the first time in history that all the kingdoms of the image were represented at the same time.

In vision, John saw a woman representing the Church. She fled into the wilderness to a place prepared of God and was to remain there for 1260 days (see Revelation 12:5). The apostate church took over the temporal power of Rome around A.D. 570. Adding 1260 years to this date, we arrive at A.D. 1830, the very year the Church of Jesus Christ was organized.

Many people scoff at the idea of prophetic fulfillment in terms of years and say that it is convenient for us to subtract 1260 from 1830 and thus arrive at A.D. 570. Nevertheless, as we examine the many evidences, we find too many converging facts to be mere coincidence. The restoration of the gospel, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the organization of the Church in A.D. 1830 all fit into the character and timing of the prophetic picture. However, these do not give evidence in any way that the Restoration is complete. It is still going on and will continue to do so until the return of Christ. The Kingdom of God is yet to be achieved in its triumphant form, which shall break down all national and racial barriers.

## **THE RESTORATION**

The work that we call the Restoration took organic form April 6, 1830, by the direct commandment of God. That the Church came from the wilderness is evidenced in modern revelation: "This church have I established and called forth out of the wilderness; and even so will I gather mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, even as many as will believe in me and hearken unto my voice" (D&C 32:2a-b). The "old Jerusalem gospel" was brought back in the New Testament form of Church organization with apostles and prophets and having the gifts and blessings of old. Once again, men were challenged to worship God as a God of love, mercy, and justice. The portrayal of God as a God of hatred and vengeance, wrath and destruction—which had held men in abject fear during the apostasy—was replaced by the restoration of the truth. The preaching of the "gospel of the kingdom" was again heard. So great has been the impact of the Restoration on the Christian world that most, if not all, Christian Churches have felt its leavening influence and have improved their doctrines. No longer do revivalists sing, "Hell is crammed with infants damned without a day of grace." The Restoration moves on!

## **GOD'S WILL**

Most important to our concept of the Restoration is the realization that it was God—not man—who willed and ordered this Restoration of the Church with its primitive organization, doctrines, objectives, and blessings. It is more than a part of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is part of the great plan of God to achieve His purpose of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

We are sometimes tempted to wish we could have lived in the time when Jesus walked the shores of Galilee, that we could have heard the gentle words that came from His lips and could have gazed upon His kindly and compassionate face. Truly, that would have been a wonderful experience. Nevertheless, how fortunate we are to live in this day of Restoration, for it is a great privilege to help rear the walls of Zion. By the grace of our heavenly Father, we have opportunity to help prepare for the return of His Son.

May we be obedient to the admonition of the Lord: "Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves" (D&C 58:6d).

## **Questions for Discussion**

1. Why was a restoration necessary?
2. List two verses of Scripture which predicted that God would restore the Church and the gospel after the apostasy.
3. What are two purposes of the Book of Mormon? In what ways can we fulfill these purposes?
4. Give two scriptures that point prophetically to the time of the Restoration.
5. What are three significant and distinctive contributions that the Restoration movement can bring to

the religious thinking of today's world?

6. How should the members of the Restoration Movement view the good works of other organizations?
7. When is the work of the Restoration completed?
8. What is the "marvelous work and a wonder?" Is it still to come forth or has it already been fulfilled?
9. By what power and means did the Restoration come? What responsibility do we have toward the Restoration Movement?