
Christian Restoration

Part 4: God Speaks Again

As Narrated by Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

While Alexander Campbell wanted to restore Primitive Christianity, a 14 year-old boy went alone into the woods to ask God which church to join. Like Moses seeing a bright bush that seemed afire but was not consumed; like Paul on the road to Damascus who heard a voice and saw a light; Joseph Smith encountered a pillar of fire and learned that God had a work to him to do.

In the years that followed, Joseph Smith said angels appeared to him, gave him an ancient book that he translated “by the gift and power of God” into the Book of Mormon, founded a church, organized two cities, and was killed at age 38.

Joseph Smith declared God told him Christianity was lost to apostasy, but God was restoring it again. Smith testified Jesus Christ appeared to him on several occasions, to restore not only lost truths, but also the authority to minister ordinances.

Joseph said on multiple occasions that his religion was “truth” and that all truth, wherever found, was part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Unlike the Protestant Fathers, Joseph Smith produced new scriptures and recorded revelations from God in the first-person voice of Jesus Christ. The missing “thus saith the Lord” from the Campbellite movement was supplied through Joseph.

Whereas missing parts of original Christianity could not be recovered in either Protestantism or the Campbellite restoration, Joseph Smith claimed it was possible to recover everything lost from Christianity through modern revelation.

Smith attracted tens-of-thousands of followers. Those who believed Joseph Smith’s claims were nicknamed “Mormons.” A complete restoration began,

but was not finished in Joseph Smith's lifetime. He produced more scripture than any prophet or apostle of the Bible. He provided prophecies about events to happen prior to Christ's return in glory. Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled and many are yet to be fulfilled. The tens-of-thousands inspired by his message gathered into a community expecting to establish a last days Zion. However, his followers, were often the source of his persecution. His death was the result of a conspiracy of former followers and angry outsiders. His death left the prophesied last days Zion something another generation would later fulfill.

Following the death of Joseph Smith Mormons splintered into groups claiming that God favored their claims to be the lawful successor possessing the restored gospel. The largest faction followed Brigham Young into the western wilderness to the Salt Lake Valley, where they are headquartered today.

There are nearly 100 groups claiming Joseph Smith as their founder. They oppose one another and most have taken the step of excommunicating all other Mormons.

All "Mormons" accept the Book of Mormon as a volume of scripture. It has an account of the resurrected Jesus Christ appearing to people in the Americas as part of His "other sheep" mentioned in the New Testament.

Joseph Smith was not a Protestant, nor a Reformer, but instead claimed to be the Restorer of the original Christianity. Joseph Smith's claims are based on his testimony that God opened the heavens and spoke to mankind again.