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Biblical Evidence That Joseph Smith Was Called of God

Author(s): Joseph Fielding Smith

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Abstract: This article discusses prophecies from the Bible that foretell the work of Joseph Smith and the restoration of the gospel.

Biblical Evidence that Joseph Smith Was Called of God

Question:

“If Joseph Smith was truly called to be a prophet of God, surely there would be some prophetic references to him in the Bible. Is it possible to point out any ancient predictions showing that he was so called?”

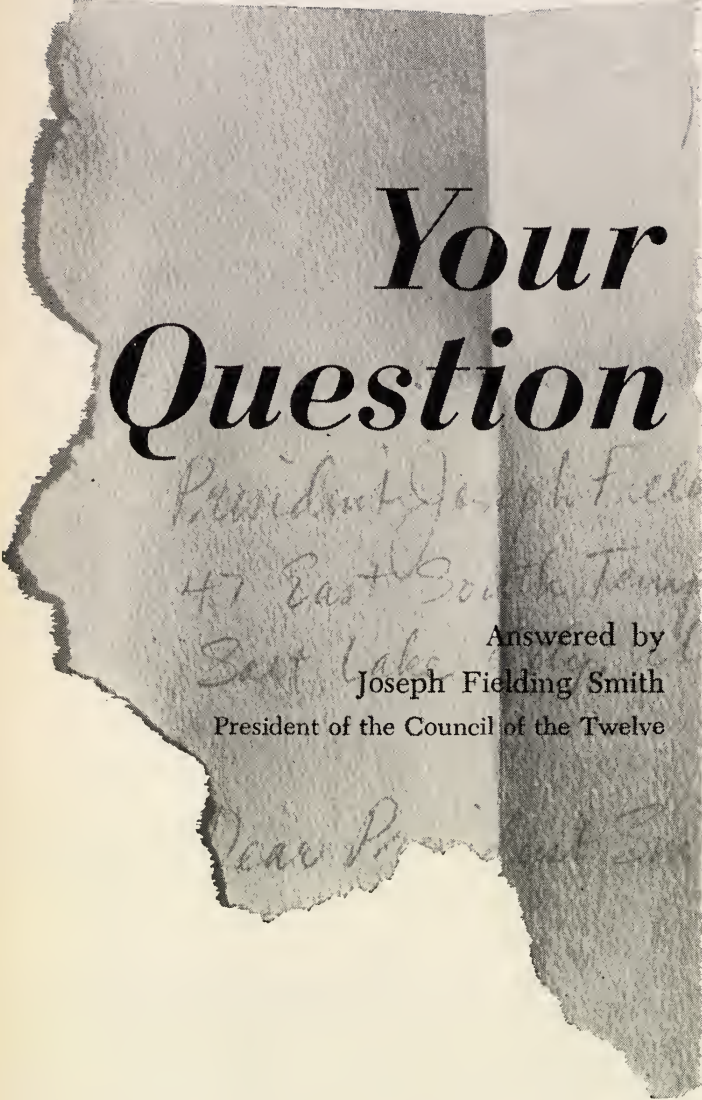
Answer:

There are many passages in the Bible pointing to the fact that a prophet would be called in the last days, and that there would be revelations and visions and restoration of the gospel in its fulness. If a person thinks the name of Joseph Smith ought to be found in the Bible spelled out in so many letters, he will search in vain. It seems rather strange that the truth, which is so plainly written showing an apostasy, and a restoration of the gospel in the last days, would be so generally misunderstood. The Bible is filled with predictions of an universal apostasy and the need for a restoration, and that again the heavens would be opened and our Eternal Father and his Son Jesus Christ, would commune with prophets and establish the gospel on the earth. We are now living in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, when Paul said Christ would “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in him.”¹ Peter called it “the times of refreshing,” and the “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”²

These predictions being true, then, in our time there must be a prophet and a church recognized by the Father and the Son in which divine revelation is found. Surely there could come no restitution or time of refreshing, without a prophet clothed with divine authority as was Moses, holding this authority from heaven, for no such authority can be assumed by any person without a divine call. Therefore there would have to be an opening of the heavens with new revelation and commandment. Moreover, the Lord through many prophets predicted that all things would be restored and that the Lord would again make covenants with his people.³

In a brief article it is impossible to point out all the references in the writings of ancient prophets

(See page 883 for footnotes.)



*President Joseph Fielding
47 East South Temple
Salt Lake City*

Your Question

Answered by
Joseph Fielding Smith
President of the Council of the Twelve

bearing on the restoration of the gospel and the coming of a new and final dispensation wherein prophets would speak and say: "Thus saith the Lord." Elders Parley P. Pratt in his *Voice of Warning*, which was published over a hundred and twenty years ago, and his brother Orson Pratt, who wrote a few years later, have published to the world an abundance of evidence showing the fulfilment of prophecy in the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is unnecessary to repeat over and over again, this evidence which has been so faithfully declared. Many others also have spoken and their words have gone forth to an unbelieving world. The attention to sincere believers in the divine mission of Jesus Christ is again called to the writings of these men. If any person desires a complete answer to this question, then he should obtain these publications: by Elder Parley P. Pratt, in the *Voice of Warning*:

Prophecy Already Fulfilled;

Prophecy Yet Future;

The Kingdom of God;

Restoration of the Saints and of all Things;

Origin of the American Indians.

Publications by Elder Orson Pratt:

Divine Authority—Or Was Joseph Smith sent of God;

The Kingdom of God;

Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

When any person has read these chapters, if he is not convinced, then his case indeed, is hopeless, for the light of truth either cannot penetrate his soul, or in spite of it he refuses to believe. Since this matter is so carefully and completely handled by these brethren, and the evidence is available, I shall turn my attention to a few other matters of the most vital significance. Let us consider first the prophecy of Malachi:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

"But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.

"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

"Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in days of old, and as in former years.

"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will

be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts."⁴

Bible interpreters have declared that this was fulfilled in the days of Christ's ministry; but this is not so. It is very evident, notwithstanding the fact that John the Baptist came in the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time, and was the forerunner of Christ, that this prophecy was not fulfilled at that time, but was to be fulfilled at a later day, or in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. This prophecy declares that (1) Christ was to come suddenly to his temple; as the messenger of the covenant; (2) He was to be like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap, to be a refiner and purifier, to purify the sons of Levi and purge them, that they "may offer unto the Lord, an offering in righteousness." (3) It was to be a day when the offering of Judah and Jerusalem would be pleasant, as in days of old and former years. (4) It was to be a day of judgment and swift witness against the sorcerers and adulterers, false swearers, and those who oppress the widow and the fatherless. Surely these things did not happen in the days of the ministry of our Lord when he dwelt among men. In that day the Levites and the sons of Judah turned against him and brought him to his death; every one abode his coming, and he did not come in that ministry in judgment like a refiner's fire. The sons of Levi were not purged, and they did not offer an offering in righteousness.

No! We must look for a later day for the fulfilment of this prophecy. Much of this prophetic prediction by Malachi is yet future; some of it has been fulfilled. The Lord did come suddenly to his temple on the third day of April 1836. It was on that day when other heavenly messengers came, and when the keys for the gathering of Israel were restored by Moses. It was on that day when Elias, who lived in the days of Abraham, came and bestowed the keys of the Dispensation of Abraham: It was when Elijah came in fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi, and restored his keys of turning the hearts of the fathers to their children and their children to their fathers.

On this occasion Christ accepted and approved the work of his servants, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, thus turning the key for the redemption of Judah and Levi that they might, in the due time of the Lord, make offerings that would be acceptable. Malachi in very definite language declared that Elijah must come, "before the coming" (*Continued on page 873*)

Your Question

(Continued) of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers, lest the earth be smitten with a curse. There is abundant evidence that can be produced showing that the hearts of the children have turned to their fathers. This is manifest in the nations of the earth, as well as in the Church of Jesus Christ. The abundant research in genealogical study and knowledge and the seeking after the dead is evidence that this prophecy has been fulfilled. Unto whom did Elijah come? Is there a minister or other person any place in the world who can testify that Elijah came and bestowed these keys to him to save the earth from a curse, except the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery? Since no one else has made such a claim, and the evidence is too strong indicating that this authority has been restored, we must look to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery for the fulfilment of this prediction.

Again: The Lord through his ancient prophets said that the time would come when the Israelites would seek their native land and that they should be established upon it. That this gathering has commenced is evident to all the world. The ancient prophecies are being fulfilled. Has any one except Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery ever laid claim to the restoration of these keys of authority? The evidence is here that they have been restored. Has any other minister or priest ever claimed that the Lord has revealed to him, and restored, the keys of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times? Only Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Yet Paul and Peter have clearly predicted the restoration of this divine authority. Surely the Lord will do nothing without revealing it to his servants the prophets. The Christian world has closed the heavens against themselves. They have declared that there is to be no more revelation, coming of angels or visions, therefore they cannot lay claim to the receiving of any keys pertaining to the restoration; yet we see the evidence of this restoration taking place on the earth. The ancient prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, the restoration of Israel, and the giving of covenants to them,



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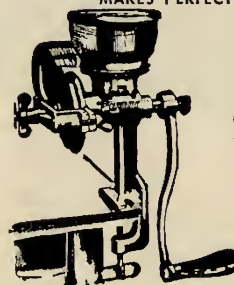
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(the Israelites) all taking place on the earth. These cannot come without the aid of divine authority and duly authorized servants appointed through the opening of the heavens.

In the remarkable vision given to King Nebuchadnezzar of the image representing the nations from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the time of the coming of Christ, we read that in the days of the kingdoms represented by the toes the "God of heaven" was to set up a kingdom "which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." The Latter-day Saints maintain that this kingdom is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Moreover that it is the "stone" cut out of the mountain without hands which eventually is to take pre-eminence upon the face of the earth. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an

everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."⁵

No one else, but Joseph Smith, has ever made the claim that this restoration and setting up of the kingdom (i.e. Church of Jesus Christ) has ever been revealed. Yet all indications point to the fact that the predicted signs of the approach of the second coming of our Lord are here. Surely the preparatory work of that coming must precede it. The restored unadulterated gospel must be here. Prophets who can receive revelation and who possess heavenly powers must be here. The heavens must be open and divine communications received by someone who is commissioned to set in order, under the guiding hand of Jesus Christ, all things preparatory to his appearance as King of kings and Lord of lords. Joseph Smith has proclaimed to the world that such power, keys, and authority were bestowed upon him. No one else has arisen to make such a claim; yet, this was revealed preparatory to these momentous and final restorations.

"Ah, Wilderness"—The Beginning of Adolescence

(Continued) Nevertheless, these are boobytraps to a growing boy. Cussing and vulgarity will usually alienate him from adults and the "successful" group at school. And drinking among adolescents always means slopping it up until they get high. Getting high means disaster. It means doing crazy things—to people, to cars, to themselves. Smoking is something else. It isn't spectacular like drinking, but it is a symbol. It represents defiance. It is "just to show the principal or parents that it's a free world." There is no pleasure in smoking until after the boy gets "the habit." Then it is a necessity. As one boy described it, "I have to smoke so I won't get the shakes." Then he added, "I can quit if I want to. I've done it lots of times."

Another activity that usually sprouts up during early adolescence is a suddenly developed talent for the telling of dirty stories. These are not nearly as significant to the boys as they sound to adults who overhear them, but it is likely to

shock a parent to hear the resounding guffaws which accompany some weird tale being told by his pink-cheeked boy with the innocent countenance. Even at eleven, boys frequently gather to swap stories and indulge themselves in expressions of vulgarity, but their major theme at that age is usually centered around routine physical functions such as elimination processes. Beginning around twelve, however, a boy begins to have a highly emotional fascination for the subject of sex. He secretly wishes he knew more about it and feels like giggling whenever the subject is mentioned. This new mysterious theme often becomes a tremendous source of humor for a twelve-year-old boy, and even a poorly told or pointless story on this subject will send him into gales of laughter.

Authorities believe this proclivity for off-color stories at this particular age is an attempt to show bravado and knowledge concerning a subject which they actually know is beyond them. It gives them a sense of security to see what "shockers" they can tell—as though they knew all about it. Perhaps it is Mother Na-