latter-day restitution that angelic ministers (MORONI, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, etc.) brought back not only the fulness of the everlasting gospel and its keys and ordinances but also the “sealing power,” which is the power to bind things on earth and have them be binding in heaven (Matt. 16:19; see SEALING). The restoration of the gospel and the power of sealing are important conditions for Christ’s coming. During this period three characteristics will prevail: judgments, the kingdom of Christ versus the kingdoms of the world, and the destruction of latter-day Babylon.

As trumpets sound and “vials” of destruction are poured out, one devastating scourge follows another, including vast pollutions, rampant wickedness, and the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 8–11, 16). In the midst of these judgments allowed by God, a voice declares that “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Rev. 11:15). Chapter 12 portrays the Church of Christ and the kingdom of God (JST Rev. 12:7; McConkie, 1973, Vol. 3, p. 516). In chapter 13, Satan’s kingdoms oppose the Saints and the work of God. Chapter 14 then shows the triumph of Christ’s kingdom and what leads to that victory. Christ comes to Mount Zion with his servants (14:1–5), and an angel, having the everlasting gospel to preach to the earth, flies through the heavens (14:6–7). (Verse 6 provides the inspiration for the well-known ANGEL MORONI STATUE placed atop some LDS temples.) Then the fall of Babylon is announced (14:8–11). Like the angel from the east (Rev. 7:2), this angel is interpreted to represent the work of the restoration (McConkie, 1973, Vol. 3, p. 530). It is this work, directed by Christ and his servants, which brings about the eventual destruction of all worldly kingdoms. The fall of Babylon (Rev. 16–18) is so dramatic that all the hosts of heaven spontaneously shout, “Alleluia” (Rev. 19:1–6).

After Christ’s coming (Rev. 19:7–21), the vision concludes in quick succession with the Millennium (Rev. 20:1–6), the loosing of Satan for a “little season” (Rev. 20:7–10; D&C 88:111–15), the great judgment (Rev. 20:11–15), and the celestialization of the earth (Rev. 21:22–5). Thus, the Revelation of John shows that in spite of all of Satan’s efforts to the contrary, God’s work will triumph and Christ will come again to reign with his Saints for a thousand years during the Millennium and throughout eternity.

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JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist was born in Judea about six months before the Savior Jesus Christ. John’s primary mortal mission was to prepare the way for, and baptize, Jesus. His later role in restoring the Aaronic Priesthood in 1829 is particularly significant to Latter-day Saints.

Biblical scholars discern subtle differences in the way each of the four New Testament Gospels presents information about John the Baptist. Mark seems to emphasize how John prefigured Jesus, in that both proclaimed the gospel and then were given over to death. Luke points to personal relationships between John and Jesus, along with important links that the Baptist provides between the Old Testament and the New. Matthew records several ways in which John’s ministry parallels that of Jesus, yet at the same time makes it clear that John was subordinate to Jesus, who identifies John as “the Elias who is to come” (cf. Matt. 11:14). The Greek Gospel of John, on the other hand, seems to minimize John’s apocalyptic teachings, quotes him as denying that he was that Elias (John 1:21), and never uses the title “the Baptist,” apparently in order to emphasize John’s role as the first person at that time to know by revelation, and to witness, that Jesus was the son of God (see J. Meier, “John the Baptist in Matthew’s Gospel,” Journal of Biblical Literature 99 [1980]:383–86).

For Latter-day Saints, these nuances are transcended by John’s larger roles subsumed within the plan of salvation. For example, his ministry illustrates the concept of the need for a prophet, for “God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7); he came as a voice of warning, proclaiming the gospel...
of repentance, bearing testimony of Jesus Christ, baptizing by immersion, holding divine authority, promising the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end, even by suffering martyrdom. He was the Elias who was “to prepare all things” (JST Matt. 11:15), but not the Elias “who was to restore all things” (JST John 1:22, 26).

Both of John’s parents were descendants of Aaron: Zacharias was an officiating priest in the temple of Jerusalem, and Elisabeth, of the daughters of Aaron, was a relative of Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:5, 36). His birth was promised by the angel Gabriel (see Noah), who visited Zacharias while he was officiating in the temple. Although Zacharias and Elisabeth had fervently prayed for children, none had been born to them. In their old age, Gabriel’s promise was received with some doubt by Zacharias. As a sign, Gabriel struck Zacharias deaf and evidently dumb until the naming of the baby eight days after John’s birth, the day John was circumcised according to the law of Moses. Contrary to the custom, by previous direction of Gabriel, the baby was named John instead of Zacharias, after his father. Zacharias gave his son a blessing on this occasion, the words of which are known as the Benedictus in Roman Catholic and Protestant terminology (Luke 1:68–79).

Little is known of John’s early life and training. When Mary visited Elisabeth during their pregnancies, John “leaped in her womb” (Luke 1:41). He was “filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb” and “was ordained by the angel of God” when he was eight days old (D&C 84:27–28). Since his parents were elderly, some wonder if he was soon orphaned or associated with religious sects in the Judean desert. Somehow he was carefully reared in gospel principles, for he came forth from the desert preaching repentance (Matt. 3:2) and was well prepared. He knew his mission and the source of his authority.

Jesus said of him, “Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet” (Luke 7:28). John the Baptist was dearly loved by the Savior. John had unusual privileges: none other would proclaim the immediate coming of Jesus; none other would be privileged to baptize the Lamb of God; none other was the legal administrator in the affairs of the kingdom then on the earth and holder of the keys of power. “These three reasons constitute him the greatest prophet born of a woman” (TPJS, p. 276).

With these credentials John came forth vigorously preaching repentance and many principles of the gospel in the wilderness of Judea near the river Jordan (Mark 1:4–5). He ate ritually clean foods, locusts (Lev. 11:22), and wild honey; he drank “neither wine nor strong drink” (Luke 1:15); and he wore the traditional clothing of a prophet, camel’s hair and a leather girdle (Mark 1:6). He also fasted (Matt. 11:18). He attracted large crowds and came under the increasing condemnation of those Jewish leaders whom he challenged with his preaching.

After a time, the “One mightier than I,” even Jesus, approached John and requested baptism (see Jesus Christ: Baptism of Jesus Christ). A humble and meek John initially resisted, declaring that he needed to be baptized by Jesus. Upon Jesus’ insistence, John baptized Jesus, following which he witnessed the sign of the dove descending from heaven upon the Christ (John 1:32).

At this juncture John alone seemed to bear the responsibility of spanning two dispensations. He was a child of promise whose mission had been prophesied years before by Isaiah, Lehi, and Nephi (Isa. 40:3; 1 Ne. 10:7–10; 2 Ne. 31:4–8).
John had begun his preaching and baptizing near the river Jordan probably about a year before Jesus began his public ministry. He “had no intention of founding a new sect” (Scobie, p. 131); his calling was to prepare the way for Jesus and many of his followers became Jesus’ closest and earliest disciples. His intense preaching of repentance had deeply angered those in power. He denounced the marriage of Herod Antipas to his brother’s wife, Herodias, which clearly violated Jewish law (Lev. 20:21; Josephus, Antiquities 18.5.1–2). Herodias wanted John killed, but Herod Antipas had concern for John’s popularity with the people. He had John imprisoned (Mark 6:17), somewhat pacifying the Pharisees, as well as Herodias. During all of this, Jesus went to Galilee. While in prison, John sent two of his disciples to Jesus to confirm their faith in the Savior’s identity, and Jesus supported and sustained him (Luke 7:24–28). Through shrewd plotting and the beguiling dance of her daughter Salome, Herodias eventually manipulated Herod into having John beheaded.

John the Baptist was among the prophets and saints who were with Christ in his resurrection (D&C 133:55). Approximately eighteen centuries later, on Friday, May 15, 1829, this forerunner of the Savior again appeared, this time as an angel of the Lord preparing the world for the Savior’s second coming, and conferred the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood. This occurred when Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery withdrew to a secluded place on the Susquehanna River near Harmony, Pennsylvania, and prayed for instruction. Hardly had they begun when a heavenly messenger appeared, introducing himself as John the Baptist. Placing his hands upon their heads, he conferred upon them the priesthood of Aaron (D&C 13). He then commanded the young men to baptize each other in the nearby Susquehanna River and then lay hands upon each other to confer the priesthood that he had bestowed upon them. The messenger promised that the Melchizedek Priesthood, or higher priesthood, would be given to them at a future time by the apostles Peter, James, and John (JS—H 1:72).

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JOHN THE BELOVED

John the Beloved is the author of five New Testament writings—a Gospel, the Revelation (Apocalypse; see John, Revelations of), and three letters. Although the author identifies himself as John in the Revelation (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9), he is known only as “the Elder” in the letters and as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” in the Gospel. Ancient tradition and elements of style have supported the common authorship of these writings, but some argue that “the Beloved” and “the Elder” were two different people.

John emphasizes spiritual qualities in his writings, including some contrasting pairs of qualities that illustrate the two opposing spiritual forces in the world. Examples include light and darkness, love and hate, truth and falsehood, and God and the devil (see opposition). John also emphasizes such ideas as bearing true witness, knowing the Lord, enduring to the end, and being raised up by the Savior.

John and his brother, James, were sons of Zebedee (some feel that Salome was Zebedee’s wife, basing their identification on Matt. 27:56 and Mark 15:40), and the men of the family were fishermen at the Sea of Galilee. Their business prospered to the extent that they employed servants (Mark 1:19–20) by the time Jesus called the brothers to the full-time ministry. Although the Gospels of Matthew and Luke list Peter, Andrew, James, and John at the beginning of their lists, Mark and Acts place Peter, James, and John at the beginning of the list of the Twelve. These three apostles were alone with Jesus on special occasions, such as at the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37–43), on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–9), and at Jesus’ suffering in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37–45). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that these three ancient apostles received the keys of the priesthood during the transfiguration experience (TPJS, p. 158).

John is usually identified as one of the two disciples of John the Baptist mentioned in the Gospel of John who became disciples of Jesus after his baptism (John 1:35–40). James and John were called Boanerges (“Sons of Thunder”) by Jesus, perhaps because of their strong and impulsive personalities. Either they (Mark 10:35–40) or their mother on their behalf (Matt. 20:20–23) asked Jesus to grant them places of honor in his heavenly