

1r-D&C-13

This Generation Shall Have My Word through You
D&C 122:1; 2 Nephi 3:12; 11:4; JS-History 1:73-74; Joseph Smith-Matthew
plus those cited in the Gospel Doctrine Study Guide
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(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. An unidentified visitor rose to bear testimony at a Fast and Testimony Meeting in San Francisco Golden Gate Ward in the early 1990's. He said he had just returned from Africa where he had seen prophecy fulfilled. That prophecy concerned Joseph Smith. Joseph had been promised that while he would face many trials, eventually **"the ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name"** (D&C 122:1). This person testified that while in Africa he had indeed heard the beseeching, **"Tell us about the prophet, Joseph Smith."**

A. Joseph Smith was indeed the voice for God's word to all mankind in these last days.

B. The Lord's word came through him from many different sources:

1. The Book of Mormon.
2. More complete and correct translations of the Bible.
3. New revelation given directly to Joseph.
4. Other ancient writings returned into his hands.

C. Great blessings have come to us through each of these marvelous sources.

II. Joseph brought us God's word through The Book of Mormon.

A. The Lord promised when the Book of Mormon came forth, it would join with the Bible and the union would lead to **"the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins"** (2 Nephi 3:12). (Emphasis added).

B. When I was serving my mission in Ireland, a young woman came to the mission office. She was a film producer and knew well the centuries old struggle between Catholic Ireland and Protestant England (In more recent time, between Northern Ireland and the Southern Republic of Ireland). **And she felt she had the answer --- New Religions.**

C. She sought to do a documentary about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She felt that here was a new religion which should help settle the conflicts between historical ones.

D. Without realizing it, **she had discovered the great plan of the Lord. His latter-day church would become the answer to the ancient struggles between religions. The Book of Mormon was to be the major factor in resolving ancient conflicts.**

1. At more than one gathering that I attended of Latter-day Saints from both North and South Ireland, the fact that **there were no hostilities between them was openly spoken of as a special blessing.**

III. In fact I suggest the scriptural references to the Balm of Gilead and its healing power is prophecy of the Book of Mormon. Many see it as a "type" of Jesus Christ. And it is. But Christ sent his healing power to us through the Book of Mormon --- its power to heal conflicts and contentions. Note this healing resin from a bush was called the Balm of Gilead because it grew most profusely in Gilead, the lands of Manasseh (Genesis 37:25). The prophets, foreseeing the apostasy, lamented, "Is there no balm in Gilead" (Jeremiah 8:22; Jeremiah 51:8). It was the descendants of Manasseh who left us the Book of Mormon. And their scriptures *have* been the healing power to overcome apostasy and division.

A. **The Book of Mormon heals rifts by making doctrine clear.** We have to understand that much of the Old Testament and New Testament were deliberately written in parabolic form. **They were written in parables so that only those spiritually in tune could understand. But this created misunderstandings and thus conflicts which have lasted until today** (See Romans 11:8-28, especially v. 25).

B. On the other hand, doctrines taught in the Book of Mormon were *written in plainness*, to come forth in the last days to heal such misunderstandings. Thus conflict is done away.

IV. **The Book of Mormon also taught how to read the Bible, to make their witnesses unified and more powerful.**

A. First, Nephi taught us that the Mosaic Law and all things in the scriptures typify Christ [That is, they teach of Christ through similitudes or likenesses of Him] (2 Nephi 11:4).

B. King Benjamin taught that “many ... types and shadows showed he [Christ] unto them [ancient Israel] concerning his coming.” But due to the hardness of their hearts, they did not understand them (Mosiah 3:15).

C. When we **use these Book of Mormon clues in how to read the Bible, our understanding of the Bible is greatly enlarged as well.**

D. In modern times, more and more people are beginning to see how *all* the Bible pointed to Jesus Christ, just as Nephi and King Benjamin taught. (See David Limbaugh’s *The Emmaus Code* for an example).

V. **Joseph Smith’s re-translation of the Bible was done under direction of the Spirit, blessing us.**

A. Joseph’s special ability to understand the scriptures was a gift from God, as indicated in the record written after his and Oliver Cowdery’s baptism. **“We were filled with the Holy Ghost... Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of”** (JS-H 1:73-74.).

B. Later in a letter of William W. Phelps on July 31, 1832, Joseph Smith wrote, “We have finished the translation of the New Testament. Great and glorious things are revealed” (Dean Jesse, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*).

C. Among such choice contributions are Joseph Smith - Matthew, which shows Jesus was actually making a dual prophecy: (1) of the destruction soon to follow in His times, and (2) that of the Last Days. Joseph Smith helps us divide and then understand the prophecies pertaining to both times.

VI. **Joseph gave us God’s word through new, direct revelations, providing many blessings.**

A. Countless are his contributions. It has been over one hundred and sixty years since Joseph was martyred. In that time it can be clearly determined if he was a true or a false prophet. In that length of time, his words have had sufficient time to be tested as to their truthfulness.

B. The spirit still remains the main source of testimony to countless individuals of the truthfulness of Joseph’s revelations. That spirit has testified to me, and will to all those who seek. The Spirit still causes my soul to thrill when Joseph rejoiced, “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God” (D&C 76:22-23).

C. Both greater light and purer knowledge have been the result of Joseph's revelations. He has revealed to all that God is a personage of great love and wisdom. He is not the God of apostate belief which condemned to hell all those who lived before Christ, or all those who lived in the Western half of the world before Christian missionaries. He is not that apostate God who condemned to hell all innocent children who were unable to be baptized.

D. Rather **He is a God of such love and wisdom that He has provided for the salvation of each and every person who has ever lived upon this earth.**

1. And He revealed to Joseph how such a great work of salvation can be accomplished.

VII. **The beliefs of earliest Christianity agree with Joseph's words.**

A. The truths Joseph **revealed through many sources are consistent with earliest, not later Christianity.** When one studies the writings of the earliest Christians, we find the same doctrines found in the restored Church.

B. In fact, by reading the consecutive writings of the earliest Christians, one can actually trace how both doctrines and ordinances were changed through the centuries as apostasy took its toll.

C. One of those early beliefs was the physical nature of God, that He was not only spirit.

D. Another was that God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost were separate personages.

E. Another was that the Lord's priesthood was to be a lay priesthood, thus blessing all.

F. Another was that baptism was not for infants.

G. Another was the practice of temple ordinances, such as baptism for the dead.

VIII. Joseph gave us God's word by restoring lost material, which blesses us.

A. One of the greatest barriers to understanding is the missing of key pieces of information.

B. And one **of Joseph's great contributions was restoring precious records containing key doctrines which were lost.**

C. The early saints themselves noticed biblical references to scriptures that were not in the Bible. Joseph Smith wrote "The common remark was, 'They are lost books,' but it seems the Apostolic church had some of these writings, as Jude mentions or quotes the Prophecy of Enoch" (*History of the Church* 1:132.)

D. Joseph did not just make up material to insert. Dr. Hugh Nibley has provided strong evidence that the writings of Moses and the other patriarchs that Joseph brought to light have many parallels to ancient manuscripts since discovered. These manuscripts bear the names of the ancient patriarchs, but their writings were generally unknown in the Western world during Joseph Smith's time. They were written in difficult foreign languages and were neglected in European libraries. **Joseph's versions, however, are the most filled with spirit and light.** The others appear to be corrupted copies of originals. (For extensive comparisons see Hugh Nibley, "To Open the Last Dispensation: Moses Chapter 1" in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, pp. 1-20).

IX. Joseph's vast array of works from many different sources has truly blessed our lives.

Obviously he has led us step by step to The Lord's Words, both past and present.

This can assure us that the even more important words he shared about our future can be fully trusted.