

## = White Horse Prophecy =

The White Horse Prophecy is a statement purported to have been made in 1843 by Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of the Latter Day Saint movement, regarding the future of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and the United States of America. The Latter Day Saints, according to the prophecy, would "go to the Rocky Mountains and ... be a great and mighty people", identified figuratively with the White Horse described in the Book of Revelation. The prophecy further predicts that the United States Constitution will one day "hang like a thread" and will be saved "by the efforts of the White Horse".

Some have speculated, on the basis of the White Horse Prophecy, that Mormons expect the United States to eventually become a theocracy dominated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). The authenticity of the prophecy as a whole, which was not made public until long after Smith's death, is debated, and the leadership of the LDS Church has stated that "the so-called 'White Horse Prophecy' ... is not embraced as Church doctrine." However, the belief that members of the LDS Church will one day need to take action to save the imperiled U.S. Constitution has been attributed to Smith in several sources and has been discussed in an approving fashion by Brigham Young and other LDS leaders.

## = = Origins = =

Latter Day Saint movement founder Joseph Smith went to Washington, D.C. in November 1839 in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain help for his persecuted followers. Pat Bagley of the Salt Lake Tribune writes that from then on, Smith and his followers "considered themselves the last Real Americans" and "the legitimate heirs of the pilgrims and Founding Fathers", who would be called upon one day to save the U.S. Constitution. Smith is believed to have then said, in 1840, that when the Constitution hung by a thread, Latter Day Saint elders would step in on the white horse to save the country.

According to a diary entry made by John Roberts of Paradise, Utah in 1902, Joseph Smith gave the White Horse Prophecy in early May 1843, during the period in which the Latter Day Saints were headquartered in Nauvoo, Illinois. Smith is recorded as saying that the Mormons "will go to the Rocky Mountains and will be a great and mighty people established there, which I will call the White Horse of peace and safety." Adding that "I shall never go there" and predicting continued persecution by enemies of the church, Smith reportedly said that "You will see the Constitution of the United States almost destroyed. It will hang like a thread as fine as a silk fiber .... I love the Constitution; it was made by the inspiration of God; and it will be preserved and saved by the efforts of the White Horse, and by the Red Horse who will combine in its defense." Smith additionally said, according to the diary, that the Mormons would send missionaries to "gather the honest in heart from among the Pale Horse, or people of the United States, to stand by the Constitution of the United States as it was given by the inspiration of God." Roberts' account quotes Smith as predicting numerous wars involving Great Britain, France, Russia, China, and other countries, and saying that the European nobility "knows that [Mormonism] is true, but it has not pomp enough, and grandeur and influence for them to yet embrace it." He is also reported to have said that a temple which the Latter Day Saints had planned to build in Jackson County, Missouri "will be built in this generation."

In 1844, Joseph Smith rejected the platforms of the major candidates for President of the United States and decided to conduct his own third-party campaign for the Presidency, an effort which was cut short by his death on June 27 of that year. Following a succession crisis in which Brigham Young was accepted as Smith's successor by the majority of the Latter Day Saints, the Mormon migration to the Intermountain West began under Young's direction in February 1846.

## = = Authenticity = =

The authenticity of the White Horse Prophecy is debated. It was never made public during Smith's

lifetime , but was recorded many years after his death by one of his associates , Edwin Rushton . Although some elements of the statement were confirmed by contemporary LDS Church leaders as having been taught by Smith , the prophecy as a whole has never been officially acknowledged or accepted , and it has been repudiated by the LDS Church since 1918 . The prophecy 's authenticity , on the other hand , has been defended by LDS scholar Duane Crowther , and Mormon fundamentalist Ogden Kraut .

In 1918 , LDS president Joseph F. Smith dismissed the White Horse Prophecy as a " ridiculous story ... and a lot of trash that has been circulated about ... by two of our brethren who put together some broken sentences from [ Joseph Smith ] that they may have heard from time to time " . In his 1966 book Mormon Doctrine , LDS theologian ( and , later , apostle ) Bruce R. McConkie wrote that " From time to time , accounts of various supposed visions , revelations , and prophecies are spread forth by and among the Latter @-@ day Saints , who should know better than to believe or spread such false information . One of these false and deceptive documents that has cropped up again and again for over a century is the so @-@ called White Horse Prophecy . "

In early 2010 , the LDS Church issued a statement saying that " the so @-@ called ' White Horse Prophecy ' is based on accounts that have not been substantiated by historical research and is not embraced as Church doctrine . " Also in 2010 , LDS historian Don L. Penrod examined significant differences in two early handwritten accounts of the prophecy , noted some words and phrases which were not characteristic of Joseph Smith 's speaking style or current in his time , and speculated that Rushton had " in his elderly years recorded some things that [ Smith ] actually said , mixing in words of his own creation " ? commenting additionally that " memories of words and events , especially many years later , are often faulty . "

= = United States Constitution = =

Though there are doubts about the authenticity of the White Horse Prophecy as a whole , several sources attribute to Smith the idea that the United States Constitution would one day hang by a thread , and LDS Church leaders have issued similar warnings with regard to the Constitution .

= = = Brigham Young = = =

In 1855 , Brigham Young reportedly wrote that " when the Constitution of the United States hangs , as it were , upon a single thread , they will have to call for the ' Mormon ' Elders to save it from utter destruction ; and they will step forth and do it . "

= = = Orson Hyde = = =

In 1858 , Orson Hyde ( another contemporary of Smith ) wrote that Smith believed " the time would come when the Constitution and the country would be in danger of an overthrow ; and ... if the Constitution be saved at all , it will be by the elders of [ the LDS ] Church " .

= = = Charles W. Nibley = = =

In 1922 , the LDS Church 's fifth presiding bishop , Charles W. Nibley , stated that " the day would come when there would be so much of disorder , of secret combinations taking the law into their own hands , tramping upon Constitutional rights and the liberties of the people , that the Constitution would hang as by a thread . Yes , but it will still hang , and there will be enough of good people , many who may not belong to our Church at all , people who have respect for law and for order , and for Constitutional rights , who will rally around with us and save the Constitution . "

= = = Melvin J. Ballard = = =

In 1928 , the LDS apostle Melvin J. Ballard remarked that " the prophet Joseph Smith said the time

will come when , through secret organizations taking the law into their own hands ... the Constitution of the United States would be so torn and rent asunder , and life and property and peace and security would be held of so little value , that the Constitution would , as it were , hang by a thread . This Constitution will be preserved , but it will be preserved very largely in consequence of what the Lord has revealed and what [ the Mormons ] , through listening to the Lord and being obedient , will help to bring about , to stabilize and give permanency and effect to the Constitution itself . That also is our mission . "

= = = J. Reuben Clark = = =

In 1942 , J. Reuben Clark ? an LDS apostle and a member of the church 's First Presidency ? said that " You and I have heard all our lives that the time may come when the Constitution may hang by a thread .... I do know that whether it shall live or die is now in the balance . " Regarding the Constitution , Clark went on to cite its " free institutions " , separation of powers , and the Bill of Rights . He added that " if we are to live as a Church , and progress , and have the right to worship ... we must have the great guarantees that are set up by our Constitution . "

= = = Ezra Taft Benson = = =

In a 1986 Brigham Young University speech , LDS president Ezra Taft Benson stated : " I have faith that the Constitution will be saved as prophesied by Joseph Smith . But it will not be saved in Washington . It will be saved by the citizens of this nation who love and cherish freedom . It will be saved by enlightened members of this Church ? men and women who will subscribe to and abide by the principles of the Constitution . "

= = = Dallin H. Oaks = = =

In 2010 , Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke at a Constitution Day Celebration , warning about the importance of preserving the U.S. Constitution . To this end , he claimed that " all citizens ? whatever their religious or philosophical persuasion " should maintain several responsibilities regarding the Constitution : understand it , support the law , practice civic virtue , maintain civility in political discourse , and promote patriotism .

= = Interpretation = =

Questions regarding LDS attitudes towards the United States government ? whether considered on their own or as component parts of the White Horse Prophecy ? have arisen from time to time as prominent members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter @-@ day Saints have become involved in American politics . The White Horse Prophecy has been characterized as " effectively plac [ ing ] believers on perpetual Red Alert for the Constitution 's possible demise " and as admonishing Mormons to " come to the rescue and restore the true Constitution by any means necessary " .

Writers such as Richard Abanes and Elaine Wolff have speculated , on the basis of the prophecy , that Mormons expect the U.S. to eventually become a " Mormon @-@ ruled theocracy divinely ordained to ' not only direct the political affairs of the Mormon community , but eventually those of the United States and ultimately the world ' " , and that " a Mormon , if he were elected president , would take his orders from Salt Lake City . " In addition to many LDS members of the Republican Party , some LDS Democrats have also been inspired to run for office by the White Horse Prophecy .

= = = George Romney = = =

In 1967 , U.S. presidential candidate George W. Romney said the following regarding the White Horse Prophecy : " I have always felt that they meant that sometime the question of whether we are

going to proceed on the basis of the Constitution would arise and at this point government leaders who were Mormons would be involved in answering that question . "

= = = Mitt Romney = = =

In 2007 , U.S. presidential candidate Mitt Romney told the Salt Lake Tribune that " I haven 't heard my name associated with [ the White Horse Prophecy ] or anything of that nature . That 's not official church doctrine .... I don 't put that at the heart of my religious belief . "

= = = Glenn Beck = = =

Conservative media figure Glenn Beck ( who joined the LDS Church in 1999 ) has alleged that President Barack Obama " is going to bring us to the verge of shredding the Constitution , of massive socialism . " On November 14 , 2008 ? following Obama 's election ? Beck appeared on Bill O 'Reilly 's show The O 'Reilly Factor and said that " we are at the place where the Constitution hangs in the balance , I feel the Constitution is hanging in the balance right now , hanging by a thread unless the good Americans wake up . " Earlier in November , while interviewing U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah ( also a Mormon ) , Beck remarked : " I heard Barack Obama talk about the Constitution and I thought , we are at the point or we are very near the point where our Constitution is hanging by a thread . " Hatch appeared on Beck 's Fox News show in January 2009 , and Beck prompted him by declaring " I believe our Constitution hangs by a thread . "

LDS blogger and religious commentator Joanna Brooks has said that " it is likely that Beck owes his brand of Founding Father ? worship to Mormonism .... Many Mormons also believe that Joseph Smith prophesied in 1843 that the US Constitution would one day ' hang by a thread ' and be saved by faithful Mormons " . Washington Post journalist Dana Milbank has described Beck 's views as essentially " White Horse Prophecy meets horsemen of the apocalypse " ? though Milbank has also observed that the White Horse Prophecy is " actually a fairly benign prophecy . They 're talking about restoring law and order and peace and tranquility . It doesn 't sound like a violent thing . "

= = = Rex Rammell = = =

In 2009 , Idaho gubernatorial candidate Rex Rammell announced plans to hold a series of meetings with believing Mormon men , which were to include discussion of the White Horse Prophecy . In response , LDS Church officials issued a statement saying the church is " politically neutral " and hoping that " the campaign practices of political candidates would not suggest that their candidacy is supported by or connected to the church . " Rammell later retracted his original plan to limit his meetings only to LDS men , apologizing to " all those citizens who are not members of the LDS faith , who have expressed a sincere interest in attending my meetings and discussing this prophecy and how we can step forward and save the United States Constitution " .