



*An upstairs room in the restored Newel K. Whitney store.
Joseph and Emma Smith lived in this store for more than a year, and the Prophet received many revelations here, including revelations about the coming of the Lord.*



The Second Coming and the Millennium

“We shall . . . do well to discern the signs of the times as we pass along, that the day of the Lord may not ‘overtake us as a thief in the night.’ ”

From the Life of Joseph Smith

In September 1832, Joseph and Emma Smith and their sixteen-month-old daughter, Julia, moved from the Johnson farm in Hiram, Ohio, back to Kirtland. There they moved into the general store owned by Newel K. Whitney, where they would live for more than a year. The Smith family lived on the second floor of the store and part of the first floor that was not used for business. Joseph and Emma’s son, Joseph Smith III, was born while the family lived in this store. The Prophet also received many revelations there.

One such revelation came on Christmas Day in 1832. The Prophet spent part of this day at home, deep in contemplation about the serious problems facing the nations of the world at that time. “Appearances of troubles among the nations became more visible this season than they had previously been since the Church began her journey out of the wilderness,” the Prophet said.¹ Events in the United States were leading toward civil war, and outbreaks of deadly diseases were widespread throughout the world. While “praying earnestly on the subject,”² the Prophet received the revelation now found in section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord revealed to Joseph that before the Second Coming, war would be poured out upon all the nations and natural calamities would chasten the people:

“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. . . . 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” (D&C 87:6, 8).

Two days later, on December 27, the Prophet received another revelation that contained much information about the Second Coming. On that day, a conference of high priests had gathered in the Prophet’s “translating room,” the room in the Whitney store where Joseph did much of his work on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. The minutes of the conference record: “Brother Joseph arose and said, to receive revelation and the blessings of heaven it was necessary to have our minds on God and exercise faith and become of one heart and of one mind. Therefore he recommended all present to pray separately and vocally to the Lord for [Him] to reveal His will unto us concerning the upbuilding of Zion and for the benefit of the Saints.”

Each high priest “bowed down before the Lord” and then spoke of his feelings and determination to keep the commandments of God.³ Shortly thereafter, the Prophet began to receive the revelation from God that would later become section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This revelation contains some of the scriptures’ most detailed prophecies about the coming of the Lord and the establishment of a thousand-year period of peace (see D&C 88:86–116).

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed many prophecies concerning the Second Coming, the Millennium, and the turbulent time that will precede these events. This great outpouring of revelation is a testimony that Joseph Smith was truly a seer raised up by God. As the Book of Mormon testifies, “A seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by [him] shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known” (Mosiah 8:17).

Teachings of Joseph Smith

The signs of the Savior's coming are being fulfilled; the faithful will recognize these signs and have peace in perilous times.

“We shall . . . do well to discern the signs of the times as we pass along, that the day of the Lord may not ‘overtake us as a thief in the night.’ [See D&C 106:4–5.]”⁴

“I will prophesy that the signs of the coming of the Son of Man are already commenced. One pestilence will desolate after another. We shall soon have war and bloodshed. The moon will be turned into blood. I testify of these things, and that the coming of the Son of Man is nigh, even at your doors. If our souls and our bodies are not looking forth for the coming of the Son of Man; and after we are dead, if we are not looking forth, we shall be among those who are calling for the rocks to fall upon them [see Revelation 6:15–17].”⁵

“Dearly and beloved brethren, we see that perilous times have come, as was testified of [see 2 Timothy 3:1]. We may look, then, with most perfect assurance, for the fulfillment of all those things that have been written, and with more confidence than ever before, lift up our eyes to the luminary of day, and say in our hearts, Soon thou wilt veil thy blushing face. He that said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light [see Genesis 1:3], hath spoken this word. And again, Thou moon, thou dimmer light, thou luminary of night, shalt turn to blood.

“We see that everything is being fulfilled; and that the time shall soon come when the Son of Man shall descend in the clouds of heaven.”⁶

“The earth will soon be reaped—that is, the wicked must soon be destroyed from off the face of the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it, and who can stay the hand of the Lord, or who is there that can measure arms with the Almighty, for at his commands the heavens and the earth must pass away. The day is fast hastening on when the restoration of all things shall be fulfilled, which all the holy prophets have prophesied of, even unto the gathering in of the house of Israel. Then shall come to pass that the lion shall lie down with the lamb, etc.

“But, brethren, be not discouraged when we tell you of perilous times, for they must shortly come, for the sword, famine, and pestilence are approaching. There shall be great destructions upon the face of this land, for ye need not suppose that one jot or tittle of the prophecies of all the holy prophets shall fail, and there are many that remain to be fulfilled yet. The Lord hath said that a short work will he make of it, and the righteous shall be saved if it be as by fire [see Romans 9:28; 1 Nephi 22:17].”⁷

“The scripture is ready to be fulfilled when great wars, famines, pestilence, great distress, judgments, etc., are ready to be poured out on the inhabitants of the earth.”⁸

“We see that perilous times have truly come, and the things which we have so long expected have at last begun to usher in; but when you see the fig tree begin to put forth its leaves, you may know that the summer is nigh at hand [see Matthew 24:32–33]. There will be a short work on the earth. It has now commenced. I suppose there will soon be perplexity all over the earth. Do not let our hearts faint when these things come upon us, for they must come, or the word cannot be fulfilled.”⁹

“I have asked of the Lord concerning His coming; and while asking the Lord, He gave a sign and said, ‘In the days of Noah I set a bow in the heavens as a sign and token that in any year that the bow should be seen the Lord would not come; but there should be seed time and harvest during that year: but whenever you see the bow withdrawn, it shall be a token that there shall be famine, pestilence, and great distress among the nations, and that the coming of the Messiah is not far distant.’”¹⁰

“Judah must return, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, and the temple, and water come out from under the temple, and the waters of the Dead Sea be healed [see Ezekiel 47:1–9]. It will take some time to rebuild the walls of the city and the temple, etc.; and all this must be done before the Son of Man will make His appearance. There will be wars and rumors of wars, signs in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, the sun turned into darkness and the moon to blood, earthquakes in divers places, the seas heaving beyond their bounds; then will appear one grand sign of the Son of Man in heaven. But what will the world

do? They will say it is a planet, a comet, etc. But the Son of Man will come as the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, which will be as the light of the morning cometh out of the east [see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:26].”¹¹

“[I] explained concerning the coming of the Son of Man; also that it is a false idea that the Saints will escape all the judgments, whilst the wicked suffer; for all flesh is subject to suffer, and ‘the righteous shall hardly escape’ [see D&C 63:34]; still many of the Saints will escape, for the just shall live by faith [see Habakkuk 2:4]; yet many of the righteous shall fall a prey to disease, to pestilence, etc., by reason of the weakness of the flesh, and yet be saved in the Kingdom of God. So that it is an unhallowed principle to say that such and such have transgressed because they have been preyed upon by disease or death, for all flesh is subject to death; and the Savior has said, ‘Judge not, lest ye be judged.’ [See Matthew 7:1.]”¹²

The Lord will not come until all things are fulfilled in preparation for His coming.

“The coming of the Son of Man never will be—never can be till the judgments spoken of for this hour are poured out: which judgments are commenced. Paul says, ‘Ye are the children of the light, and not of the darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief in the night.’ [See 1 Thessalonians 5:4–5.] It is not the design of the Almighty to come upon the earth and crush it and grind it to powder, but he will reveal it to His servants the prophets [see Amos 3:7].”¹³

“Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come [see Matthew 24:36; D&C 49:7]. Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and all that say so are false teachers.”¹⁴

Regarding a man who claimed to have seen the sign of the Son of Man, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “He has not seen the sign of the Son of Man, as foretold by Jesus; neither has any man, nor will any man, until after the sun shall have been darkened and the moon bathed in blood; for the Lord hath not shown me any such sign; and as the prophet saith, so it must be—‘Surely

the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.’ (See Amos 3:7.) Therefore hear this, O earth: The Lord will not come to reign over the righteous, in this world, in 1843, nor until everything for the Bridegroom is ready.”¹⁵

**Those who are wise and faithful will be prepared
when the Lord comes again.**

“When I contemplate the rapidity with which the great and glorious day of the coming of the Son of Man advances, when He shall come to receive His Saints unto Himself, where they shall dwell in His presence, and be crowned with glory and immortality; when I consider that soon the heavens are to be shaken, and the earth tremble and reel to and fro; and that the heavens are to be unfolded as a scroll when it is rolled up; and that every mountain and island are to flee away, I cry out in my heart, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! [See 2 Peter 3:11.]”¹⁶

“The earth is groaning under corruption, oppression, tyranny and bloodshed; and God is coming out of His hiding place, as He said He would do, to vex the nations of the earth. Daniel, in his vision, saw convulsion upon convulsion; he ‘beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit;’ and one was brought before him like unto the Son of Man; and all nations, kindred, tongues, and people, did serve and obey Him [see Daniel 7:9–14]. It is for us to be righteous, that we may be wise and understand; for none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand, and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever [see Daniel 12:3].”¹⁷

“Let the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble, the poor and the needy, the bond and the free, both black and white, take heed to their ways, and cleave to the knowledge of God, and execute justice and judgment upon the earth in righteousness, and prepare to meet the judge of the quick and the dead, for the hour of His coming is nigh.”¹⁸

“Let us be wise in all things, and keep all the commandments of God, that our salvation may be sure. Having our armor ready and prepared against the time appointed and having on the whole armor of righteousness, we may be able to stand in that trying day [see Ephesians 6:13].”¹⁹

In December 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith said the following in a letter to members of the Church in Colesville, New York: “May you all be faithful and wait for the time of our Lord, for his appearing is nigh at hand.

“ ‘But [of] the time and the season, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for ye yourselves perfectly know that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night: for when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman, but they shall not escape.

“ ‘But ye, brethren, are not in darkness. . . . Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober, for they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

“ ‘But let us who be of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ [1 Thessalonians 5:1–4, 6–9.]

“Wherefore, comfort one another, even as ye also do, for perilous times are at hand. . . . Peace is taken from the earth in part, and it will soon be in whole; yea, destructions are at our doors, and they soon will be in the houses of the wicked, and they that know not God.

“Yea, lift up your heads and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh. We are the most favored people that ever have been from the foundation of the world, if we remain faithful in keeping the commandments of our God. Yea, even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, beheld our day and rejoiced [see Moses 7:65–67], and the prophets from that day forth have prophesied of the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and rejoiced at the day of rest of the Saints; yea, and the Apostle of our Savior also did rejoice in his appearance in a cloud with the host of

heaven, to dwell with man on the earth a thousand years [see Revelation 1:7]. Therefore we have reason to rejoice.

“Behold the prophecies of the Book of Mormon are fulfilling as fast as time can bring it about. The Spirit of the living God is upon me; therefore, who will say that I shall not prophesy. The time is soon at hand that we shall have to flee whithersoever the Lord will, for safety. Fear not those who are making you an offender for a word [see Isaiah 29:20–21], but be faithful in witnessing unto a crooked and a perverse generation that the day of the coming of our Lord and Savior is at hand. Yea, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his path [see Matthew 3:3].

“Who will shrink because of offenses, for offenses must come, but woe to them by whom they come, for the rock must fall on them and grind them to powder [see Matthew 18:7; 21:43–44]. For the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, and woe will be unto them if they do not repent and be baptized in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the remission of their sins, and come in at the strait gate and be numbered with the house of Israel. For God will not always be mocked, and not pour out his wrath upon those that blaspheme his holy name, for the sword, famines, and destruction will soon overtake them in their wild career, for God will avenge, and pour out his vials of wrath, and save his elect [see Revelation 16:1].

“And all those who will obey his commandments are his elect, and he will soon gather them from the four winds of heaven, from one quarter of the earth to the other [see Matthew 24:31], to a place whithersoever he will; therefore, in your patience possess ye your souls [see Luke 21:19].”²⁰

**The Millennium will be a time of peace when the Savior
will reign over the earth.**

Articles of Faith 1:10: “We believe . . . that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”²¹

“The designs of God . . . have been . . . to establish peace and good will among men; to promote the principles of eternal truth; to bring about a state of things that shall unite man to his fellow



*“The day is fast hastening on when the restoration of all things shall be fulfilled. . . .
Then shall come to pass that the lion shall lie down with the lamb.”*

man; cause the world to ‘beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks’ [Isaiah 2:4], make the nations of the earth dwell in peace, and to bring about the millennial glory, when ‘the earth shall yield its increase, resume its [paradisiacal] glory, and become as the garden of the Lord.’ . . .

“It has been the design of Jehovah, from the commencement of the world, and is His purpose now, to regulate the affairs of the world in His own time, to stand as a head of the universe, and take the reins of government in His own hand. When that is done, judgment will be administered in righteousness; anarchy and confusion will be destroyed, and ‘nations will learn war no more.’ [See Isaiah 2:4.] . . .

“. . . Moses received the word of the Lord from God Himself; he was the mouth of God to Aaron, and Aaron taught the people, in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs; they were both one, there was no distinction; so will it be when the purposes of God shall be accomplished: when ‘the Lord shall be King over the whole earth,’ and ‘Jerusalem His throne.’ ‘The law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.’ [See Zechariah 14:9; Jeremiah 3:17; Micah 4:2.]

“ . . . ‘He whose right it is, will possess the kingdom, and reign until He has put all things under His feet’ [see Ezekiel 21:27; 1 Corinthians 15:27]; iniquity will hide its hoary head, Satan will be bound, and the works of darkness destroyed; righteousness will be put to the line, and judgment to the plummet, and ‘he that fears the Lord will alone be exalted in that day.’ [See Isaiah 2:11; 28:17.]”²²

“That Jesus will be a resident on the earth a thousand [years] with the Saints is not the case, but will reign over the Saints and come down and instruct, as he did the five hundred brethren [see 1 Corinthians 15:6], and those of the first resurrection will also reign with him over the Saints.”²³

**After the Millennium, the earth will be changed
into a sanctified, celestial state.**

“While at dinner, I remarked to my family and friends present, that when the earth was sanctified and became like a sea of glass, it would be one great urim and thummim, and the Saints could look in it and see as they are seen.”²⁴

“This earth will be rolled back into the presence of God and crowned with celestial glory.”²⁵

“After the little season [of Satan’s last rebellion] is expired and the earth undergoes its last change and is glorified, then will all the meek inherit the earth, wherein dwelleth the righteous.”²⁶

*The Prophet taught the following on April 2, 1843, later recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 130:9: “This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and this earth will be Christ’s.”*²⁷

Suggestions for Study and Teaching

Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages vii–xii.

- Read the first two full paragraphs on page 250, and note the high priests' preparation to receive the revelation that is now section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Think about how this account applies to you in your efforts to understand the prophecies of the Second Coming.
- Read the Prophet Joseph Smith's prophecies of the perilous times before the coming of the Lord (pages 251–53). How can we remain at peace even during such trials? Why do you think we need to know and understand the signs of the Second Coming? What signs of the Second Coming have been or are being fulfilled?
- Read the second full paragraph on page 253 and the third paragraph on page 255. What does the phrase “as a thief in the night” suggest about the Lord's coming? Why do you think the day of the Lord will not overtake the children of the light as a thief in the night?
- How can we prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior? (For some examples, see pages 254–56.) Think about how you will feel to see the Savior if you are prepared for His coming. As we prepare for the Second Coming, how can we avoid feelings of fear or alarm?
- Review Joseph Smith's prophecies about the Millennium (pages 256–58). What are your thoughts and feelings as you contemplate this period of time?

Related Scriptures: Micah 4:1–7; D&C 29:9–25; 45:36–71; 88:95–98, 110–15; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:21–55

Notes

1. *History of the Church*, 1:301; from “History of the Church” (manuscript), book A-1, p. 244, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 130:13; instructions given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 2, 1843, in Ramus, Illinois.
3. Kirtland High Council, Minutes Dec. 1832–Nov. 1837, entry for Dec. 27, 1832, pp. 3–4, reported by Frederick G. Williams, Church Archives.
4. *History of the Church*, 3:331; from “Extract, from the Private Journal of Joseph Smith Jr.,” *Times and Seasons*, Nov. 1839, p. 9.
5. *History of the Church*, 3:390; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith about July 1839 in Commerce, Illinois; reported by Willard Richards.
6. *History of the Church*, 3:291; punctuation modernized; from a letter from Joseph Smith and others to Edward Partridge and the Church, Mar. 20, 1839, Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri.

7. Letter from Joseph Smith and John Whitmer to the Saints in Colesville, New York, Aug. 20, 1830, Harmony, Pennsylvania; in Newel Knight, *Autobiography and Journal*, ca. 1846–47, pp. 133–36, Church Archives.
8. *History of the Church*, 6:364; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on May 12, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Thomas Bullock.
9. *History of the Church*, 3:286; from a letter from Joseph Smith to Presendia Huntington Buell, Mar. 15, 1839, Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri; Sister Buell's last name is incorrectly spelled "Bull" in *History of the Church*.
10. *History of the Church*, 6:254; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Mar. 10, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff; see also appendix, page 562, item 3.
11. *History of the Church*, 5:337; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 6, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Willard Richards.
12. *History of the Church*, 4:11; punctuation modernized; from instructions given by Joseph Smith on Sept. 29, 1839, in Commerce, Illinois; reported by James Mulholland.
13. *History of the Church*, 5:336–37; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 6, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Willard Richards.
14. *History of the Church*, 6:254; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Mar. 10, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff.
15. *History of the Church*, 5:291; from a letter from Joseph Smith to the editor of the *Times and Seasons*, Feb. 28, 1843, Nauvoo, Illinois, published in *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 1, 1843, p. 113.
16. *History of the Church*, 1:442; from a letter from Joseph Smith to Moses Nickerson, Nov. 19, 1833, Kirtland, Ohio.
17. *History of the Church*, 5:65; from "The Government of God," an editorial published in *Times and Seasons*, July 15, 1842, p. 857; Joseph Smith was the editor of the periodical.
18. *History of the Church*, 6:93; from Joseph Smith's appeal to the state of Vermont, Nov. 29, 1843, Nauvoo, Illinois, published as *General Joseph Smith's Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys* (1843), p. 7.
19. Letter from Joseph Smith and others to Hezekiah Peck, Aug. 31, 1835, Kirtland, Ohio; in "The Book of John Whitmer," p. 80, Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri; copy of "The Book of John Whitmer" in Church Archives.
20. Letter from Joseph Smith and John Whitmer to the Saints in Colesville, New York, Dec. 2, 1830, Fayette, New York; in Newel Knight, *Autobiography and Journal*, ca. 1846–47, pp. 198–206, Church Archives.
21. Articles of Faith 1:10.
22. *History of the Church*, 5:61, 63–65; punctuation modernized; from "The Government of God," an editorial published in *Times and Seasons*, July 15, 1842, pp. 855–57; Joseph Smith was the editor of the periodical.
23. Quoted by William P. McIntire, reporting a discourse given by Joseph Smith in early 1841 in Nauvoo, Illinois; William Patterson McIntire, Notebook 1840–45, Church Archives.
24. *History of the Church*, 5:279; from a Joseph Smith journal entry, Feb. 18, 1843, Nauvoo, Illinois.
25. Quoted by William Clayton, reporting an undated discourse given by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois; in L. John Nuttall, "Extracts from William Clayton's Private Book," p. 8, Journals of L. John Nuttall, 1857–1904, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; copy in Church Archives.
26. Quoted by William P. McIntire, reporting a discourse given by Joseph Smith in early 1841 in Nauvoo, Illinois; William Patterson McIntire, Notebook 1840–45, Church Archives.
27. Doctrine and Covenants 130:9; instructions given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 2, 1843, in Ramus, Illinois.