

Kentucky Talk “Seeing God’s Pattern in the Storm”

Hello, my name is Vern Horning. I grew up in a good LDS home in Minnesota where I was taught the gospel as restored through Joseph Smith. While serving as a missionary in California, I developed a love for the scriptures and grew closer to the Lord. I saw that the Heavens had been opened again with revelations restoring truth to the earth. I came to believe that Jesus Christ was doing a great work among the children of men and felt how blessed I was to be a member of His church. I loved teaching His gospel and sought earnestly to bring souls unto Him. I loved the Plan of Salvation and wanted to build His kingdom on the earth. I looked forward to hearing and studying the teachings and words of the Lord’s living apostles and prophets. I was committed to not only keeping the commandments but also the counsel of these men. I was truly converted.

After my mission, I attended Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah to continue my education and with the hope that I would also find a wife. On my second day there I bumped into a beautiful girl named Whitney who also shared my love of the Lord. 33 years later we are still in love and have raised 4 wonderful children by striving to live the gospel in our home. Whitney and I loved the Church and found great wisdom and joy living its teachings and serving others. We saw blessings from living it. I was content and at peace and believed that we were living the fullness of the Gospel.

Several years ago, while serving as bishop for my LDS ward, I had a life changing set of events which started off innocent enough. I had been informed that my friend Keith was teaching false doctrine, he “was saying that Mormons were Gentiles.” I went to his home and asked if he could help me understand what this was about. For the next three hours, he opened the scriptures and persuaded me to see that we are the Gentiles of the Book of Mormon. It was exhilarating to read from the scriptures and learn something new. I could not deny what the scriptures taught and the spirit of the Lord that was with us. Keith told me that he and another man from our ward, Alan, got together on Sunday evenings to share insights from the scriptures. A few Sundays later I joined them and had more wonderful experiences, learning from the scriptures principles and truths I had never seen before or only understood at a surface level. I was like a kid in a candy store. I was waking up to what the Fulness of the Gospel was really about: progressing from

unbelief to belief, then to exercise faith, which must ultimately lead to knowledge. I discovered that the scriptures actually mean what they say- the purpose of this life is to come to know the Lord, literally. What I was learning through the scriptures and having the more mysterious passages opened up to me, made me determined to be a better follower of Christ.

I want to share some of the truths I have learned from my journey. I am still a student and by no means have a perfect understanding.

We are living in a day when the storms of this faithless world are growing. We see “iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that remains steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved” (Matt 11:30).

The definitions of things matter. When you change or limit a word, you corrupt its meaning. My further education required me to understand what the Lord meant by His words. I want to start today with the word “**Prophet.**”

Prophets are men that are called by God’s own voice. Once they have entered into His presence, He may call them to declare His message to the world. This is the pattern found throughout all of scripture. A prophet is one who has the spirit of prophecy.

Joseph Smith taught:

“If any person should ask me if I were a prophet, I should not deny it, as that would give me the lie; for, according to John, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; therefore if I profess to be a witness or a teacher, and have not the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, I must be a false witness; but if I be a true teacher and witness, I must possess the spirit of prophecy, and that constitutes a prophet; and any man who says he is a teacher or a preacher of righteousness, and denies the spirit of prophecy, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; and by this key, false teachers and imposters may be detected” (DHC: 5:215-216).

“No man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has the testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony” (DHC 3:389-390).

We see that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Some churches teach that this is merely the testimony believers have about Him but it is so much more. We need to get this right because one must have the testimony of Jesus to be a Prophet.

Joseph defined it when he said. “To obtain a promise from God for myself that I shall have Eternal life. that is the more sure word of prophycy... to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, that is the testimony of Jesus” (JS, May 21 1843, James Burgess Notebook).

The testimony of Jesus comes directly from Him. Prophets have a knowledge of God because they receive it by revelation and have received this heavenly gift. Receiving the Testimony of Jesus as taught by Joseph is more than having the Spirit of the Lord enter into your heart or merely believing in Jesus. Imposters either overstate their connection to God, lie about it, or do not understand that it is essential for a prophetic call. They claim the honorary title of “Prophet” that comes with their church calling and the people who sustain them in it. They believe keys are bestowed to them by men and can be perpetually distributed throughout time. This is exemplified in the Catholic Church which believes that the papal keys have been passed from the apostle Peter down to the current Pope.

The next natural question we should ask is how do we obtain Eternal life? According to Joseph you must be sealed with the “Holy Spirit of Promise,” which is the “more sure word of prophecy.”

What do these phrases mean?

The Holy Spirit of Promise is the sealing word of God that must be confirmed or ratified by Him for it to become eternal. Joseph explained we can know this, if we receive an actual knowledge that the course of life which we pursue is according to the will of God. This is essentially

necessary to enable us to have that confidence in God, without which no person can obtain Eternal life (L on F 6:2). If one does not obtain this knowledge of a promise sealed by God, through His word — sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise — then it will not last into the eternities. The only thing that will endure is that which is established by God and must come in mortality (Glossary: Holy Spirit of Promise).

The Lord taught the relationship of the Holy Spirit of Promise is connected to the Second Comforter when He said, “Wherefore, I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of Promise, which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the Testimony of John. This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the Celestial Kingdom, which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn” (T&C 86:1).

The Lord referenced the apostle John’s testimony which states, “If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever — even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it sees him not, neither knows him. But you know him, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you (John 9:8).

There has been some confusion among teachers of religion regarding the Holy Spirit of Promise and the second comforter. Some claim that it is just another name for the Holy Ghost which they associate with feelings of emotion. However, Joseph Smith, who was intimately connected with these things, clearly taught, “The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins, and receives the Holy Ghost (by the laying on of hands) which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and Election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John. . . . Now what is this

other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter, that when any man obtains this last Comforter he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him or appear unto him from time to time” (TPJS, pp. 150-151).

The question that seems to be asked the most often by those who are taught this principle is “If this is essential for salvation, does it really need to happen to us while in the flesh?”

The Lord answered this way,

“Truly I say unto you, it is not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that does the will of my Father who is in Heaven. For the day soon comes that men shall come before me to judgment, to be judged according to their works. And many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and in your name have cast out devils, and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I say unto them, You never knew me. Depart from me, you that work iniquity” (Matt 7:21).

It should be noted that Joseph, in his inspired translation, changed this statement from “I never knew you” to “you never knew me.”

Jesus Christ taught that Eternal life comes by knowing God, “And this is life eternal: that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 9:19). This is why “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge” (HC 4:588).

Another question that is often asked is, “If this is correct and necessary, why do church leaders not teach it?”

The Lord’s statement “you never knew me” was preceded by His warning to “[B]eware of false prophets that come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. . . . A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them (Matt 3:46).

One of the tests in this life is to receive true messengers and reject false prophets.

There are several ways you can look at what the Lord means by “fruit.” One way is to test a messenger’s words. Do they “enlarge my soul and enlighten my understanding and are the words delicious to me?” (Alma 16:28). Does your mind begin to expand? If so, “it is because it is light; and whatsoever is light is good, because it is discernible; therefore, ye must know that it is good” (Alma 16:29). To figure out who is a true or false prophet requires that we be seekers of truth. “[B]lessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the holy ghost” (Matt 3:9).

Coming to know correct doctrine requires study and prayer until you have become familiar with the voice of God. For “the things of God are of deep import, and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out” (T&C 138:18). This requires a sacrifice of time, putting off the distractions of this world to read, listen, ponder, discuss, and pray. This stuff matters.

There are some natural obstacles to overcome to increase in light and truth. One is false traditions. “And that wicked one comes and takes away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers” (T&C 93:11). Usually when a true messenger is sent from the Lord to a people, what they have to say challenges their current cultural and religious beliefs and practices. False traditions fool man into thinking he’s obedient when he is actually misled.

Joseph had this problem with the people in his day. “This generation,” he said, “it has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand. I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the saints prepared to receive the things of God, but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God will fly to pieces like glass, as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions” (HC, 6:184–85).

Fear can stop or limit spiritual progression. It is the opposite of faith and hope. Those controlled by their fears will view Christ's way as a stumbling block and an offense. We ought to fear God more than we fear anything else including the influences of man. We ought to love God and fear Him because it's our relationship to Him, and Him alone, that matters.

Do the words of the messenger or prophet match scripture or contradict what the Lord has already revealed? Because God is the same yesterday, today, and for ever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing (Moroni 4:7), true prophets will never contradict another true prophet, past, present or future. Their words are the Lords. This is what is meant when the Lord said "And though the heaven and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by my own voice or by the voice of my servants it is the same (T&C 54:7).

False prophets are ones who believe that by the nature of their calling anything they say is the same as if God said it. They use this scripture to justify that anything they teach must be believed and obeyed. Their arrogance creates confusion and causes their members to all go "astray, save it be a few who are the humble followers of Christ. Nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men (2 Nephi 12:2).

True Prophets restore eternal ordinances and correct corruptions to the gospel. They teach that in the beginning, Adam was set to watch over the ordinances, to reveal them from heaven to man, or to send angels to reveal them. Ordinances have been the same and are to remain the same forever and ever (JS, History of the Church, vol.4, p. 208.)

The real test of a messenger's fruit is demonstrated by the end result: what does the teaching accomplish? Do their words produce good fruit? If a messenger's fruit is good then it has the potential to redeem the soul of the hearer by bringing them back into the presence of Christ. Jesus condemned the religious leaders in His day because they "shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer them that are entering to go in" (Matt 10:27). Jesus was pointing out that the church leaders were not true messengers because they had not entered in at the correct gate, did not know God, and were incapable of leading

others to life and salvation. The Lord said of them “They are blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt 8:9).

This is why it matters whether or not leaders of religion actually have real experience with heaven and point others to the same source.

We must have correct scriptural knowledge and use it in order to discern the fruit of anyone claiming to be a prophet.

The creation story begins with Adam and Eve standing in the presence of the Lord. After transgressing a law of God, they found themselves cast out of paradise. “Adam called upon the name of the Lord, and Eve also, his wife; and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden speaking unto them, and they saw him not, for they were shut out from his presence. And he gave unto them commandment that they should worship the Lord their God and should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

And after many days, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why do you offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, I know not but the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spoke, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father who is full of grace and truth. Wherefore, you shall do all that you do in the name of the Son. And you shall repent and call upon God in the name of the Son for ever more.

And in that day the holy ghost fell upon Adam, which bore record of the Father and the Son, saying, I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and for ever, that as you have fallen, you may be redeemed — and all mankind, even as many as choose. And in that day, Adam blessed God, and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying, Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again, in my flesh I shall see God” (Gen 3:2-4).

Through the story of Adam and Eve we learn what the gospel is: it is to be obedient to the commandments of God, sacrifice, receive the ministry of angels, do everything in the name of the Son, repent and pray, and by so doing receive the holy ghost. Adam was promised that if he chose, he could see God in the flesh or in other words, be redeemed from the fall. This was at least fulfilled at Adam-Oni-Ahman but most likely earlier than this event.

Adam was the first prophet. All true messengers follow the pattern established by the Lord through him and have likewise been redeemed and brought back into the presence of God.

The Brother of Jared followed this pattern. While praying to the Lord on the top of a mountain, “the Lord shewed himself unto him and said, Because thou knowest these things, ye are redeemed from the Fall. Therefore, ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I shew myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life; and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name. And they shall become my sons and my daughters” (Ether 1:13).

As a fallen and unredeemed people we, like sheep, have gone astray — we have turned every one to his own way (Isaiah 19:2). Without divine intervention we would be lost. Apostasy is a falling away from God’s revealed truth. There seems to be two forms apostasy takes. One is a deliberate casting away of the Gospel. To reject the way of a disciple of Christ and give completely to the natural man. To mock God and see no value in the holy scriptures.

The other form of apostasy can be harder to see. It effects the very religious. It always involves small changes that introduce incorrect teachings or modify ordinances. It includes innovations by men which grow and evolve over time. Changes may also be subtractive. Truths are lost, ordinances are reduced and simplified and finally discarded.

No one in apostasy ever thinks that they are in it. This is the great deception. They trust their leaders are inspired and led by God and incapable of leading their church astray. This is one reason the Lord warns us about being at ease in Zion. Self-assurance as to salvation by an

institution allows the “Devil to cheateth their souls and leadeth them away carefully down to hell . . . He whispereth in their ears until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance” (2 Nephi 12:4).

Those who are in apostasy reject, mock, or even become angry with true messengers. This was the reaction to Lehi after he delivered the Lord’s warnings to the very religious people in Jerusalem. “And it came to pass that the Jews did mock him because of the things which he testified of them, for he truly testified of their wickedness and their abominations. And he testified that the things which he saw and heard, and also the things which he read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a messiah and also the redemption of the world. And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him” (1 Nephi 1:5).

Joseph Smith taught: “The world always mistook false prophets for true ones, and those that were sent of God, they considered to be false prophets, and hence they killed, stoned, punished and imprisoned the true prophets, and these had to hide themselves ‘in deserts and dens, and caves of the earth,’ and though the most honorable men of the earth, they banished them from their society as vagabonds, whilst they cherished, honored and supported knaves, vagabonds, hypocrites, impostors, and the basest of men” (TPJS, p. 206).

For people in apostasy to repent, it first has to be noticed, acknowledged and exposed. One sign of apostasy is that the heavens have gone quiet. I’m not talking about endless manifestos, declarations, proclamations, and policy changes, but real words from the Lord.

False prophets justify this silence by saying, “we don't need much revelation. We need to pay more attention to the revelation we've already received” (Gordon B. Hinckley, San Francisco Chronicle, Sunday Interview, April 13, 1997). Or they say “the great reservoir of revelation for our dispensation—meaning the things that we need to know to govern our conduct in order to gain an eternal life—these things have already been given. And there will not be great added reservoirs of substantive revelation that will come before the Second Coming” (Bruce R. McConkie, 1979).

This is like saying that the reason for the almost 1800 years of God's lack of speaking to the earth during the great apostasy was because He had said everything He needed to say in the Bible.

In truth, the only reason the heavens go quiet is because the world lacks men who have the faith to become true prophets. Moroni said it best, "For it is by faith that miracles are wrought, and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men. Wherefore, if these things have ceased, woe be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain. For no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name. Wherefore, if these things have ceased, then has faith ceased also, and awful is the state of man, for they are as though there had been no redemption made" (Moroni 7:7).

Damned leaders and damned people believe that keeping the creeds of their religion is all that is necessary in order to be saved. No man has ever been saved without a direct connection with heaven. All who have received salvation and the words of eternal life have followed the same pattern. The Lectures on Faith teach that, "It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they in like manner offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him" (L on F 6:8).

The truth is out there, but it was never meant to be easy to find. There is a reason the Lord said "Repent therefore and enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in there at, because strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads unto life, and few there are that find it (Matt 3:45).

This is why the Lord sends prophets to people in apostasy. Prophets have a heavenly perspective and have been instructed how to call out and correct error. Almost everyone believes that they have the full truth and do not need anything new. In order for a people to receive truth they must cast off a hard heart. They must give place for the word and at least consider that what they are hearing could be true. It would be better to be humble and open to the possibility that God wants

to say more. Alma explained it this way, “And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word. And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God, until they know them in full. And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the Devil and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell” (Alma 9:3).

True prophets have the following in common:

1. They are called of God, which means they speak with Him face to face, receive a message from Him which must be delivered exactly as it was given to him.
2. They call humanity to repentance and restore corrupted or lost ordinances.
3. They are overwhelmingly rejected, especially by their own people.
4. They teach the Lord’s commandments in order that true faith which leads to salvation may be exercised.
5. They teach the correct character, perfections, and attributes of God.
6. They declare to the people that faith isn’t the goal but the means to receive knowledge from heaven for themselves as well as personal revelation that they are approved of God. In other words, a true prophet wants to work themselves out of a job. Moses declared, “Would to God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them” (Numbers 7:19).

When the Heavens begin a work with the children of men, they work through prophets. When Moses reestablished the direct connection between God and His chosen people, the Lord explained to them, “Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream” (Numbers 7:22).

The night before he was killed, the Prophet Joseph Smith had a dream. I believe it contains insights concerning what was to become of the restoration.

Joseph recounted,

“I was back in Kirtland, Ohio, and thought I would take a walk out by myself and view my old farm, which I found grown up with weeds and brambles, and altogether bearing evidence of neglect and want of culture. I went into the barn, which I found without floor or doors, with the weather boarding off, and was altogether in keeping with the farm.

While I viewed the desolation around me, and was contemplating how it might be recovered from the curse upon it, there came rushing into the barn a company of furious men who commenced to pick a quarrel with me.

The leader of the party ordered me to leave the barn and the farm, stating it was none of mine and that I must give up all hope of ever possessing it.

I told him the farm was given me, and although I had not had any use of it for some time back, still, I had not sold it, and according to righteous principles it belonged to me.

He then grew furious and began to rail upon me, and threaten me, and said it never did belong to me.

I then told him that I did not think it worth contending about, that I had no desire to live upon it in its present state, and if he thought he had a better right, I would not quarrel with him about it, but leave. But my assurance that I would not trouble him at present did not seem to satisfy him, as he seemed determined to quarrel with me, and threatened me with destruction of my body.

While he was thus engaged, pouring out his bitter words upon me, a rabble rushed in and nearly filled the barn, drew out their knives, and began to quarrel among themselves for the premises, and for a moment forgot me, at which time I took the opportunity to walk out of the barn, about up to my ankles in mud.

When I was a little distance from the barn, I heard them screeching and screaming in a very distressed manner, as it appeared they had engaged in a general fight with their knives. While they were thus engaged, the dream or vision ended” (T&C 153).

Joseph did not leave an explanation regarding the dream's purpose or interpretation. But we do know that he viewed dreams as an important source of revelation as evidenced by the fact that he recorded his dreams and used them in his public sermons.

I believe we can see this as a foreseeing dream rich in symbolism.

This is what I see in Joseph's dream:

The farm was symbolic of the Restoration as viewed in a future time. Its neglected state and disrepair suggest a condition of apostasy. Following the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum the church was left without a prophet. Even Emma understood this when she said "without Joseph Smith there is no church" (William Clayton Journal, August of 1844). What had once been a living church, directed by the voice of God, rapidly fractured into many off-shoots. Some were run by men who sincerely wanted to preserve what Joseph had started. But it did not take long for new doctrines to be added, ordinances to be corrupted, truths and principles to be lost.

While Joseph was viewing his desolate farm, the leader of the angry men who ordered Joseph to leave rationalized his ownership of the church. This symbolizes those men who took leadership following the death of Joseph and believed that all they needed was authority from the members who sustained them rather than from God. Of the men who competed to replace Joseph, I know of none who claimed to have been caught up to heaven or where the Lord declared their prophetic call.

Nephi saw these false leaders in our day and said, "And they say unto the people, Harken unto us and hear ye our precept, for behold, there is no God (or at least not speaking revelation) today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men. Behold, hearken ye unto my precept" (2 Nephi 12: 1).

The rabble that rushed into the barn were the competing parties of the various churches coming from Joseph's restoration. When the usurpers turned on each other and began fighting among

themselves, they fulfilled these words, “Woe unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught, and revile against that which is good and say that it is of no worth, for the day shall come that the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth. And in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity, they shall perish. But behold, if the inhabitants of the earth shall repent of their wickedness and abominations, they shall not be destroyed, saith the Lord of Hosts. But behold, that great and abominable church, the whore of all the earth, must tumble to the earth, and great must be the fall thereof. For the kingdom of the Devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the Devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains and they be stirred up to anger and perish. For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men and stir them up to anger against that which is good” (2 Nephi 12: 4).

The role of Joseph Smith in relation to the restoration was to continue even after his death. The Lord declared, “Behold, verily I say unto you, I have reserved those things which I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, for a wise purpose in me, and it shall be made known unto future generations. But this generation shall have my word through you” (JSH 12:1).

When the Gospel is conferred on mankind through a dispensation head like Joseph Smith or Moses, then those who live in that Dispensation are obligated to honor the ordinances laid down through that servant. This means no one that follows has the keys or rights to change anything. Especially in the absence of revelation. The Lord declared “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant (Isa 9:3). This is what happened to the farm progressing from condemnation, then to rejection, and finally to complete termination of all priestly claim.

Joseph would not want anything to do with any of the Restoration churches in their current state. “For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other, Behold, I, I am the Lord’s — and the other shall say, I, I am the Lord’s — and thus shall everyone say that hath built up churches and not unto the Lord. And they shall contend one with another, and their priests shall contend one with another,

and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the holy ghost which giveth utterance (2 Nephi 12:1).

The Lord knew that what He began through Joseph would become a leaky ruin of a farm. In order for the Lord to fulfill all of his words, we need to preserve the restoration.

The Lord has promised, “blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts and lend an ear unto my counsel for they shall learn wisdom. For unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough — shall be taken away even that which they have. Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the holy ghost. Woe be unto the gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts, for notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, they will deny me. Nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me, for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long, saith the Lord God of Hosts.

But behold, there shall be many at that day when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people which are of the house of Israel, and also that I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed, and that the words of your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed. And my words shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth for a standard unto my people which are of the house of Israel” (2 Nephi 12:6-8).

The Lord has been merciful to the gentiles. The restoration of the Gospel from 1820 through 1844 was the Lord’s first attempt to use the gentiles to reclaim the house of Israel. The rejection and murder of the Smith brothers required three and four generations to pass before the Lord would begin His work again. The required time has passed, and as prophesied, the Lord has now set His hand again the second time to recover His people which are of the house of Israel (2 Nephi 12:8).

Thank you