

## RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

When Latter-day Saints speak of the “restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ” they refer primarily to the restoration that has occurred in the latter days, establishing the DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES (Eph. 1:10; D&C 27:13). However, there have been a number of restorations of the gospel over the history of the earth.

“Restoration” means to bring back that which was once present but which has been lost. The introduction of the gospel of Jesus Christ on this earth began with Adam and Eve. In the GARDEN OF EDEN they partook of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Moses 4:12), and as a result they became fallen and mortal and were expelled from the garden. God then revealed to them that they could be redeemed through the Only Begotten (Moses 5:1–12) and gave Adam the PRIESTHOOD after the Order of the Son of God (cf. Abr. 1:3; Fac. 3, Fig. 3, Book of Abraham). Thereafter, they received the various ORDINANCES of the gospel, including a ceremonial ENDOWMENT, and entered into covenants of obedience to all of God’s commandments (Fac. 3, Fig. 3, Book of Abraham).

After Adam and Eve became parents, they taught their children the gospel of Jesus Christ. But many of their posterity loved Satan more than God and from that time forth began to be “carnal, sensual, and devilish” (Moses 5:12–13). Eventually mankind substituted worldly interests in place of the commandments of God, and in time the gospel was distorted, fragmented, and lost from the earth.

Prophets have been called by God from time to time to *restore* the true covenants and gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the prophets was ABRAHAM (Abr. 3:22–25), who, having proved his faithfulness in numerous ways, was given a special covenant for himself, his descendants, and all who accept the gospel. This covenant extended to all future generations and nations of the earth (*see* ABRAHAMIC COVENANT). Another was MOSES, through whom the Lord restored the gospel for a short time, but because of the unwillingness of the people, the Lord instituted a preparatory law to help the people turn their hearts from idolatry to God (*see* LAW OF MOSES). Later God revealed his gospel to ELIJAH, ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, and EZEKIEL, among others, who urged the people to repentance and faithfulness. Many ancient prophets testified of a

coming Messiah and of his crucifixion and resurrection. They also spoke of a subsequent long period of apostasy, but promised that there would be a restoration in the latter days, prior to the second coming of the Lord (cf. Amos 8–9).

The same gospel, covenants, and ordinances that had once been given to Adam, ENOCH, NOAH, Abraham, Moses, and the other ancient prophets, were restored to the earth during the MERIDIAN OF TIME when Jesus Christ lived on the earth. However, the Church that Jesus established in New Testament times was short-lived because of apostasy, which resulted in part from persecution and the eventual dispersion and death of the apostles. Hence, the authority of the priesthood, much of the gospel of Christ, and the ordinances and covenants were again lost to the earth. PETER, JOHN, and PAUL each spoke of this APOSTASY, which was already starting in their day, and prophesied that there would also be a restoration.

In the spring of 1820 a vision was given to Joseph SMITH, near Palmyra, New York, in response to his fervent prayer to know the truth concerning religion. In this experience, Joseph Smith was visited by God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ (JS—H 1:17; *see also* FIRST VISION). In subsequent visits, holy angels instructed, ordained, and prepared him to become a latter-day prophet and an instrument in God’s hands in restoring the gospel of Jesus Christ for the last time and setting up the kingdom spoken of by Daniel (Dan. 2; D&C 27:13; 65:1–6).

As part of this restoration, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized by revelation on April 6, 1830, “it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God” (D&C 20:1). It has the same priesthood, doctrines, and ordinances, and the same “organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth” (A of F 6). Eventually, all of the keys of the priesthood, which had been given to man from Adam’s time onward, were restored. Prophets who held priesthood keys anciently came to Joseph Smith and conferred those keys upon him (D&C 128:18). These included JOHN THE BAPTIST (D&C 13), Peter, JAMES, and John (D&C 27:12), and Moses, ELIAS, and Elijah (D&C 110:11–16).

Thus, through the latter-day Prophet there has been a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ

on the earth with the powers, authority, and ordinances as in ancient times. Other aspects of the restoration to occur are the gathering of Israel, the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, and the MILLENNIUM.

[See also *Dispensations of the Gospel; Restoration of All Things.*]

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## RESTORATIONISM, PROTESTANT

Beginning about 1800, a religious movement known as the Second Great Awakening swept across the American frontier. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints emerged in this setting.

Many people in this period were seeking the original vitality of the New Testament Church, and those who espoused this point of view were called "restorationists." Protestant restorationism, as manifested in the early nineteenth century, followed the lead of the early reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin, who believed that the church should be firmly rooted in the scriptures. But even their theologies contained complexities that to the nineteenth century restorationists seemed far removed from day-to-day life. Men of differing persuasions, often unlettered, emerged to sound the cry for the restoration of biblical Christianity.

In New England, Elias Smith and Abner Jones, both Baptists, organized a "Christian church" in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. They sought the New Testament Church in its simple, nondenominational form and thus called themselves Christians. In Virginia and North Carolina, a similar movement developed under the leadership of James O'Kelly and Rice Haggard, both dissatisfied Methodist ministers. Their group was also to be known as Christians, and the Bible was to be their only creed. In 1811, the two groups united. William Kincaid, an illiterate frontiersman, converted at a revival meeting, led another group of Christians in Kentucky.

Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian minister from Virginia and North Carolina, sought the expe-

rience of religion that he saw in the New Testament. He finally left the Presbyterian church in Kentucky to found a "Christian church." Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian educated in Glasgow, Scotland, believed the church should be founded upon the Bible only, and his followers coined the slogan, "Where scripture speaks, we speak, and where scripture is silent, we are silent." In Pennsylvania he founded the Christian Association of Washington for the cultivation of piety. His son, Alexander, who influenced Sidney RIGDON, was the restorationist who founded the church known today as the Disciples of Christ.

Virtually all restorationists believed that the New Testament Church was to be restored, that there should be no CREEDS, that baptism should be by immersion, that salvation was through faith and repentance, and that there were a remission of sins and a gift of the Holy Ghost. They differed, however, in other points: whether the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost were a result of baptism, simply a product of faith, or conferred by the laying-on of hands; whether there had been a loss of authority; whether all things were to be restored, including New Testament miracles and gifts of the Spirit, or whether only some things would be restored; and whether religious experience was necessary.

Latter-day Saints were more comprehensively restorationist than any other group. The principal LDS beliefs that created the most discussion were that the authority of the priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith by heavenly messengers; that remission of sins follows baptism, which is essential to salvation; that all things (including miracles) are to be restored; that revelation is as requisite today as in the past; and that, as in the New Testament Church, the scriptural canon is not closed. The acceptance of these beliefs led Sidney Rigdon to break with Alexander Campbell and embrace the restored gospel as taught by Latter-day Saint missionaries.

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