

Chapter 3

Discourse of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Given on April 21st, 1834

Conference of Elders, Norton, Ohio

The following discourse comes from minutes taken by Oliver Cowdery, copied into Minute Book 1 by Orson Hyde not long after. In 1843 they were edited and copied into the Manuscript History of the Church. The speech contains statements regarding the importance of Zion, modern revelation, and preparing for the Second Coming.

It is very difficult for us to communicate to the churches all that God has revealed to us, in consequence of tradition; for we are differently situated from any other people that ever existed upon this earth. Consequently, those former revelations cannot be suited to our condition, because they were given to other people who were before us; but in the last days, God was to call a remnant, in which was to be deliverance, as well as in Jerusalem, and Zion. Now, if God should give no more revelations, where will we find Zion and this remnant?

[Joseph] said that the time was near when desolation was to cover the earth, and then God would have a place of deliverance in his remnant, and in Zion, etc. He then gave a relation of obtaining and translating the Book of Mormon, the revelation of the Priesthood of Aaron, the organization of the church in the year 1830, the revelation of the High Priesthood, and the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon the church, etc.

Take away the Book of Mormon, and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none; for without a Zion and a place of deliverance, we must fall, because the time is near when the sun will be darkened, the moon turn to blood, the stars fall from heaven, and the earth reel to and fro; then,

if this is the case, if we are not sanctified and gathered to the places where God has appointed, [then, despite]¹ our former professions and our great love for the bible, we must fall, we cannot stand, we cannot be saved; for God will gather out his saints from the gentiles, and then comes desolation [and] destruction, and none can escape, except the pure in heart who are gathered, etc.

¹ The manuscript history and subsequent versions interpolate the words “with all” here, but contextually, the words “then despite” seem to make more sense, because it appears that the inference is that even “former professions” and a “great love for the Bible” will not save anyone if they are not “sanctified and gathered to the places where God has appointed.”