

“Latter-day Saints” and Christ’s Second Coming

by Marvin W. Cowan

When Mormonism began in 1830 it was called the Church of Christ by its founder, Joseph Smith. Then in 1834 the official name was changed to The Church of The Latter Day Saints. On April 17, 1838 Smith had a “revelation” in which the Lord named it “The Church of Jesus Christ of *Latter-day Saints*” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 114:3-4). Smith said God gave them that name because Mormons were Christ’s church in **the latter days**. The following prophecies by Joseph Smith show why Mormons believed they were in the “*latter days*” at that time.

Joseph Smith prophesied at the LDS Conference on April 6, 1843 that “**There are those of the rising generation who shall not taste death till Christ comes**” (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, p. 336; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 286). 162 years ago Smith said that Christ would come before that generation all died. But that generation died long ago and Christ still has not come, so it was a false prophecy.

On April 2, 1843 Smith prophesied that difficulties in South Carolina would result in much bloodshed before Christ’s Second Coming (*Doctrine & Covenants* 130:12-13). Verse 13 links this prophecy to *Doctrine & Covenants* 87 dated Dec. 25, 1832 in which Smith predicted that a war between the Northern and Southern states would begin in South Carolina and end with the **destruction of all nations** and the **Lord’s coming** (*D. & C.* 87:7-8). The last verse of *Doctrine & Covenants* 87 commanded the people in 1832 to “Stand ye in the holy places, and be not moved, **until the day of the Lord come.**” Smith gave this prophecy 173 years ago, so none of those people are still living. The Lord has not come yet, so this was a false prophecy just like most of the other things predicted in *Doctrine & Covenants* 87.

On February 14, 1835, Smith called a meeting in which the original 12 Apostles of the Mormon Church were ordained. At that meeting Smith said, “It was the will of God that those who went to Zion (Jackson County, Missouri), with a determination to lay down their lives, if necessary, should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the **last time, or the coming of the Lord, which was nigh—even fifty-six years should wind up the scene.**” When 56 years are added to 1835 it also points to **1891** as the time for Christ’s Second Coming.

On April 2, 1843 Smith said in *Doctrine & Covenants* 130:14-15 that while he was praying about the Second Coming, a voice said, “Joseph, my son, if thou *livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt* see the face of the Son of Man.” Smith was born December 23, 1805, so 85 years added to that date would make it **1890 or 1891** for Christ’s Second Coming.

In the *History of the Church* vol. 5, p. 336, Smith quoted *this prophecy* and then said, “*I prophesy* in the name of the Lord God, and let it be written—the Son of Man will not come in the clouds of heaven **till** I am **eighty-five** years old.” But Christ did not come in 1890 or 1891 so that was also a false prophecy.

On January 4, 1833 Joseph Smith prophesied,

I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, that *not many years shall pass away* before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; *pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land*, to open and prepare the way for the *return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country*. The people of the Lord, those who have complied with the requirements of the new covenant, have **already commenced gathering together to Zion, which is in the state of Missouri**; therefore I declare unto you the **warning which the Lord has commanded to declare unto this generation**, remembering that the eyes of my Maker are upon me, and that to Him I am accountable for every word I say, wishing nothing worse to my fellow-men than their eternal salvation; therefore, “Fear God, and give glory to Him, for *the hour of His Judgment is come*.” *Repent ye, repent ye, and embrace the everlasting covenant, and flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things, which I have spoken fulfilled* (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 315-316).

Some claim that the Civil War was a fulfillment of the first part of this prophecy. But Smith’s local *newspaper* contained similar predictions about the Civil War **before** he gave this prophecy or the one in *Doctrine & Covenants* 87.

In this 1833 “prophecy” Smith said that “pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will **sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land**.” But the *wicked* of that generation died just like the wicked died in the generations before it and after it. They did not die the way Smith said they would. Smith also said *when* the wicked were swept off of the face of the land it would prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the “north country.” But the ten “lost tribes” of Israel didn’t return to Israel or to America in that generation or since then.

Smith said that the people of the Lord (Latter Day Saints) “have **already commenced gathering together to Zion**, which is **in the state of Missouri**” and urged *his hearers in 1833* to “**Flee to Zion**” before the overflowing scourge overtake **you**.” Mormons began gathering to Zion in Jackson County, Missouri but trouble there forced them to move to Nauvoo, Illinois in 1839. But no “overflowing scourge” overtook them even though they left Zion. Mormons have not “gathered” to Missouri since they left in 1839.

Smith also said, the “*The hour of His (God’s) judgment is come.*” If God’s judgment came in 1833 everyone living since then has missed it! Smith said “there are those ***now living*** upon the earth ***whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things, which I have spoken fulfilled.***” He said that 172 years ago in 1833, but *that generation all died* without seeing ***any*** of this prophecy fulfilled, so it was a false prophecy. These prophecies help explain why Mormonism’s official name is The Church of Jesus Christ of ***Latter-day Saints.***

Those who want to read more on this subject can do so in *Voice of Warning* by Parley P. Pratt. It is published in numerous editions by the LDS Church. Next time we will discuss some of the beliefs that Mormons have about Christ’s future kingdom.