

## Joseph Smith Prophecies of The Future

Compiled by Glen W. Chapman – October 2006

### Wilford Woodruff Tells of Joseph Smith's Prophecy Concerning The Church

"The Prophet called others, to go abroad and gather up the strength of the "Lord's house and to prepare the camp of Zion. Parley P. Pratt came to my house. I had just been baptized. I was engaged for a year in furnishing lumber by contract. Parley P. Pratt told me it was my duty to lay aside all my temporal matters, go to Kirtland, and join Zion's camp. I obeyed his counsel. I arrived in Kirtland on Saturday and there met with Joseph and Hyrum Smith in the street. I was introduced to Joseph Smith. It was the first time that I had ever seen him in my life. He invited me home to spend the Sabbath with him, and I did so. They had meeting on Sunday (In the spring of 1834).

"On Sunday night the Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland, and who had gathered together to go off in Zion's camp. That was the first time I ever saw Oliver Cowdery, or heard him speak; the first time I ever saw Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, and the two Pratts, and Orson Hyde and many others. There were no Apostles in the Church then except Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. When we got together the Prophet called upon the Elders of Israel with him to bear testimony of this work. Those that I have named spoke, and a good many that I have not named, bore their testimonies. When they got through the Prophet said, "Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it." I was rather surprised. He said "it is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America it will fill the world." Among other things he said, "it will fill the Rocky Mountains. There will be tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints who will be gathered in the Rocky Mountains, and there they will open the door for the establishing of the Gospel among the Lamanites, who will receive the Gospel and their endowments and the blessings of God. This people will go into the Rocky Mountains; they will there build temples to the Most High. They will raise up a posterity there, and the Latter-day Saints who dwell in these

mountains will stand in the flesh until the coming of the Son of Man. The Son of Man will come to them while in the Rocky Mountains."

## Accurate Prophecies of the Civil War

On Dec. 25, 1832, Joseph received the following revelation about the American Civil War, now printed as Section 87 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

1. Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls;
2. And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place.
3. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and then war shall be poured out upon all nations.
4. And it shall come to pass, after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war.
5. And it shall come to pass also that the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation.
6. And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations;
7. That the cry of the Saints, and of the blood of the Saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies.
8. Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen.

Beginning in the 1830s, LDS missionaries carried manuscript copies of the above revelation with in their missionary journeys, and "frequently read it to their congregations in various parts of the United States" (Roberts, p. 315). The entire revelation was printed in 1851 in Liverpool, England, in a pamphlet entitled, "The Pearl of Great Price." This was a decade before the first shot of the Civil War on April 12, 1861. Thus, the prediction was made 28 years before its fulfillment, and was printed and circulated in England and in the United States at least ten years before.

Further, while speaking in Ramus, Illinois, on April 2, 1843, Joseph said: "I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God, that the commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed previous to the coming of the Son of Man will be in South Carolina. It may probably arise through the slave question. This a voice declared to me, while I was praying earnestly on the subject, December 25th, 1832."

Was Joseph's prophecy just a case of noting existing tensions and making obvious extrapolations? Hardly! While there had been tensions between the South and the North, including talk of secession, hardly anyone seriously thought that civil war would erupt.

Americans had great faith in their nation and in democracy. In fact, there were members of the Church who were so shaken by the "ridiculous" nature of Joseph's civil war prophecy that they left the Church, rejecting him as a false prophet. Even if Joseph were trying to make something out of trends and currents he saw in society, the many specific details of his prophecy suggest that more than reason and guesswork were needed to be so accurate. Let's consider the details that he accurately predicted:

1. The war would begin with the rebellion of South Carolina.
2. It would cause the death and misery of many souls.
3. The Southern States would be divided against the Northern States.
4. The Southern States would call upon other nations for assistance, even upon the nation of Great Britain.
5. Great Britain would call upon other nations for assistance
6. War would eventually be poured out upon all nations.

Now in December of 1832 there was controversy involving South Carolina and the issue of states' rights. South Carolina had advocated the doctrine of "nullification," arguing that a state could nullify federal laws or taxes that they ruled to be unconstitutional. If there was federal resistance, then South Carolina said they could leave the Union. President Andrew Jackson argued against their position. With much controversy in the air, it would seem logical that Joseph be stirred to ponder the events of the day and inquire of the Lord, resulting in the revelation of Dec. 1832. But there was no reasonable expectation of war at that time, or even in 1851 when the prophecy was more widely publicized. Can anyone offer evidence from writings of American statesmen or scholars in 1832, 1843, or 1851 that make such predictions? Did other wise minds of the day foresee what Joseph saw? Neither a scholar or statesmen, the uneducated 27-year old man, Joseph Smith, saw what would happen by the spirit of revelation.

### **Civil War Foretold BEFORE Dec. 1832?**

While details of the Civil War were foretold on Dec. 25, 1832 in Section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants, earlier prophecies hint at the upcoming war. Section 38, verse 29, given nearly two years earlier on Jan. 2, 1831, implies that war was coming upon the United States, and that the Lord was leading his people west (first to Ohio) to prepare them for and deliver them from the trouble ahead:

29 Ye hear of wars in far countries, and you say that there will soon be great wars in far countries, but ye know not the hearts of men in your own land.  
30 I tell you these things because of your prayers; wherefore, treasure up wisdom in your bosoms, lest the wickedness of men reveal these things unto you by their wickedness, in a manner which shall speak in your ears with a voice louder than that which shall shake the earth; but if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.  
31 And that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without spot and blameless -

It is a fact of history that South Carolina took the initiative that led to the rebellion of the Southern States and that the war began in South Carolina. Reacting negatively to the election of Abraham Lincoln, South Carolina's leaders convened on Dec. 20, 1860 and passed an ordinance of secession. Newly elected Governor Pickens then declared "the dissolution of the union between the state of South Carolina and the other states under the name of the United States." Ten other states later joined South Carolina, but she was the first to rebel. The Civil War was the bloodiest this country has ever seen, causing about 400,000 deaths. The South did enlist the aid of Great Britain and also sought help from France (Great Britain, as I recall, also encouraged France to assist the South). Later, after war had been poured out on the nations of the earth, Great Britain found herself threatened by Nazi Germany and called upon other nations of the earth for her defense. After the Civil War, international intrigues and wars grew to increasing severity, with ghastly international scenes of horror during World War I and World War II, with dozens of other wars having been fought and going on at the moment. War has always been on the earth, but the scale of destruction since the Civil War has grown sharply, and war in the past century has become increasingly multinational rather than bilateral. Truly, war has been poured out on all nations.

Joseph said that "after many days" slaves would rise up against their masters. I don't think that referred to the Civil War, but to later events, perhaps events that I have seen in my lifetime. Uprisings of repressed peoples in many Communist nations and other authoritarian states may have been meant in the prophecy. Past and future uprisings of some groups in the United States may also be meant. During the Civil War itself, however, there were relatively few instances of slaves rising up against their masters. The prophecy, however, says "after many days" (meaning, I think, many days after the prophesied war had begun), not "during the Civil War."

32 Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high; . . .

The implied war was not to be caused by foreign invasion, but was due to wicked men in Joseph's own land, suggestive of civil war. A related warning is in Section 42, verse 64, given Feb. 9, 1831:

64 And even now, let him that goeth to the east teach them that shall be converted to flee to the west, and this in consequence of that which is coming on the earth, and of secret combinations.

A month later, on March 8, 1831, still nearly two years before the Dec. 1832 problem with South Carolina, the Lord again warned the Saints of the need to move west to escape war in this country. In Doctrine and Covenants 45:63-64, we read:

Ye hear of wars in foreign lands; but, behold, I say unto you, they are nigh, even at your doors, and not many years hence ye shall hear of wars in your own lands.

64 Wherefore I, the Lord, have said, gather ye out from the eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my church; go ye forth into the western countries, call upon the inhabitants to repent, and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me.

Of course, these were mere hints compared to the explicit detail given in Section 87 in 1832, but it should be clear that Joseph Smith the Prophet had received warnings about pending war in this country well before Dec. 1832. And the call to move west to escape the war was truly prophetic, for the Saints, continuing their westward trek to Utah in the late 1840s, were outside the scope of the Civil War when it did sweep across the United States, in fulfillment of detailed prophecy.

Orson Pratt was a young missionary who told others of Joseph's civil war prophecy long before it occurred. He was mocked for it, as were many others. Here are his words (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, p. 135. as cited by Otten & Caldwell in *Sacred Truths of the Doctrine & Covenants*, Vol.2, pp.93-94):

This prophecy has been printed and circulated extensively in this and other nations and languages. It pointed out the place where it should commence in South Carolina. That which I declared over the New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and many other parts in the East, when but a boy, came to pass twenty-eight years after the revelation was given.

When they were talking about a war commencing down here in Kansas, I told them that was not the place; I also told them that the revelation had designated South Carolina, "and," said I, "you have no need to think that the Kansas war is going to be the war that is to be so terribly destructive in its character and nature. No, it must commence at the place the Lord has designated by revelation."

What did they have to say to me? They thought it was a Mormon humbug, and laughed me to scorn, and they looked upon that revelation as they do upon all others that God has given in these latter days -- as without divine authority. But behold and lo! in process of time it came to pass, again establishing the divinity of this work, and giving another proof that God is in this work, and is performing that which He spoke by the mouths of the ancient prophets, as recorded in the Book of Mormon before any Church of Latter-day Saints was in existence.

In an article about Orson Pratt's use of the Civil War Prophecy, William G. Hartley discusses Orson's experiences to show how non-Mormons viewed the prophecy before its fulfillment, and how the non-Mormon editors of one newspaper reacted to Joseph's prophecy once the Civil War broke out ("Prophecy in His Pocket," *New Era*, Jan. 1989, pp. 44-45):

"When I [Orson Pratt] was a boy, I traveled extensively in the United States and the Canadas, preaching this restored Gospel. I had a manuscript copy of this revelation (on civil war), which I carried in my pocket, and I was in the habit of reading it to the people among whom I traveled and preached."

How did his listeners respond? Did they say, "Well, it takes no prophet to see war will start in South Carolina"? No. Said Orson: "As a general thing the people regarded it as the height of nonsense, saying the Union was too strong to be broken; and I they said, was led away, the victim of an impostor."

When South Carolina's secession threats cooled down after 1832, did Orson begin to doubt the prophecy? No, because "I knew the prophecy was true, for the Lord had spoken to me and had given me revelation." But year after year passed away without war, and now and then "some of the acquaintances I had formerly made would say, 'Well, what is going to become of that prediction? It's never going to be fulfilled.'" Orson replied, "Wait, the Lord has his set time."

... When war broke out in April 1861, 28 years after the prophecy was pronounced, the Philadelphia Sunday Mercury newspaper carried a lengthy article entitled "A Mormon Prophecy." "We have in our possession a pamphlet, published at Liverpool, in 1851," the article began, referring to the civil war prophecy. "In view of our

present troubles, this prediction seems to be in progress of fulfillment, whether Joe Smith was a humbug or not." The article reprinted the entire prophecy, then noted how events were fulfilling it, and concluded regarding Joseph Smith: "Have we not had a prophet among us?"

As Fort Sumter surrendered, others, like the Mercury's editors, remembered hearing about the prophecy. Perhaps some of those who once scoffed when youthful missionary Orson Pratt pulled the prophecy from his pocket and read it now had cause to wonder, to worry, and to wish they had listened more closely to what the rest of the prophecy said.

Sources: Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia* 1:87-91; Orson Pratt Discourse, August 26, 1876, in *Journal of Discourses* 18:224-5; *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* clipping in *Journal History*, 5 May 1861.

Brigham Young and others knew that Joseph was speaking of events much greater than just the Civil War, and knew that he had prophesied of future wars beyond what was published in the Doctrine and Covenants. Brigham said this:

Brother Hyde spoke of a revelation which he tried to find in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. That revelation was reserved at the time the compilation for that book was made by Oliver Cowdery and others, in Kirtland. It was not wisdom to publish it to the world, and it remained in the private *escritoire* [desk]. Brother Joseph had that revelation concerning this nation at a time when the brethren were reflecting and reasoning with regard to African slavery on this continent, and the slavery of the children of men throughout the world. There are other revelations, besides this one, not yet published to the world.

*Journal of Discourses*, 8:58.

Alma Allred (*op. cit.*, p. 166) explains that Joseph's prophecy about war being poured out on all nations had a wider application than just the Civil War, in spite of Mr. Geisler's uninspired translation of the text. Allred also explains that Orson Hyde was mocked by Eastern papers after an 1850 public speech in which he stated that war was about to divide the nation. In 1862, after the beginning of the Civil War, he wrote an "I told you so" letter to the editor of the *Missouri Republican* of Springfield. What he wrote shows that Joseph's prophecies of war went well beyond the Civil War and, as Allred puts it, "included an additional, chilling detail of events yet future." Here is the excerpt from Orson Hyde:

*You have scarcely yet read the preface of your national trouble. Many nations will be drawn into the American maelstrom that now whirls through our land; and after many days, when the demon of war shall have exhausted his strength and madness upon American soil, by the destruction of all that can court or provoke opposition, **he will remove his headquarters to the banks of the Rhine.***

*Millennial Star*, 24 (3 May 1862):274-275, emphasis added.

Hyde refers to the demon of war itself, and not just the then-present Civil War, that would later find it's headquarters on the banks of the Rhine - a most appropriate way to foreshadow the great World Wars of this century, wars which were focused on that nation on the banks of the Rhine, Germany, but wars which would involve us and many

other nations. It is reasonable to assume that Hyde's reference to the banks of the Rhine is derived from unpublished prophetic statements from Joseph Smith, though we cannot be sure.

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## The Saints to Flourish in the Rocky Mountains

In 1831, Joseph prophesied that "Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed" (Doctrine and Covenants 49:25). A related and more specific prophecy was given in 1842, as described in the following excerpt from B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 2, Ch. 51, pp.181-182:

On the 6th of August, 1842, with quite a number of his brethren, he [Joseph Smith] crossed the Mississippi river to the town of Montrose, to be present at the installation of the Masonic Lodge of the Rising Sun. A block schoolhouse had been prepared with shade in front, under which was a barrel of ice water, Judge James Adams was the highest Masonic authority in the state of Illinois, and had been sent there to organize this lodge. He and Hyrum Smith, being high Masons, went into the house to perform some ceremonies which the others were not entitled to witness. These, including Joseph Smith, remained under the bowery. Joseph, as he was tasting the cold water, warned the brethren not to be too free with it. With the tumbler still in his hand he prophesied that the saints would yet go to the Rocky Mountains; and, said he, this water tastes much like that of the crystal streams that are running from the snow-capped mountains. We will let Mr. Call describe this prophetic scene: 'I had before seen him in a vision, and now saw while he was talking his countenance change to white; not the deadly white of a bloodless face, but a living, brilliant white. He seemed absorbed in gazing at something at a great distance, and said: 'I am gazing upon the valleys of those mountains.' This was followed by a vivid description of the scenery of these mountains, as I have since become acquainted with it. Pointing to Shadrach Roundy and others, he said: 'There are some men here who shall do a great work in that land.' Pointing to me, he said: 'There is Anson, he shall go and shall assist in building up cities from one end of the country to the other; and you, rather extending the idea to all those he had spoken of, shall perform as great a work as has been done by man, so that the nations of the earth shall be astonished, and many of them will be gathered in that land and assist in building cities and temples, and Israel shall be made to rejoice.

Of this prophecy, Joseph wrote:

I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains, many would apostatize, others would be put to death by our persecutors or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease, and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains. (*History of the Church*, Vol.5, Ch.4, p.85)

The Saints did suffer much more affliction and migrated to the Rocky Mountains in 1847, several years after Joseph was killed. There they built settlements and cities along

stretches of many hundreds of miles in the West, from Canada to Mexico. In the midst of the Rockies, the Latter-day Saints have arguably become a mighty or at least a noteworthy people, where they "flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, . . . assembled together unto the place . . . appointed" (D&C 49:25). Indeed, the establishment of holy temples and a great international religious center in Utah, in the tops of the Rocky Mountains, appears to be a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-5:

2. And 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.
3. 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.
4. And he 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.
5. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

As for the reasonableness of Joseph's prophecy in 1842, B.H. Roberts explains (*New Witnesses for God* , Vol. 1, pp. 302-303):

*At that date, August 6th, 1842, the Rocky Mountains seemed like a country afar off to the people of Illinois. The Missouri River was the extreme frontiers of the United States. All beyond that was well nigh an unexplored wilderness filled with savages. The church was fairly settled at Nauvoo, the state authorities were apparently very friendly, the future of the Saints in Illinois seemed propitious. Yet in the midst of all these favorable circumstances the Prophet predicted much affliction for some of the Saints, death from persecution for others, apostasy for many, and for the great body of the church an exodus to the Rocky Mountains, where some of those present who were listening to the prediction, should live to assist in making settlements and building cities in the Rocky Mountains where they would see the Saints become a mighty people.*

There can be no question as to the reality of these two predictions, the one of March, 1831, and the other of August, 1842, or of their being of a character to test the divine inspiration of him who uttered them. That they were proclaimed some years before the events predicted in them began to be fulfilled, or even there was any thought or prospect of such events taking place, is well known; that the latter prophecy has been fulfilled to the uttermost, the whole history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from August, 1842, until now witnesses. The Saints suffered many afflictions in Illinois. Their homes, fields, stacks of grain, stock and other property were destroyed; their prophets and a number of others were killed outright by mob violence; many more perished from exposure and disease occasioned by being driven from their homes at an inclement season of the year. In those trying times, following the martyrdom of the Prophet and the expulsion from Nauvoo, many turned away from the faith, and it is too generally known to need comment, that the great body of the church made its way to the Rocky Mountains, where cities, towns and villages have been founded, the wilderness subdued, and the Saints are fast becoming a mighty people.

