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Prophecies of the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon and Their Fulfillment

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Abstract: Quotes Isaiah 29 and prophecies within the Book of Mormon concerning its eventual appearance in the latter days. Recounts events surrounding its preparation for publication, with emphasis on the experiences of the Three Witnesses.

OUR SUNDAY CHAPTER.

PROPHECIES OF THE COMING FORTH
OF THE BOOK OF MORMON. AND
THEIR FULFILLMENT.

THE prophets of past dispensations I have furnished us with a great variety of inspired predictions of the establishment of the Church of God in the latter-days. By His Spirit and power, they saw from afar the condition of mankind in this boasted age of civilization. They clearly beheld and understood the combined darkness and religious mythology of eighteen centuries which have bound the nations in religious ignorance, imprisoned the minds of men in gross darkness, and when self-made priests would make merchandise of the souls of men. They saw that men had denied the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and adopted one in His stead who had no body, parts or passions. They saw the down-trodden condition of the seed of Jacob trampled under the feet of oppressive tyrants, robbed of their franchise in every land and clime. Scattered like sheep without a shepherd, they saw all this and more which caused them to weep in anguish and sorrow. They prayed the Lord in their behalf, that a remnant of their descendants might be preserved on the earth in the latter-days to whom the words of inspiration spoken by their fathers should be imparted and received. They manifested a divine submission to their own fate while on earth. In the midst of persecution they became strong in the Lord; having received one assurance, that their labors would not be in vain; that truth would gain dominion over error

and righteousness over sin. That the glory of ancient Israel would be restored. The veil was lifted. They gazed in the visions of God on the dispensation of the fullness of times with joy and adoration. They sang, they worshiped, they prophesied in prose and poetry of the restoration of the gospel in the latter-days.

Isaiah, referring to the remnants of Joseph, says, "And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." Again, "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." And again, "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor

among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."

"Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together: I the Lord have created it."

The Psalmist says, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

In the 1st Book of Nephi, Chapter 14, we find the following: "And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles, unto the remnant of the seed of thy brethren, and after it had come forth unto them, I beheld other books, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles, and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true."

In the Second Book of Nephi, Chapter 27, it is thus recorded, "For behold, the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep. For behold, ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets; and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity. And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall bring forth unto you the records of a book, and they shall be the records of them which have slumbered.

"And behold the book shall be sealed: and in the book shall be a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof. * * * Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein. And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men: for the Lord God hath said, that the words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead."

The late Apostle Orson Pratt, said in a discourse delivered by him August 25th, 1878: "Moroni, being a prophet of God, would not join that nation in their wickedness and idolatry, and the only way he could preserve his life was to keep himself secreted and hidden from the knowledge of the Lamanites. While concealing himself from his enemies, he finished the record of the Book of Mormon. The latest date which he gives in the record is 420 years after the birth of Christ, according to the signs that were given on this American continent. Thirty-six years prior to this time, his nation was destroyed in what we term the State of New York, around about a hill, called by that people the Hill Cumorah, where many hundreds of thousands of the Nephites—men, women and children, fell during the greatest battle they had with the Lamanites. For thirty-six years

this prophet of God kept himself hid, and wrote as he was prompted by the spirit of inspiration, and finally hid up the plates of gold, containing the records in the hill of Cumorah, with the promise which the Lord gave him, that these records should come to light in the last days, and that he himself would bring them forth by his own wisdom and power."

This promise was fulfilled, for the Prophet Joseph informs us, "At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim and the breastplate. On the 22nd day of September, 1827, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use my endeavors to preserve them until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected."

In the month of June, 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "In the course of the work of translation, we ascertained that three special witnesses were to be provided by the Lord, to whom He would grant that they should see the plates from which this work (the Book of Mormon) should be translated, and that these three witnesses should bear record of the same, as will be found recorded in the Book of Mormon. Almost immediately after we had made this discovery, it occurred to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and the afore-mentioned Martin Harris (who had come to inquire after our progress in the work), that they would have me inquire of the Lord to know if they might not

obtain of Him to be these three special witnesses, and teased me so much, that at length I complied, and through the Urim and Thummim I obtained of the Lord for them the following revelation:

"Behold, I say unto you, that you must rely upon my word, which, if you do with full purpose of heart, you shall have a view of the plates, and also the breast-plate, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared upon the mount when he talked with the Lord face to face, and the miraculous directors which were given to Lehi while in the wilderness on the borders of the Red Sea; and it is by your faith that you shall obtain a view of them, even by that faith which was had by the prophets of old. And that after you have obtained faith, and have seen them with your eyes, you shall testify of them by the power of God, and this you shall do that my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., may not be destroyed, that I may bring about my righteous purposes unto the children of men in this work. And ye shall testify that you have seen them, even as my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., has seen them; for it is by my power that he has seen them, and it is because he had faith; and he has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him; and as your Lord and your God liveth, it is true.

"Wherefore, you have received the same power, and the same faith, and the same gift like unto him; and if you do these last commandments of mine which I have given you, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you, for my grace is sufficient for you, and you shall be lifted up at the last

day. And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it unto you, that I might bring about my righteous purposes unto the children of men. Amen.'"

The prophet continues: "Not many days after the above commandment was given, we four, viz., Martin Harris, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and myself, agreed to retire into the woods and try to obtain my fervent and humble prayer, the fulfillment of the promises given in the revelation, that they should have a view of the plates. We accordingly made choice of a piece of woods convenient to Mr. Whitmer's house, to which we retired, and having knelt down we began to pray in much faith to Almighty God to bestow upon us a realization of these promises. According to previous arrangements I commenced by vocal prayer to our heavenly Father, and was followed by each of the rest in succession. We did not, however, obtain any answer or manifestation of the divine favor in our behalf. * * * Upon this our second failure, Martin Harris proposed that he should withdraw himself from us, believing, as he expressed himself, that his presence was the cause of our not obtaining what we wished for; he accordingly withdrew from us, and we knelt down again, and had not been many minutes engaged in prayer, when presently we beheld a light above us in the air of exceeding brightness; and behold, an angel stood before us, in his hands he held the plates which we had been praying for these to have a view of; he turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discover the engravings thereon distinctly. He then addressed himself to David Whitmer, and said, 'David,

blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps His commandments.' When immediately afterwards, we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, 'These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear.'

"I now left David and Oliver, and went in pursuit of Martin Harris, whom I found at a considerable distance fervently engaged in prayer. He soon told me, however, that he had not prevailed with the Lord, and earnestly requested me to join him in prayer, that he might also realize the same blessings which we had just received. We accordingly joined in prayer, and ultimately obtained our desires, for before we had yet finished, the same vision was opened to our view, at least it was again to me, and I once more beheld and heard the same things, whilst at the same moment, Martin Harris cried out, apparently in ecstasy of joy, "'Tis enough; mine eyes have beheld,' and jumping up he shouted hosannah, blessing God, and otherwise rejoiced exceedingly. Having thus, through the mercy of God, obtained these manifestations, it now remained for these three individuals to fulfill the commandment which they had received, viz., to bear record of these things, in order to accomplish which they drew up and subscribed the following document."

The document referred to here, is the testimony of the three witnesses. See one of the fly-leaves in the Book of Mormon.

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