

Mormon Answers: Fulfilled Prophecies of Joseph Smith

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (sometimes incorrectly called the "Mormon Church") claims that the ancient office of prophet has not vanished from the earth and that Joseph Smith, Junior, was called as a prophet of Jesus Christ in the early 1800s to begin the Restoration of the Church of Jesus. If he was a prophet, did he make any valid prophecies? My answer is yes, and this page discusses some of the possible evidences for prophetic gifts. As with any discussion of religious matters, there is plenty of room for other opinions and disagreement - that's fine.

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This is one of several pages in a suite of "Frequently Asked Questions about Latter-day Saint Beliefs." This work is solely the responsibility of Jeff Lindsay and has not been endorsed by the Church. While I strive to be accurate, my writings - like those of anybody, even modern or ancient prophets - are subject to human error and bias.

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OTHER RESOURCES

An excellent collection of related information on apparent problems with prophecies of Joseph Smith is [the FAIRMormon.org page, Joseph Smith/Alleged false prophecies](#).



Mormanity is my LDS blog, in operation since 2004. Numerous issues have been discussed there. Join the fray! Or visit the other blogs on my blogroll there.



Also consider my "[Book of Mormon Evidences](#)"

- Condemned to Execution, Joseph Prophecies of Deliverance

page.

You can [order a free Book of Mormon at ComeUntoChrist.org](#).

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OVERVIEW

Many critics of the Church allege that Joseph Smith never made a true prophecy and that he failed the test of a real prophet. The allegedly false prophecies that they offer are sometimes based on questionable sources, sometimes are distortions of the truth, or sometimes are open for honest debate but can be resolved without abandoning Joseph Smith as a legitimate prophet. I address some of these issues on my LDSFAQ page, [Questions About Prophets and Prophecy](#) (also see my essay on [the fallibility of human leaders in the true Church](#)). Related resources with a great deal of information can be found beginning with [the FAIRMormon.org page, Joseph Smith/Alleged false prophecies](#).

Did Joseph Smith make any true prophecies? Yes! Indeed, the record cannot be explained away as lucky guesses. Below I list a number of the arguably true prophecies that Joseph Smith made. However, the most important evidence for Joseph's divine calling as a prophet of Christ is the [Book of Mormon](#), which is why I am a member of [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#).

For those who have seen allegedly false prophecies of Joseph Smith, keep in mind that most of the statements used to condemn Joseph Smith were written down by someone else and

are subject to inaccuracy. My experience with how others quote me has been most frustrating. Even experienced journalists often garble what was actually said. Many alleged false prophecies are just hearsay, and many were never intended as a prophetic statement. (And sometimes even what I write or say myself isn't what I really meant!)

Latter-day Saints know that the gift of prophecy does not make every utterance divinely inspired. As Latter-day Saints, we only need to be bound by what has been canonized, not by every alleged saying or even every actual writing of Church leaders. Very few alleged false prophecies are from canonized writings, and I believe that the few apparent exceptions are treated on this page. So if 50 years after Joseph was killed, somebody writes that they remember him talking about men living on the moon, and no one else can verify that claim, it's nothing to be bothered by. And even if Joseph did speculate on something that silly while sitting around a campfire one night, as a mortal he's entitled to silly opinions. It's unreasonable to hold him to a standard higher than the prophets of the Bible could meet. (See my page on [prophets and prophecy](#) for more information, and see "[The Nature of Prophets and Prophecy](#)." by John A. Tvedtnes, published at [FairMormon.org](#).)

ACCURATE PROPHECIES OF THE CIVIL WAR TOP

On Dec. 25, 1832, Joseph received the following revelation about the American Civil War, now printed as Section 87 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

"We have in our possession a pamphlet, published at Liverpool, in 1851.... In view of our present troubles, this prediction seems to be in progress of fulfillment, whether Joe Smith was a humbug or not.... **Have we not had a prophet among us?**"

(*Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* after the outbreak of the Civil War. Clipping in *Journal History*, 5 May 1861.)

- 1 Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls;
- 2 And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place.
- 3 For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and then war shall be poured out upon all nations.
- 4 And it shall come to pass, after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war.
- 5 And it shall come to pass also that the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation.
- 6 And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations;
- 7 That the cry of the Saints, and of the blood of the Saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies.
- 8 Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen.

Beginning in the 1830s, LDS missionaries carried manuscript copies of the above revelation with them in their missionary journeys, and "frequently read it to their congregations in various parts of the United States" (Roberts, p. 315). The entire revelation was printed in 1851 in Liverpool, England, in a pamphlet entitled, "The Pearl of Great Price." This was a decade before the first shot of the Civil War on April 12, 1861. Thus, the prediction was made 28 years before its fulfillment, and was printed and circulated in England and in the United States at least ten years before.

Further, while speaking in Ramus, Illinois, on April 2, 1843, Joseph said: "I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God, that the commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed previous to the coming of the Son of Man will be in South Carolina. It may probably arise through the slave question. This a voice declared to me, while I was praying earnestly on the subject, December 25th, 1832." (See Doctrine and Covenants 130:12-13.)

Was Joseph's prophecy just a case of noting existing tensions and making obvious extrapolations? Hardly! While there had been tensions between the South and the North, including talk of secession, hardly anyone seriously thought that civil war would erupt. Americans had great faith in their nation and in democracy. In fact, there were members of the Church who were so shaken by the "ridiculous" nature of Joseph's civil war prophecy that they left the Church, rejecting him as a false prophet. Even if Joseph were trying to make something out of trends and currents he saw in society, the many specific details of his

prophecy suggest that more than reason and guesswork were needed to be so accurate. Let's consider the details that he accurately predicted:

1. The war would begin with the rebellion of South Carolina.
2. It would cause the death and misery of many souls.
3. The Southern States would be divided against the Northern States.
4. The Southern States would call upon other nations for assistance, even upon the nation of Great Britain.
5. Great Britain would call upon other nations for assistance
6. War would eventually be poured out upon all nations.

Now in December of 1832 there was controversy involving South Carolina and the issue of states' rights. South Carolina had advocated the doctrine of "nullification," arguing that a state could nullify federal laws or taxes that they ruled to be unconstitutional. If there was federal resistance, then South Carolina said they could leave the Union. President Andrew Jackson argued against their position. With much controversy in the air, it would seem logical that Joseph be stirred to ponder the events of the day and inquire of the Lord, resulting in the revelation of Dec. 1832. There was much attention to the topic, and some writers exclaimed that the crisis could lead to civil war. However, Americans and their leaders remained confident that the problem could be resolved without actual war erupting, and certainly not an all-engulfing civil war. There was no serious expectation of civil war at that time, or in 1843 when Joseph added that the slave issue would probably be involved in the rebellion, or even in 1851 when the prophecy was published by the Church and more widely publicized. Can anyone offer evidence from writings of American statesmen or scholars in 1832, 1843, or 1851 that make such predictions? Some heated rhetoric in 1832 is a far cry from a real expectation of war. Neither a scholar or statesmen, the uneducated 27-year old man, Joseph Smith, saw what would happen by the spirit of revelation.

Kerry Shirts discusses the detailed fulfillment of this prophecy on his page, "[A War Against the Critics of Joseph Smith's Civil War Prophecy](https://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/FQ_prophecies.shtml)":

Civil War Foretold BEFORE Dec. 1832?

While details of the Civil War were foretold on Dec. 25, 1832 in Section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants, earlier prophecies hint at the upcoming war. Section 38, verse 29, given nearly two years earlier on Jan. 2, 1831, implies that war was coming upon the United States, and that the Lord was leading his people west (first to Ohio) to prepare them for and deliver them from the trouble ahead:

29 Ye hear of wars in far countries, and you say that there will soon be great wars in far countries, but ye know not the hearts of men in your own land.

30 I tell you these things because of your prayers; wherefore, treasure up wisdom in your bosoms, lest the

But notwithstanding these hostile demonstrations on the part of South Carolina, there was really no very great danger to the Union at that time. Andrew Jackson, a man of great determination of character, and patriotically devoted to the Union, was president; and his political principles ran parallel with his devotion. He issued a proclamation in which he urged South Carolina not to persist in the enforcement of her ordinance as it would necessarily bring the federal and state authorities in conflict, and if the citizens of South Carolina took up arms against the United States they would be guilty of treason. . . .

It was in December, 1832, the same month in which the revelation and prophecy under consideration was given, that this issue between South Carolina and the Federal government about reached its climax. It is important to observe that these questions of nullification and a state's right to secede from the Union were sharply agitated in December, 1832, because it gives direct testimony of the original date of the prophecy. That is, it is clear from the facts of history that the question in 1832 was before the nation; and very naturally the Prophet inquired of the Lord concerning it, with the result that he received the revelation now under consideration.

That the Prophet did make inquiry of the Lord concerning this subject is evident from a direct statement of his to that effect. Preaching at Ramus, Illinois, on the 2nd of April, 1843, the Prophet in the course of his remarks said: "I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God, that the commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed previous to the coming of the Son of Man will be in South Carolina. It may probably arise through the slave question. This a voice declared to me, while I was praying earnestly on the subject, December 25th, 1832.

wickedness of men reveal these things unto you by their wickedness, in a manner which shall speak in your ears with a voice louder than that which shall shake the earth; but if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.

31 And that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without spot and blameless -

32 Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high; . . .

The implied war was not to be caused by foreign invasion, but was due to wicked men in Joseph's own land, suggestive of civil war. A related warning is in Section 42, verse 64, given Feb. 9, 1831:

64 And even now, let him that goeth to the east teach them that shall be converted to flee to the west, and this in consequence of that which is coming on the earth, and of secret combinations.

A month later, on March 8, 1831, still nearly two years before the Dec. 1832 problem with South Carolina, the Lord again warned the Saints of the need to move west to escape war in this country. In Doctrine and Covenants 45:63-64, we read:

Ye hear of wars in foreign lands; but, behold, I say unto you, they are nigh, even at your doors, and not many years hence ye shall hear of wars in your own lands.

64 Wherefore I, the Lord, have said, gather ye out from the eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my church; go ye forth into the western countries, call upon the inhabitants to repent, and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me.

Of course, these were mere hints compared to the explicit detail given in Section 87 in 1832, but it should be clear that Joseph Smith the Prophet had received warnings about pending war in this country well before Dec. 1832. And the call to move west to escape the war was truly prophetic, for the Saints, continuing their westward trek to Utah in the late 1840s, were outside the scope of

No American statesman in 1832 believed that the doctrines of secession then talked of would result in a great civil war. None of them had the foresight to see that a great rebellion would occur, beginning in South Carolina; that it would terminate in the death and misery of many souls; that the Southern States would be divided against the Northern States; that the Southern States would call on Great Britain, and that war would eventually be poured out upon all nations. No one, I say, foresaw that this would be the result save only that inspired youth--when but twenty-seven years of age--Joseph Smith, and he saw it only by the spirit of prophecy and revelation.

the Civil War when it did sweep across the United States, in fulfillment of detailed prophecy.

It is a fact of history that South Carolina took the initiative that led to the rebellion of the Southern States and that the war began in South Carolina. Reacting negatively to the election of Abraham Lincoln, South Carolina's leaders convened on Dec. 20, 1860 and passed an ordinance of secession. Newly elected Governor Pickens then declared "the dissolution of the union between the state of South Carolina and the other states under the name of the United States." Ten other states later joined South Carolina, but she was the first to rebel. The Civil War was the bloodiest this country has ever seen, causing about 400,000 deaths. The South did enlist the aid of Great Britain and also sought help from France (Great Britain, as I recall, also encouraged France to assist the South). Later, after war had been poured out on the nations of the earth, Great Britain found herself threatened by Nazi Germany and called upon other nations of the earth for her defense. After the Civil War, international intrigues and wars grew to increasing severity, with ghastly international scenes of horror during World War I and World War II, with dozens of other wars having been fought and going on at the moment. War has always been on the earth, but the scale of destruction since the Civil War has grown sharply, and war in the past century has become increasingly multinational rather than bilateral. Truly, war has been poured out on all nations.

Joseph said that "after many days" slaves would rise up against their masters. I don't think that referred to the Civil War, but to later events, perhaps events that I have seen in my lifetime. Uprisings of repressed peoples in many Communist nations and other authoritarian states may have been meant in the prophecy. Past and future uprisings of some groups in the United States may also be meant. During the Civil War itself, however, there were relatively few instances of slaves rising up against their masters. The prophecy, however, says "after many days" (meaning, I think, many days after the prophesied war had begun), not "during the Civil War."

Orson Pratt was a young missionary who told others of Joseph's civil war prophecy long before it occurred. He was mocked for it, as were many others. Here are his words (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, p. 135. as cited by Otten & Caldwell in *Sacred Truths of the Doctrine & Covenants*, Vol.2, pp.93-94):

This prophecy has been printed and circulated extensively in this and other nations and languages. It pointed out the place where it should commence in South Carolina. That which I declared over the New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and many other parts in the East, when but a boy, came to pass twenty-eight years after the revelation was given.

When they were talking about a war commencing down here in Kansas, I told them that was not the place; I also told them that the revelation had designated South Carolina, "and," said I, "you have no need to think that the Kansas war is going to be the war that is to be so terribly destructive in its character and nature. No, it must commence at the place the Lord has designated by revelation."

What did they have to say to me? They thought it was a Mormon humbug, and laughed me to scorn, and they looked upon that revelation as they do upon all others that God has given in these latter days -- as without divine authority. But behold and lo! in process of time it came to pass, again establishing the divinity of this work, and giving another proof that God is in this work, and is performing that which He spoke by the mouths of the ancient prophets, as recorded in the Book of Mormon before any Church of Latter-day Saints was in existence.

In an article about Orson Pratt's use of the Civil War Prophecy, William G. Hartley discusses Orson's experiences to show how non-Mormons viewed the prophecy before its fulfillment, and how the non-Mormon editors of one newspaper reacted to Joseph's prophecy once the Civil War broke out ("Prophecy in His Pocket," *New Era*, Jan. 1989, pp. 44-45):

"When I [Orson Pratt] was a boy, I traveled extensively in the United States and the Canadas, preaching this restored Gospel. I had a manuscript copy of this revelation (on civil war), which I carried in my pocket, and I was in the habit of reading it to the people among whom I traveled and preached."

How did his listeners respond? Did they say, "Well, it takes no prophet to see war will start in South Carolina"? No. Said Orson: "As a general thing the people regarded it as the height of nonsense, saying the Union was too strong to be broken; and I they said, was led away, the victim of an impostor."

When South Carolina's secession threats cooled down after 1832, did Orson begin to doubt the prophecy? No, because "I knew the prophecy was true, for the Lord had spoken to me and had given me revelation." But year after year passed away without war, and now and then "some of the acquaintances I had formerly made would say, 'Well, what is going to become of that prediction? It's never going to be fulfilled.'" Orson replied, "Wait, the Lord has his set time."

... When war broke out in April 1861, 28 years after the prophecy was pronounced, the Philadelphia Sunday Mercury newspaper carried a lengthy article entitled "A Mormon Prophecy." "We have in our possession a pamphlet, published at Liverpool, in 1851," the article began, referring to the civil war prophecy. "In view of our present troubles, this prediction seems to be in progress of fulfillment, whether Joe Smith was a humbug or not." The article reprinted the entire prophecy, then noted how events were fulfilling it, and concluded regarding Joseph Smith: "Have we not had a prophet among us?"

As Fort Sumter surrendered, others, like the Mercury's editors, remembered hearing about the prophecy. Perhaps some of those who once scoffed when youthful missionary Orson Pratt pulled the prophecy from his pocket and read it now had cause to wonder, to worry, and to wish they had listened more closely to what the rest of the prophecy said.

Sources: Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia* 1:87-91; Orson Pratt Discourse, August 26, 1876, in *Journal of Discourses* 18:224-5; *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* clipping in *Journal History*, 5 May 1861.

Modern anti-Mormons try to mock Joseph's prophecy as obvious, though it clearly wasn't. Some, in their desperation to attack, may even be tempted to alter the words of the prophecy to make an easier target. Norman Geisler's essay, "Scripture," in the book *The Counterfeit Gospel of Mormonism* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1998, pp. 9-49) subtly changes the phrase "the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations" to "the time will come that **the** war will be poured out upon all nations" and then argues that this part of the prophecy deals with the Civil War only (see Alma Allred, "Coin of the Realm: Beware of Specious Specie" in *FARMS Review of Books*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2000, pp. 137-174). This is, of course, the leading tactic in anti-Mormon writings: misrepresent LDS teachings with something easily attacked, and then attack the new (but bogus) target. It's much easier that way, but only the unwary will be fooled.

Brigham Young and others knew that Joseph was speaking of events much greater than just the Civil War, and knew that he had prophesied of future wars beyond what was published in the Doctrine and Covenants. Brigham said this:

Brother Hyde spoke of a revelation which he tried to find in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. That revelation was reserved at the time the compilation for that book was made by Oliver Cowdery and others, in Kirtland. It was not wisdom to publish it to the world, and it remained in the private *escritoire* [desk]. Brother Joseph had that revelation concerning this nation at a time when the brethren were reflecting and reasoning with regard to African slavery on this continent, and the slavery of the children of men throughout the world. There are other revelations, besides this one, not yet published to the world.

Journal of Discourses, 8:58.

Alma Allred (*op. cit.*, p. 166) explains that Joseph's prophecy about war being poured out on all nations had a wider application than just the Civil War, in spite of Mr. Geisler's uninspired translation of the text. Allred also explains that Orson Hyde was mocked by Eastern papers after an 1850 public speech in which he stated that war was about to divide the nation. In 1862, after the beginning of the Civil War, he wrote an "I told you so" letter to the editor of the *Missouri Republican* of Springfield. What he wrote shows that Joseph's prophecies of war went well beyond the Civil War and, as Allred puts it, "included an additional, chilling detail of events yet future." Here is the excerpt from Orson Hyde:

You have scarcely yet read the preface of your national trouble. Many nations will be drawn into the American maelstrom that now whirls through our land; and after many days, when the demon of war shall have exhausted his strength and madness upon American soil, by the destruction of all that can court or provoke opposition, **he will remove his headquarters to the banks of the Rhine.**

Millennial Star, 24 (3 May 1862):274-275, emphasis added.

Hyde refers to the demon of war itself, and not just the then-present Civil War, that would later find its headquarters on the banks of the Rhine - a most appropriate way to foreshadow the great World Wars of this century, wars which were focused on that nation on the banks of the Rhine, Germany, but wars which would involve us and many other nations. It is reasonable to assume that Hyde's reference to the banks of the Rhine is derived from unpublished prophetic statements from Joseph Smith, though we cannot be sure.

In any case, it's clear that Joseph's 1832 prophecy of civil war was not obvious to everybody, as our critics contend, or Orson Hyde would not have been mocked by journalists for reiterating that prophecy, and neither would Orson Pratt have had such opposition concerning the prophecy before its fulfillment. And would the editors of the *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* have dared refer to "Joe Smith" as "a prophet among us" if his prophecy had been so obvious?

For more detailed information on Joseph's amazing prophecy of the Civil War, see Kerry Shirts' page, "[A War on the Civil War Prophecy](#)."

THE SAINTS TO FLOURISH IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS **TOP**

In 1831, Joseph prophesied that "Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed" (Doctrine and Covenants 49:25). A related and more specific prophecy was given in 1842, as described in the following excerpt from B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 2, Ch. 51, pp.181-182:

On the 6th of August, 1842, with quite a number of his brethren, he [Joseph Smith] crossed the Mississippi river to the town of Montrose, to be present at the installation of the Masonic Lodge of the Rising Sun. A block schoolhouse had been prepared with shade in front, under which was a barrel of ice water, Judge James Adams was the highest Masonic authority in the state of Illinois, and had been sent there to organize this lodge. He and Hyrum Smith, being high Masons, went into the house to perform some ceremonies which the others were not entitled to witness. These, including Joseph Smith, remained under the bowery. Joseph, as he was tasting the cold water, warned the brethren not to be too free with it. With the tumbler still in his hand he prophesied that the saints would yet go to the Rocky Mountains; and, said he, this water tastes much like that of the crystal streams that are running from the snow-capped mountains. We will let Mr. Call describe this prophetic scene: 'I had before seen him in a vision, and now saw while he was talking his countenance change to white; not the deadly white of a bloodless face, but a living, brilliant white. He seemed absorbed in gazing at something at a great distance, and said: 'I am gazing upon the valleys of those mountains.' This was followed by a vivid description of the scenery of these mountains, as I have since become acquainted with it. Pointing to Shadrach Roundy and others, he said: 'There are some men here who shall do a great work in that land.' Pointing to me, he said: 'There is Anson, he shall go and shall assist in building up cities from one end of the country to the other; and you, rather extending the idea to all those he had spoken of, shall perform as great a work as has been done by man, so that the nations of the earth shall be astonished, and many of them will be gathered in that land and assist in building cities and temples, and Israel shall be made to rejoice.

Of this prophecy, the following is in Joseph Smith's history, but it may not have been written by him:

I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains, many would apostatize, others would be put to death by our persecutors or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease, and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains. (*History of the Church* , Vol.5, Ch.4, p.85)

The above statement might have been added by someone else later, for the part about the Rocky Mountains appears to have been squeezed in, as if it came later. If so, perhaps someone was trying to add words they think Joseph said, or perhaps someone was really putting incorrect words in Joseph's mouth. In any case, there are some questions about that particular statement and the full story is simply unknown. David Bitton addressed this problem in 1974 ("Joseph Smith in the Mormon Folk Memory," The John Whitmer address, delivered at the Second Annual Meeting of the John Whitmer Historical Association, Lamoni, Iowa, September 28, 1974, unpublished manuscript, p.16, as cited by Jerald and Sandra Tanner at <https://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech13.htm>). So clearly, there are some clouds of uncertainty on exactly what Joseph said on this matter, based on the critique of the Tanners. The actual prophecies he made may have been more general - "upon the hills", in the West, etc.

However, important evidence on this matter comes from an early anti-Mormon source that the Tanners have quietly ignored or, perhaps, never encountered (though it has been pointed out for some time). This oversight on their part was raised by an unnamed LDS historian (often assumed to be Michael Quinn) in a widely circulated document from 1977, "Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to *Mormonism--Shadow or Reality?*". Here is the relevant passage:

The failure to cite well-known evidence that challenges their conclusions occurs repeatedly in the Tanners' analysis of the seven-volume *History of the Church*. For example, it is implied (pages 134-35) that the prophecy of Joseph Smith about the Mormons moving to the Rocky Mountains (HC 5:85) was a falsification added to the history after the Mormons were actually in the Great Basin. However, in 1964 (eight years before this edition of *Shadow-Reality*) Stanley B. Kimball published a bibliography of sources for the Nauvoo history of Mormonism (of which the Tanners should have been aware) where he noted that the Oliver H. Olney Papers (written in 1842-43) at Yale University, "recorded the early plans of Joseph Smith to move west. . . ."[Stanley B. Kimball, *Sources of Mormon History in Illinois, 1839-48: An Annotated Catalog of the Microfilm Collection at Southern Illinois University* (Carbondale-Edwardsville, Ill., 1964), 24. In the expanded edition published in 1966, this entry was on page 25.] If the Tanners did not trust that description, they or their widely scattered friends could have read the versified, anti-Mormon manuscript by Olney, dated July 2, 1842:

As a company is now a forming / In to the wilderness to go / As far west as the Rocky mountains. . . . If this was not the secret whispering / Amongst certain ones of the Church of L.D.S. / And could be easily proven If man could speak.[Oliver H. Olney Papers, Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.]

The Tanners are aware that the History of the Church was compiled from a variety of sources (many of which were only loaned to Church historians, to be returned once they had extracted pertinent information), and that the exact source for the account of Joseph Smith's prophecy of August 6, 1842 is not clear. Olney recorded the rumors about the move west in July, and someone else recorded the prophecy in August.

So if Joseph did point the Saints to the Rocky Mountains and speak of their rise there, he did pretty well with that prophecy. The Saints migrated to the Rocky Mountains in 1847, several years after Joseph was killed. There they built settlements and cities along stretches of many hundreds of miles in the West, from Canada to Mexico. In the midst of the Rockies, the Latter-day Saints have arguably become a mighty or at least a noteworthy people, where they "flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, . . . assembled together unto the place . . . appointed" (D&C 49:25). Indeed, the establishment of holy temples and a great international religious center in Utah, in the tops of the Rocky Mountains, appears to be a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-5:

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Tangential note on the name "Utah"

I have heard many times that the name "Utah," given to the State by non-LDS politicians, means "top of the mountains" in the Ute or Paiute language. I've long assumed this was just a "faith-promoting rumor," but an acquaintance of mine several years ago contacted the Ute Indian Tribal council and was told that Ute means "high place/mountain tops", and was used to name themselves after the terrain in which they lived (Utah territory). However, this contradicts the current [website of the Ute Indian Tribe](#), which has this FAQ information (accessed Nov. 16, 2012):

Is it true that Utah got its name from the Ute Indians?

Yes, However, it is unclear where the pronunciation came from, as the word Ute is sometimes pronounced "Oot", "Yoot" or "Yutah". Furthermore, the word Ute, means "Land of the Sun" in Ute, and they refer to themselves as who call themselves "Nuciu", or "Noochew", which means, "The People".

The Utes are called "the Mountain People," but called by whom? Jan Petit in [Utes: The Mountain People](#) (Boulder, CO: Johnson Printing Company, 1990) explains that while the Utes called themselves "Nuche" meaning "the people" or "we the people," the nearby Pueblo people called them "Mountain People" and the Spaniards called them "Yutas"

(Petit, p. 1). According to Wikipedia's article on the Ute Indians (accessed Nov. 16, 2012),

The word Ute means "Land of the sun" in their language. "Ute" possibly derived from the Western Apache word "yudah", meaning "high up." This has led to the misconception that "Ute" means people high up or mountain people.

The mountain link for "Utah" may exist, though it may not be because of what the Utes called themselves but perhaps rather because of what the Pueblos, Apaches, and/or Spanish called them. So one can forgive those who have propagated the misconception mentioned at Wikipedia, including the Utah State Government official website (now archived), which used to contain this statement: "The name "Utah" comes from the Native American "Ute" tribe and means *people of the mountains*." See also the page at www.50states.com/utah.htm, which still (as of Nov. 2012) indicates that the name "Utah" comes from the Native American "Ute" tribe and means "people of the mountains." Well, they are the people of the mountains, as Jan Petit's highly acclaimed book title reminds us.

Now if the Utes were and are called the people of the mountains (though not necessarily by themselves), then maybe the name Utah, imposed on would-be Deseret-dwellers by non-Mormons, might fit Isaiah 2 at least well enough for the sake of pleasant irony. Not extremely cool, and maybe not quite as "faith promoting" as some have thought, but still a fun factoid, or semi-factoid in this case.

As for the reasonableness of Joseph's prophecy in 1842, B.H. Roberts explains (*New Witnesses for God* , Vol. 1, pp. 302-303):

At that date, August 6th, 1842, the Rocky Mountains seemed like a country afar off to the people of Illinois. The Missouri River was the extreme frontiers of the United States. All beyond that was well nigh an unexplored wilderness filled with savages. The church was fairly settled at Nauvoo, the state authorities were apparently very friendly, the future of the Saints in Illinois seemed propitious. Yet in the midst of all these favorable circumstances the Prophet predicted much affliction for some of the Saints, death from persecution for others, apostasy for many, and for the great body of the church an exodus to the Rocky Mountains, where some of those present who were listening to the prediction, should live to assist in making settlements and building cities in the Rocky Mountains where they would see the Saints become a mighty people.

There can be no question as to the reality of these two predictions, the one of March, 1831, and the other of August, 1842, or of their being of a character to test the divine inspiration of him who uttered them. That they were proclaimed some years before the events predicted in them began to be fulfilled, or even there was any thought or prospect of such events taking place, is well known; that the latter prophecy has been fulfilled to the uttermost, the whole history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from August, 1842, until now witnesses. The Saints suffered many afflictions in Illinois. Their homes, fields, stacks of grain, stock and other property were destroyed; their prophets and a number of others were killed outright by mob violence; many more perished from exposure and disease occasioned by being driven from their homes at an inclement season of the year. In those trying times, following the martyrdom of the Prophet and the expulsion from Nauvoo, many turned away from the faith, and it is too generally known to need comment, that the great body of the church made its way to the Rocky Mountains, where cities, towns and villages have been founded, the wilderness subdued, and the Saints are fast becoming a mighty people.

THE LIBERTY JAIL PROPHECIES: BRIGHTNESS IN THE MIDST OF GLOOM [TOP](#)

1838 was a terrible year for the young Church, just 8 years old. There had been persecution since its inception, with mobs driving the Latter-day Saints from New York to Ohio and again from Ohio to Missouri. The Saints believed Missouri was a special place and hoped to build the city of Zion there, though that day still lies in the future. Instead of peace and prosperity, the Latter-day Saints found some of the worst persecution yet. What was to have been their new center was blasted with bullets and burned with fire by hateful mobs. Many were killed and assaulted. Instead of protecting a persecuted people, Governor Lilburn Boggs issued an extermination order calling for the murder of the Mormons if they remained. (See my related page, "[Mormons and Danites: The Historical Background in Missouri.](#)") Disarmed and threatened with death, the surviving Saints had no choice but to leave, crossing the Mississippi to seek for shelter in Illinois. Joseph Smith was not with the refugees to comfort them in that dark hour. For the winter of 1838 to 1839, Joseph was confined in a cold, damp basement cell in Missouri, held on false charges (including murder, treason, burglary, arson,

larceny, theft and stealing) by those who wished to destroy him and the Church. Here he would be forced to hear his captors boast of how they had killed and raped Mormons. Here he would be offered human flesh to eat by his inhuman guards (but he was inspired not to eat it before he learned what it was). Here he would wonder if he should ever see his family again. By all counts, it looked as if the enemies of the Church would achieve their sinister desires. After languishing and suffering for months in the ironically named Liberty Jail, a despairing Joseph wrote the following words in March of 1839 (Doctrine and Covenants Section 121:1-3):

1 O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?
2 How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?
3 Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them?

The Lord's response to Joseph included wonderful revelations and prophecies in Section 121 and 122 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This included a message of comfort, a promise of deliverance, and an assurance of justice:

7 My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;
8 And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.
9 Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands.
10 Thou art not yet as Job; thy friends do not contend against thee, neither charge thee with transgression, as they did Job.
11 And they who do charge thee with transgression, their hope shall be blasted, and their prospects shall melt away as the hoar frost melteth before the burning rays of the rising sun; . . .
16 Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them.
17 But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves.

The Lord then gave Joseph great revelations about the Millennium, which is yet to come. Then, in Section 122, the Lord told Joseph that:

1 The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;
2 While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.

That prophecy has been fulfilled. Joseph could have been killed in that prison, unable to return to his friends as promised in Section 121. Instead, in April 1839, after six months of illegal imprisonment, someone in authority acted to allow the Mormon prisoners to escape during a change of venue, perhaps desiring to avoid public embarrassment by having a trial without evidence. Joseph and his brother Hyrum, about 10 days after being allowed to escape, arrived in Quincy, Illinois and found their families impoverished but alive and healthy. As was prophesied in verse 9 of Section 121, Joseph was greeted by "friends do stand by thee," and did greet him again "with warm hearts and friendly hands."

Joseph and the Church could have been destroyed by their persecutors. Joseph's few years as leader of a small and hated group could have ended in obscurity. Instead, the name of Joseph Smith is known across the world today, as was prophesied. Hell rages against the name of Joseph Smith, as enemies devise every manner of lie to slander Joseph and the Latter-day Saints, while millions seek counsel, authority, and blessings that have been given to us from Christ, revealed and restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The next few verses of Section 122 also contain related prophecies and inspired words that have been precious to many people in times of affliction:

- 3 And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors.
- 4 And although their influence shall cast thee into trouble, and into bars and walls, thou shalt be had in honor; and but for a small moment and thy voice shall be more terrible in the midst of thine enemies than the fierce lion, because of thy righteousness; and thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever.
- 5 If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; if thou art in perils among robbers; if thou art in perils by land or by sea;
- 6 If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? and if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb;
- 7 And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.
- 8 The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?
- 9 Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; for their bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever.

That such inspiring words were written under the dismal conditions of the Liberty Jail in Missouri is a witness of the character of the Prophet Joseph Smith. In addition, the prophecy about future imprisonments and persecutions was accurate. Joseph would be killed 5 years later by conspiring enemies of the Church while he was held in another prison, Carthage Jail in Illinois. In spite of all the attacks on Joseph and all the slander, the Latter-day Saints have not been turned away from Joseph. He is loved for the honorable man that he was and for his role as a prophet of Jesus Christ. His greatest legacy as a Prophet, in my opinion, is the *Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Christ*, which is held in ever increasing respect by those who read it and follow its teachings. Those who read it sincerely and pray about it come to know with the heart and the mind that Joseph was a prophet of God. After being mocked for 150 years by enemies of the Church, the Book of Mormon stands stronger than ever, with many thinkers - including some non-LDS scholars - being impressed and moved not only by the text but also by the intellectual evidences of authenticity.

In fact, long before the prophecies in March of 1839 now recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph prophesied that he and his fellow prisoners would not be killed. On the morning of November 3, 1838, after Joseph had been arrested and while he and other prisoners were on the road to Independence under the watch of guards, he told his brethren to be of good cheer, for "the word of the Lord came to me last night that ... whatever we may suffer during this captivity, not one of our lives shall be taken" (Dona Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, NY, 1977, p. 244). But there was little reason for such optimism at the time. In fact, his enemy, General Lucas, whose troops had taken Far West and who seemed gleeful about the Extermination Order, had just told the Saints, "As for your leaders, do not think - do not imagine for a moment - do not let it enter your minds that they will be delivered, or that you will see their faces again, for their fate is fixed - their die is cast - their doom is sealed" (Hill, p. 243, citing *History of the Church*, Vol. 3, pp. 202-204). But Joseph and his companions survived and returned, as prophesied.

The survival of these men was more than improbable; it was miraculous. Hyrum Smith, in a courtroom affidavit, testified of one miracle associated with their survival at this time. As the group was being taken to Jackson County, where they were supposedly going to be executed,

"two large wagons drove up, and we were ordered to get into them. While we were getting into them, there came up four or five men armed with guns, who drew up and snapped their pistols at us in order to kill us. Some flashed in the pan, and others only snapped, but none of their guns went off. They were immediately arrested by several officers. . . ."

(Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. S.F. Proctor and M.J. Proctor, Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996, p. 384.)

THE SAINTS TO ESCAPE ENEMIES WITHIN 5 YEARS

TOP

In February 1844, when persecution in Illinois had become severe once again, Joseph "prophesied that within five years we should be out of the power of our old enemies, whether they were apostates or of the world; and told the brethren to record it, that when it comes to pass they need not say they had forgotten the saying." This is recorded in *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 225. By 1849, the Saints were gathered in Utah (the first wave entered the Salt Lake area in July of 1847) and had indeed escaped the power of their old enemies.

THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS PROPHECY

TOP

On May 18, 1843, Joseph Smith made a specific prophecy to the politician Stephen A. Douglas which later proved to be surprisingly accurate, though it seemed wild before its fulfillment.

The prophecy relating to Judge Stephen A. Douglas occurred on the 18th of May, 1843. The following text is taken from the daily Journal of William Clayton (the private secretary of President Smith, who was present at the interview described) as reported by B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 2, Ch. 51, p.182 ff.

Prophecy Upon The Head Of Judge Stephen A. Douglas

May 18th, 1843:--Dined with Judge Stephen A. Douglas, who is presiding at court. After dinner Judge Douglas requested President Smith to give him a history of the Missouri persecution, which he did in a very minute manner for about three hours. He also gave a relation of his journey to Washington city, and his application in behalf of the saints to Mr. Van Buren, the president of the United States, for redress, and Mr. Van Buren's pusillanimous reply--'Gentlemen, your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you;' and the cold, unfeeling manner in which he was treated by most of the senators and representatives in relation to the subject, Clay saying, 'You had better go to Oregon,' and Calhoun shaking his head solemnly, saying, 'It's a nice question--a critical question; but it will not do to agitate it.'

The judge listened with the greatest attention, and then spoke warmly in deprecation of Governor Boggs and the authorities in Missouri, who had taken part in the extermination, and said that any people that would do as the mobs of Missouri had done ought to be brought to judgment; they ought to be punished.

President Smith, in concluding his remarks, said that 'if the government, which receives into its coffers the money of citizens for its public lands, while its officials are rolling in luxury at the expense of its public treasury, cannot protect such citizens in their lives and property, it is an old granny anyhow, and I prophesy in the name of the Lord of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the saints in the state of Missouri and punish crimes committed by her officers, that in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left, for their wickedness in permitting the murder of men, women and children and the wholesale plunder and extermination of thousands of her citizens to go unpunished, thereby perpetrating a foul and corroding blot upon the fair fame of this great republic, the very thought of which would have caused the high-minded and patriotic framers of the Constitution of the United States to hide their faces with shame. Judge, you will aspire to the presidency of the United States; and if you ever turn your hand against me or the Latter-day Saints, you will feel the weight of the hand of the Almighty upon you; and you will live to see and know that I have testified the truth to you; for the conversation of this day will stick to you through life.' . . .

Following recitation of Clayton's journal entry, B.H. Roberts goes on to describe how the prophecy was published long in advance of its fulfillment and how it was later fulfilled (Roberts, pp. 184-189):

Time Of The Publication Of The Prophecy

This prophecy was first published in Utah, in the Deseret News of September 24th, 1856; it was afterwards published in England, in the Millennial Star, February, 1859. In both instances it is found in the "History of Joseph Smith," then being published in sections in those periodicals. It is a matter of common knowledge that Stephen A. Douglas, after the publication of this prediction, did aspire to the presidency of the United States, and was nominated for that office by the Democratic Convention, held in Baltimore on the 23rd of June, 1860. When in the convention he was declared the regular nominee of the Democratic party, "The whole body rose to its feet, hats were waved in the air, and many tossed aloft; shouts, screams, and yells, and every boisterous mode of expressing approbation and unanimity, were resorted to."

Bright Prospects For Mr. Douglas

When Mr. Douglas first began to aspire to the presidency, no man in the history of American politics had more reason to hope for success. The political party of which he was the recognized leader, in the preceding presidential election had polled 174 electoral votes as against 122 cast by the other two parties which opposed it, and a popular vote of 1,838,169 as against 1,215,798 votes for the two parties opposing. It is a matter of history, however, that the Democratic party in the election of 1860 was badly divided; and factions of it put candidates into the field with the following result: Abraham Lincoln, candidate of the Republican party, was triumphantly elected. He received 180 electoral votes; Mr. Breckenridge received 72 electoral votes; Mr. Bell 39; and Mr. Douglas 12. "By a plurality count of the popular vote, Mr. Lincoln carried 18 states; Mr. Breckenridge 11; Mr. Bell 3; and Mr. Douglas one--Missouri! Twenty days less than one year after his nomination by the Baltimore Convention, while yet in the prime of manhood--forty-eight years of age--Mr. Douglas died at his home in Chicago, a disappointed, not to say heart-broken man.

The . . . Cause Of [Douglas'] Failure

Though it may be regarded somewhat as a digression here, let us now inquire into the relations between the prophecy and Mr. Douglas' failure to become president of the United States. Fourteen years after the interview containing the prophecy with which we are dealing, and about one year after the prophecy had been published in the Deseret News, Mr. Douglas was called upon to deliver a speech in Springfield, the capital of Illinois. His speech was delivered on the 12th of June, 1857, and published in the Missouri Republican of June 18th, 1857. It was a time of much excitement throughout the country, concerning the "Mormon" church in Utah. Falsehoods upon the posting winds seemed to have filled the air with the most outrageous calumny. Crimes the most repulsive murders, robberies, rebellion and high treason were falsely charged against its leaders. It was well known that Mr. Douglas had been on terms of intimate friendship with President Joseph Smith, and was well acquainted with the other church leaders. He was therefore looked upon as one competent to speak upon the "Mormon" question, and was invited to do so in the speech to which reference is here made. Mr.

Douglas responded to the request. He grouped the charges against the "Mormons" which were then passing current, in the following manner:

"First, that nine-tenths of the inhabitants are aliens by birth who have refused to become naturalized, or take the oath of allegiance, or do any other act recognizing the government of the United States as the paramount authority of the territory of Utah.

"Second, that the inhabitants, whether native or alien born, known as 'Mormons' (and they constitute the whole people of the territory) are bound by horrible oaths and terrible penalties to recognize and maintain the authority of Brigham Young, and the government of which he is the head, as paramount to that of the United States, in civil as well as in religious affairs; and they will in due time, and under the direction of their leaders, use all means in their power to subvert the government of the United States, and resist its authority."

Mr. Douglas based his remarks upon these rumors against the saints, in the course of which he said:

"Let us have these facts in an official shape before the president and congress, and the country will soon learn that, in the performance of the high and solemn duty devolving upon the executive and congress, there will be no vacillating or hesitating policy. It will be as prompt as the peal that follows the flash--as stern and unyielding as death. Should such a state of things actually exist as we are led to infer from the reports--and such information comes in an official shape--the knife must be applied to this pestiferous, disgusting cancer which is gnawing into the very vitals of the body politic. It must be cut out by the roots and seared over by the red hot iron of stern and unflinching law. * * * Should all efforts fail to bring them [the Mormons] to a sense of their duty, there is but one remedy left. Repeal the organic law of the territory, on the ground that they are alien enemies and outlaws, unfit citizens of one of the free and independent states of this confederacy.

"To protect them further in their treasonable, disgusting and bestial practices would be a disgrace to the country--a disgrace to humanity--a disgrace to civilization, and a disgrace to the spirit of the age. Blot it out of the organized territories of the United States. What then? It will be regulated by the law of 1790, which has exclusive and sole jurisdiction over all the territory not incorporated under any organic or special law. By the provisions of this law, all crimes and misdemeanors, committed on its soil, can be tried before the legal authorities of any state or territory to which the offenders shall be first brought to trial and punished. Under that law persons have been arrested in Kansas, Nebraska, and other territories, prior to their organization as territories, and hanged for their crimes. The law of 1790 has sole and exclusive jurisdiction where no law of a local character exists, and by repealing the organic law of Utah, you give to the general government of the United States the whole and sole jurisdiction over the territory."

Douglas' Lost Opportunity

I shall so far anticipate historical events, which, if a chronological order were strictly followed, would belong to a later period of our narrative, as to say that the speech of Mr. Douglas was of great interest and importance to the people of Utah at the time it was made. Mr. Douglas had it in his power to do them a great service because of his personal acquaintance with Joseph Smith and the great body of the "Mormon" people in Utah, as well as their leaders; for he had known both leaders and people in Illinois, and those whom he had known in Illinois constituted the great bulk of the people in Utah when he delivered his Springfield speech. He knew that the reports carried to the east by vicious and corrupt men were not true. He knew that these reports in the main were but a rehash of the old, exploded charges made against Joseph Smith and his followers in Missouri; and he knew these Missouri reports to be false by many evidences furnished him by Joseph Smith in the interview of the 18th of May, 1843, and by the "Mormon" people at sundry times during his association with them at Nauvoo. He had an opportunity to befriend the innocent; to refute the calumny cast upon a virtuous community; to speak a word in behalf of the oppressed; but the demagogue triumphed over the statesman, the politician, over the humanitarian; and to avoid popular censure, which doubtless he feared befriending the "Mormon" people would bring to him, he turned his hand against them with the result that he did not destroy them but sealed his own doom. In fulfillment of the words of the prophet, he felt the weight of the hand of the Almighty upon him--Mr. Douglas failed of his dearest ambition, the presidency of the United States, and on the 3rd of June, 1861, he died.

All The Elements Of A Great Prophecy In The Douglas Incident

It was impossible for any merely human sagacity to foresee the events foretold in this prophecy. Stephen A. Douglas was a bright but comparatively an unknown man at the time of the interview, in May, 1843. There is and can be no question about the prophecy preceding the event.

It was published, as before stated, in the Deseret News of the 24th of September, 1856, about one year before the Douglas speech at Springfield, in June, 1857; and about four years before Douglas was nominated for the presidency by the Baltimore Democratic Convention.

Moreover a lengthy review of Mr. Douglas' speech was published in the editorial columns of the Deseret News in the issue of that paper for September 2nd, 1857, addressed directly to Mr. Douglas, the closing paragraph of which is as follows:--

"In your last paragraph [of the Springfield speech] you say 'I have thus presented to you plainly and fairly my views of the Utah question.' With at least equal plainness and with far more fairness have your views now been commented upon. And inasmuch as you were well acquainted with Joseph Smith, and this people, also with, the character of our maligners, and did know their allegations were false, but must bark with the dogs who were snapping at our heels, to let them know that you were a dog with them; and also that you may have a testimony of the truth of the assertion that you did know Joseph Smith and his people and the character of their enemies (and neither class have changed, only as the saints have grown better and their enemies worse); and also that

you may thoroughly understand that you have voluntarily, knowingly, and of choice sealed your damnation, and by your own chosen course have closed your chance for the presidential chair, through disobeying the counsel of Joseph which you formerly sought and prospered by following, and that you in common with us, may testify to all the world that Joseph was a true prophet, the following extract from the history of Joseph Smith is again printed for your benefit, and is kindly, recommended to your careful perusal and most candid consideration."

Then follows the account of the interview between Joseph Smith and Mr. Douglas as recorded in the Journal of William Clayton, as published in the Deseret News a year before Mr. Douglas' Springfield speech, and as now quoted in this History. Also it should be remembered that the above editorial in the Deseret News boldly challenging Mr. Douglas on the matter of the presidency, preceded by three years the election of 1860.

This was boldly challenging Mr. Douglas. He raised his hand against the followers of Joseph Smith, despite the warning of the Prophet; and his people in the chief organ of their church, reproduced the prophecy and told him that he had sealed his doom and closed his chance for the presidential chair through disobeying the counsel of the Prophet; and this three years before the election took place. The presidential election of 1860, and the death of Mr. Douglas in the prime of life the year following, tell the rest of the story.

It may be that dwelling at such length upon this incident I have wandered from the direct line of the historical development of the history of the Latter-day Saints, but this remarkable prophecy, its no less remarkable fulfillment, and the deep interest of it must be my justification. I have nothing further to do with the career or character of Mr. Douglas than pointing out the remarkable fulfillment of a prophecy which demonstrates the divine inspiration of the man who uttered it.

Now the events concerning Mr. Douglas clearly fulfilled prophecy, but what about Joseph's prophecy of the government being overthrown? In modern American usage, "government" typically refers to the entire system of governing a nation, so we tend to imagine national anarchy when we someone speaks of our government being overthrown. But "government" can also refer to the political party in control or to the group of officers in power. In Britain, for example, "the government" is frequently dissolved and changed, meaning that the party in power changes, without genuine anarchy or disruption of the method of governing. Was Joseph Smith predicting utter chaos and the loss of our Constitutional form of government? I doubt it, for he had also prophesied elsewhere that our Constitution would be preserved, even though it would be endangered in the future. If we take his words to mean that the ruling powers in the country at the time would be overthrown, then that part of the prophecy has been fulfilled, as Woody Brison notes (personal communication, Nov. 1997):

You have documented nicely the fulfillment of the part about Stephen A. Douglas, but what about the part about the government? . . . [I]t turns out this prophecy also was fulfilled. "The government" at that time was essentially identical to the Whig party, which was totally vanquished in the elections of the 1850's and 60's and ceased to exist about that time.

A PREDICTION OF DESTRUCTION IN JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI [TOP](#)

The excerpt below is taken from B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* , Vol. 1, p. 298:

The following prophetic incident is given upon the authority of Mr. Leonidas M. Lawson, now of New York City, formerly a resident of Clay county, Missouri, and a brother-in-law of General Doniphan. "In the year 1863," says Mr. Lawson, "I visited General A. W. Doniphan at his home in Liberty, Clay county, Missouri. This was soon after the [Civil War] devastation of Jackson county, Missouri under what is known as 'Order No. 11.' This devastation was complete. Farms were everywhere destroyed, and the farm houses were burned. During this visit General Doniphan related the following historical facts and personal incidents." Then follows in Mr. Lawson's account a recital of the treatment meted out to the Saints in Missouri from the time of their first arrival in 1831, to their expulsion, including recitals of the personal relations of General Doniphan and Joseph Smith, including the following incident which occurred during the Prophet's imprisonment in Liberty jail:

"On one occasion General Doniphan caused the sheriff of the county to bring Joseph Smith from the prison to his law office, for the purpose of consultation about his defense. During Smith's presence in the office, a resident of Jackson county, Missouri, came in for the purpose of paying a fee which was due by him to the firm of Doniphan & Baldwin, and offered in payment a tract of land in Jackson county.

"Doniphan told him that his partner, Mr. Baldwin, was absent at the moment, but as soon as he had an opportunity he would consult him and decide about the matter. When the Jackson county man retired, Joseph Smith, who had overheard the conversation, addressed General Doniphan about as follows:

""Doniphan, I advise you not to take that Jackson county land in payment of the debt. God's wrath hangs over Jackson county. God's people have been ruthlessly driven from it, and you will live to see the day when it will be visited by fire and sword. The Lord of Hosts will sweep it with the besom of destruction. The fields and farms and houses will be destroyed, and only the chimneys will be left to mark the desolation.'

"General Doniphan said to me that the devastation of Jackson county forcibly reminded him of this remarkable prediction of the Mormon Prophet. . . .

In a letter from Mr. A. Saxey of Spanish Fork, Utah to Mr. Junius Wells treating further of the fulfillment of this prophecy, so well attested, Mr. Saxey under date of August 25, 1902 says:

"In the spring of 1862 my regiment went south, and it was during that time that "Order No. 11" was issued, but I was back there again in 1864, during the Price raid, and saw the condition of the country. The duty of executing the order was committed to Colossians W. R. Penick's regiment, and there is no doubt but that he carried it into effect, from the howl the copperhead papers made at the time. I went down the Blue river, we found houses, barns, outbuildings, nearly all burned down, and nothing left standing but the chimneys which had, according to the fashion of the time, been built on the outside of the buildings. I remember very well that the country looked a veritable desolation."

CONDEMNED TO EXECUTION, JOSEPH PROPHECIES OF DELIVERANCE **TOP**

In the fall of 1838, mobs from Missouri rampaged the LDS settlement of Far West and several LDS leaders, including Joseph Smith, were captured, brutally torn from their families. Falsely accused of murder and other crimes, they were condemned to be shot in the presence of their families and the Saints. A militia officers, General Doniphan, opposed the planned murder of the prisoners to be murdered and declared he would not allow his men to witness it. The other officers were then afraid to take responsibility for the execution, but sought instead to take them to Independence, Jackson County, to have them executed for the alleged crimes under less risky circumstances. As the journey began, the prospects for the captives looked grim. B.H. Roberts reports (*New Witnesses for God* , Vol.1, p.295):

Amidst the proud boasts of their captors, who brutally told their heart-broken families and the Saints that they had seen the last of their Prophet, a start was made with the prisoners for Independence, Jackson County. The prospects of the betrayed men were most desperate. They were in the hands of a reckless mob whose hatred of them was intense. There was little respect at the time for law in the state. In the language of General Clark (Commander-in-Chief of the mob-militia of the state, then assembled at Far West) addressed to the Saints, their fate seemed fixed, their die cast, their doom sealed.

The start for Independence was made on the 2nd of November; the following morning, after spending a most wretched night, encamped on the banks of Crooked River, Joseph Smith spoke to his fellow-prisoners in low but cheerful and confident tones, and uttered this prophecy:

"Be of good cheer, brethren, the word of the Lord came to me last night that our lives should be given us, and that whatever we may suffer during this captivity, not one of our lives should be taken."

"Of this prophecy," says Elder Parley P. Pratt, "I testify in the name of the Lord, and though spoken in secret, its public fulfillment and the miraculous escape of each of us is too notorious to need my testimony."

Though his death had been ordered and seemed certain, now that he had fallen into the hands of his enemies, Joseph's prophecy was fulfilled. Praise to the name of General Alexander W. Doniphan, who refused to carry out the execution order. Read more about this incident on my page about [Missouri and the 1838 "Mormon War"](#).

PREDICTION OF THE THREE WITNESSES TO THE BOOK OF MORMON **TOP**

In March of 1829, Joseph Smith received a revelation about the need to have three witnesses to see the gold plates that he was about to translate. The revelation is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 5:11-13:

11 And in addition to your testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you.

12 Yea, they shall know of a surety that these things are true, for from heaven will I declare it unto them.

13 I will give them power that they may behold and view these things as they are;

Joseph then asked three men to go with him and pray for the promised divine manifestation. Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer went with him and prayed. They then described this experience:

The Testimony of Three Witnesses

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY

DAVID WHITMER

MARTIN HARRIS

These men never denied their testimony of the Book of Mormon, even though some left the Church and would have had ample reason and opportunity to expose a fraud, if it had been

one. To the day of their deaths, they remained true to the testimony recorded above and were adamant about the reality of what they experienced. A detailed review of their story and the significance of their testimony is offered by Richard L. Anderson in his article, [The Book of Mormon Witnesses](#).

Joseph had prophesied of the manner and nature of the testimony that the three witnesses would receive before the event occurred.

THE PROPHETIC BOOK OF MORMON [**TOP**](#)

No other evidence of Joseph Smith's divine calling is more worthy of consideration and more powerful than the [Book of Mormon](#). There are many things in that volume which seemed laughable in 1830 but which have become highly plausible or even verified in the twentieth century. Some of the many [evidences for the Book of Mormon](#) should be considered as prophecies fulfilled. For example, the Book of Mormon describes a journey through the Arabian Peninsula that offers substantial information that was unavailable to scholars until recently. It gives specific directions for the journey that prove to be about the only plausible path that could have been taken, names a specific ancient burial site (Nahom) in the right place, and describes a lush, green, mountainous site on the eastern coast - Bountiful - with details that were laughable until a few years ago, when an entirely plausible site was found in the right place, as described in the Book of Mormon. The apparent discoveries of Nahom (Nehem) and excellent candidates for Bountiful (Wadi Sayq being one) should give pause to anyone who quickly dismisses Joseph Smith as a fraud.

THE PROPHETIC "WORD OF WISDOM" [**TOP**](#)

Section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants contains a revelation given to Joseph Smith in 1833 known as [the Word of Wisdom](#). It outlines principles of healthy living that go far beyond the scientific knowledge of the 1800s and much of this century. For example, it prohibits tobacco as being harmful to man - something which was not proven by science until this century. Alcoholic beverages are also prohibited, as is black tea and coffee (the "hot drinks" of his day). Positive statements are made about the importance of wheat and other grains, along with other produce. Meat is not prohibited, but should be used "sparingly" and primarily in times of winter or need. The 1833 dietary guidelines sound much like the recommended "food pyramid" produced by federally-funded research in the past decade. The revelation also says that the health principles in it were given to warn us and protect us from the "evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days." I see that as a prophetic statement of the terribly evil role that the U.S. tobacco industry continues to play. Through its use of clout and money, they continue to receive federal support for tobacco farmers and continue to legally market a product that brings death to over 400,000 Americans each year - at a time when we ban or regulate numerous other products if injury to only a few people is threatened.

It's important to remember that the medical establishment did not recognize the health harms of tobacco until long after the Word of Wisdom. See, for example, the [BBC News story](#) by William Kremer mentioned in [a Mormanity post from 2012](#). As William Kremer wrote, "Cigarettes were in fact promoted as beneficial for health. They were listed in pharmaceutical encyclopaedias until 1906 and prescribed by doctors for coughs, colds and tuberculosis (a disease which the World Health Organization now links with tobacco)." I'm glad the medical establishment has finally come around and no longer prescribes cigarettes. I'm also glad that the Word of Wisdom gave the world a head start in understanding the need for humans to avoid tobacco.

PROPHETIC MIRACLES INVOLVING NEWEL K. WHITNEY [TOP](#)

The following examples of Joseph's prophetic gifts were related by Orson F. Whitney in the April 1912 General Conference Report, pp. 50-51 (also see *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 146, and *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, Vol.1, p.222):

Six months after the Church was organized, Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and other Elders started upon a mission to the Lamanites; and, coming to Kirtland, in northern Ohio, they preached the Gospel there, and gathered into the fold quite a number, among them Edward Partridge, who became the first Bishop of the Church; Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Frederick G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, and my grandfather, Newel K. Whitney, with his wife, Elizabeth Ann Whitney. These disciples, hearing that the Church would probably move westward, began to pray for the coming of the Prophet. I have heard my grandmother and my father relate that when the Prophet came to Kirtland he drove in a sleigh and halted in front of the mercantile store of Gilbert and Whitney. He sprang out, went into the store, walked up to the junior partner, and said: "Newel K. Whitney, thou art the man." Grandfather was astonished; he had never seen Joseph Smith till then--Joseph had never seen him with his natural eyes--and he answered: "Stranger, you have the advantage of me; I could not call you by name, as you have me." And the stranger then said: "I am Joseph, the Prophet. You have prayed me here. Now, what do you want of me?"

By what power did this remarkable man, Joseph Smith, recognize one whom he had never before seen in the flesh? Why did not Newel K. Whitney recognize him? It was because Joseph Smith was a seer, a choice seer; he had actually seen Newel K. Whitney upon his knees, hundreds of miles away, praying for his coming to Kirtland. Marvelous--but true!

Another incident in my grandfather's experience with the Prophet shows further this power of seership. In the year 1832, after Newel K. Whitney had become Bishop of Kirtland, they went down to Independence, Missouri, where Edward Partridge was Bishop in Zion, and while returning Bishop Whitney met with a serious accident. The coach upon which they were traveling had a runaway. The Prophet leaped from the coach and cleared the wheels, but the Bishop, attempting to do likewise was caught in the wheel and his leg broken in several places. As a result of this accident they were detained several weeks at Greenville, Indiana, where they put up at a public house; Elder Rigdon, their traveling companion, meanwhile going on to Kirtland. An attempt was made upon the Prophet's life by poisoning, so that he deemed it prudent to leave the place as soon as possible, and he proposed to the Bishop that they go at once. What followed is thus recorded in the History of the Church, as compiled and edited by Brother B. H. Roberts. This is the Prophet's own language:

"Brother Whitney had not had his foot moved from the bed for nearly four weeks, when I went into his room, after a walk in the grove, and told him if he would agree to start for home in the morning, we would take a wagon to the river, about four miles, and there would be a ferry boat in waiting which would take us quickly across, where we would find a hack which would take us directly to the landing, where we should find a boat, in waiting, and we would be going up the river before 10 o'clock, and have a prosperous journey home. He took courage and told me he would go. We started next morning, and found everything as I had told him." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, Ch. 19, p. 272)

Instances might be multiplied, if necessary. Not only by the gift of prophecy, but by the power of seer-ship, Joseph Smith was able to forecast the future. It was by that miraculous power that he saw the Father and the Son. It was by that wonderful power that he and Oliver Cowdery saw Jehovah, Moses and Elijah in the Kirtland temple; and by which also Joseph and Sidney gazed upon the glories of the celestial, terrestrial and telestial worlds.

Here is an interesting event recorded in the footnotes of *History of the Church*, Vol. 1 (p. 146):

"Mother Whitney" also tells how on a certain night prior to the advent of Elder Cowdery and his companions, while she and her husband were praying to the Lord to know how they might obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost, which of all things they desired, they saw a vision as of a cloud of glory resting upon their house, and heard a voice from heaven saying, "Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming." Shortly afterwards Oliver Cowdery and his associates came with the Book of Mormon, and with the message of the restored Gospel.

THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN TO TURN TO THEIR FATHERS [TOP](#)

On Sept. 22, 1823, the angel Moroni quoted the Old Testament prophet Malachi and said:

Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (Joseph Smith -- History 1:38-39.)

In April of 1836, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery declared that Elijah, in fulfillment of prophecy, visited them in the Kirtland Temple and gave them priesthood keys (authority) for the work of turning the hearts of the children to the father, including sacred temple work such as the sealing of families for eternity and baptism for the dead. These keys would initiate the turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. That includes genealogical research, in which the children seek out the names and histories of their fathers, and that information in turn can make ordinance work such as baptism possible for those who did not receive it while alive on the earth.

Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., in *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 2, pp.123-125, explains the significance of the prophecy that the "hearts of the children would be turned to the fathers":

One of the outstanding evidences bearing witness that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery spoke the truth, when they declared that Elijah had come to them and conferred upon them his priesthood, is the fact that since that time the hearts of the children have in a miraculous way turned towards their fathers.

It might be contended with some semblance of logic that Joseph Smith and his successors could yield an influence over the members of the Church and have them go to the temples to do ordinance work for their dead, in order that the saying could go abroad that this prophecy by Malachi had been fulfilled, and the hearts of the children have turned to their fathers.

It would be unreasonable to say, however, that Joseph Smith, or the entire body of the Church, could wield the power to persuade millions who are not members of the Church, also, to turn their attention towards their dead fathers; yet it is a fact that the hearts of the hearts of millions have so turned, since the proclamation of the coming of Elijah in 1836. . . .

Before the year 1836 there was very little, if any, research being made anywhere in this world in behalf of the dead. It is true that here and there some man may have been searching out a genealogical record, but what was his object? To prove title to some estate.

There were no genealogical societies; there were no genealogical organizations; there were no genealogical researches of any systematic character anywhere in the world. That is significant, is it not?

What do we discover now? One year after this revelation was given and these keys were bestowed, we find in Great Britain the government passing laws compelling the preservation of duplicate records of the dead on the part of those who kept them. This is a significant fact, one link that points in the direction of the truth of the statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It did not occur the year before this vision.

In the year 1844, the year of the martyrdom, the first organization for the purpose of gathering together the records of the dead, and compiling genealogical records, was formed in the city of Boston. It was the New England Historical and Genealogical Society. In 1869, in the city of New York, another society, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, was organized. *[I believe England had a genealogical society founded in 1836 - J.L.]*

Since that day societies have sprung up all over the land. There are hundreds of them along the Atlantic border. The state of Massachusetts is full of them. We find the same thing in Virginia, in the Carolinas, and along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Georgia, where the first settlements in this country were made. The hearts of the children have since that day turned to their fathers, and they are searching out the records of their dead.

Today genealogical research has swept many lands. The LDS archives in Salt Lake City comprise the largest set of genealogical records in the world. The prophecies delivered to

Joseph about the hearts of the children to the fathers began to be fulfilled after Elijah came.

PREDICTION OF STAKES IN BOSTON AND NEW YORK [TOP](#)

In spite of the Church having been driven from New York and the Eastern United States, Joseph predicted that New York City and Boston would one day have stakes (Church organizations comprising multiple congregations). He said, "In the great cities, as Boston, New York, etc., there shall be stakes" (*History of the Church*, Vol.6, p. 319). On Dec. 9, 1934, the New York Stake was organized. The Boston Stake was organized May 20, 1962. (See Gilbert W. Scharffs, *The Truth About "The God Makers,"* Publishers Press, Salt Lake City, 1986, p. 397.)

JOSEPH PREDICTS HIS DEATH [TOP](#)

The last item written by Joseph Smith in his journal is an entry from Saturday, June 22, 1844, now recorded in *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 546:

I told Stephen Markham that if I and Hyrum were ever taken again we should be massacred, or I was not a prophet of God.

Shortly thereafter he and Hyrum were placed in Carthage Jail and then murdered by a mob. Others who were with them survived the attack, but Joseph and his brother were killed, as predicted.

Fifteen years earlier in 1829, Joseph received a revelation that hinted at his future murder. Doctrine and Covenants 5:22 urges Joseph to be faithful, "and if you do this, behold I grant unto you eternal life, even if you should be slain."

DAN JONES TO SERVE A MISSION IN WALES [TOP](#)

The night before Joseph Smith was killed, as a captive in Carthage Jail, he prophesied that Dan Jones, whose life was clearly at risk, would survive to serve a mission in Wales. That event is recorded in *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 601:

Soon after Dr. Richards retired to the bed which Joseph had left, and when all were apparently fast asleep, Joseph whispered to Dan Jones "are you afraid to die?" Dan said, "Has that time come, think you? Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death would have many terrors." Joseph replied, "You will yet see Wales, and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die."

Joseph was right. Dan's life was spared the next day. Later that year, in August of 1844, he went to Wales in company with Wilford Woodruff and gave great impetus to missionary work in that land. His work led to the conversion of many hundreds of people. Further, he started the first foreign-language magazines for the Church, publishing a magazine in the Welsh language beginning in 1846. According to an article on "International Magazines" in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol. 2, "Dan Jones edited and published thirty-two issues of *Prophwyd y Jubili, Neu Seren y Saints* (Prophet of Jubilee, New Star of Saints), filled with doctrinal and historical articles, messages from Church leaders, and replies to attacks from antagonists of the Church. Other [non-English] magazines followed."

SIDNEY RIGDON TO BE A SPOKESMAN **TOP**

In Doctrine and Covenants 100:9-11, Joseph recorded a revelation indicating that "you, my servant Sidney, should be a spokesman unto this people; yea, verily, I will ordain you unto this calling, even to be a spokesman unto my servant Joseph... and he shall be a revelator unto thee...."

Not only was this prophecy well fulfilled by the mighty role played by Sidney Rigdon in leading the Church and speaking for Joseph, but it also fulfilled a prophecy recorded in the Book of Mormon. In 2 Nephi 3:17-20, Nephi recorded a prophecy from Joseph of Egypt about a future Joseph through whom scriptures and divine law would be brought forth. This Joseph was to have a spokesman: "I will make for him a spokesman." The spokesman was to declare revelations given to Joseph. This describes well the role of Sidney, who acted as a spokesman on many occasions and who received revelations from Joseph.

HEALING AND PROPHECY WITH THE JOHNSONS IN KIRTLAND **TOP**

In Kirtland, Joseph Smith made friends with a local resident, John Johnson. The Johnsons and several others visited Joseph at his home in 1831. Mrs. Johnson had been ill for years with a lame arm. It made her unable, for example, to lift her hand above her head. One of the group asked Joseph if God had given any man power to heal Mrs. Johnson. A **non-member** of the Church records what followed:

A few moments later, when the conversation had turned in another direction, Smith rose, and walking across the room, taking Mrs. Johnson by the hand, said in the most solemn and impressive manner, "Woman, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command thee to be whole," and immediately left the room. The company was awe-stricken at the infinite presumption of the man, and the calm assurance with which he spoke. The sudden mental and moral shock - I know not how better to explain the well-attested fact - electrified the rheumatic arm - Mrs. Johnson at once lifted it up with ease, and on her return home the next day she was able to do her washing without difficulty or pain.

(A.S. Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio*, Chase and Hall, Cincinnati, 1876, p. 250, as cited by Duane S. Crowther, *The Prophecies of Joseph Smith*, Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, 1963, p. 221)

Several in the Johnson family were baptized into the Church, and it was in the Johnson home where Joseph received the glorious vision and revelation of the kingdoms of heaven recorded in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 76.

One of the Johnson sons, Olmstead, was less than valiant and refused the Gospel. In 1832 when Olmstead returned from a journey to the Johnson home, Joseph made this prophecy to Olmstead in 1832: "I told him if he did not obey the Gospel, the spirit he was of would lead him to destruction and when he went away, he would never return or see his Father again" (History of the Church, 1:260). Olmstead did not repent, but later left on a journey to the south, including Mexico, and then back to the U.S. where he became ill in Virginia and died without seeing his family again (*ibid.*).

ESCAPE OF STEPHEN MARKHAM [TOP](#)

Duane S. Crowther in *The Prophecies of Joseph Smith*, (Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, 1963, pp. 328-9) describes a prophecy Joseph made while Joseph was held captive in Missouri, awaiting trial. Stephen Markham was to be a witness for Joseph, but was beaten by a guard, whom Markham resisted successfully. Then other mobsters joined the fray. Markham managed to get away, but his life was clearly in danger. Other witnesses had been threatened and driven off (see the discussion of the Richmond Hearing on my page about [Missouri](#)). The night after these events, a vision was given to Joseph:

During this night the visions of the future were opened to my understanding; when I saw the ways and means and near approach of my escape from imprisonment, and the danger that my beloved Brother Markham was in. **I awoke Brother Markham, and told him if he would rise very early and not wait for the judge and lawyers, as he had contemplated doing, but rise briskly, he would get safe home, almost before he was aware of it; and if he did not the mob would shoot him on the way;** and I told him to tell the brethren to be of good cheer, but lose no time in removing from the country.

(History of the Church Volume 3, p. 316)

The next morning Brother Markham escaped as prophesied. Mobbers pursued him, but were not able to capture or harm him. And Joseph, as we have already discussed, was later freed, as prophesied.

APOSTLES TO DEPART FROM FAR WEST ON 26 APRIL 1839 [TOP](#)

During the turmoil of 1838 in [Missouri](#) and in Kirtland, the Quorum of the Twelve became somewhat chaotic. Joseph sought revelation from God on the activities of the Twelve and received in return the revelation in Section 118 of the Doctrine and Covenants, received July 8, 1838:

Next spring let them depart to go over the great waters, and there promulgate my gospel, the fulness thereof, and bear record of my name. Let them take leave of my saints in the city of Far west on the twenty-sixth day of April next, on the building spot of my house, saith the Lord.

Persecution soon drove the saints out of Far West, while Joseph was imprisoned under inhumane conditions. Many saints were killed. Fulfilling the Lord's instructions at that time seemed impossible. In fact, enemies of the Church learned of this revelation and were determined to keep it from happening. Mob members in Far West declared that any Mormons showing up in that town near the assigned date would be murdered. In spite of such threats, the members of that Quorum managed to enter Far West just after midnight on the morning of the 26th of April, where they laid the cornerstone for the temple, ordained two new apostles and other officers, sang a hymn, had a prayer, and then departed in accordance with the instructions they had from the Lord.

ISAIAH 11 ABOUT TO BE FULFILLED? [TOP](#)

When asked to offer his most powerful example of an allegedly failed prophecy from Joseph Smith, one critic of the Church pointed to a statement about Isaiah 11 made by Joseph Smith, quoting the angel Moroni. Here is his accusation:

Let us begin this parade.... Sept. 21, 1823. Joseph Smith says in Pearl of Great Price, [History of] Joseph Smith 2:40, that Moroni told him that Isaiah 11 was "about to be fulfilled." Isaiah 11:6-11 prophesies that the wolf and the lamb, the calf and the lion, etc. shall dwell in peace together, and that nothing will "hurt or destroy" and that the earth shall be "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (don't add your example of the "lion" and the "lamb" unless you have ones to cover a "wolf" or a "calf" too.)

FULFILLMENT: None of this has yet come to pass.

Thanks for the note. By the way, Isaiah 11 is a prophecy about many things that would occur before and after the return of Christ. To say that it is about to be fulfilled is like saying that the Second Coming of Christ is about to happen - and we stand firmly behind that prophecy. It hasn't been fulfilled yet, but in the Lord's timetable, it will happen in this era, shortly after the time of Joseph Smith, and even many Christians agree that we are in the time span in which the Second Coming is a real possibility - that the Second Coming is "about" to occur. Could be another 50 or 100 years, but we're still at the door of this great event.

How can Is. 11 be cited as the best example of an incorrect prophecy when there has not been sufficient time for its fulfillment but when numerous indications associated with its future fulfillment are coming to pass?

While Isaiah 11 speaks of Christ as the Branch and rod of Jesse in verses 1 to 4, it also speaks of a "root of Jesse" - another person also descended from Jesse - who would establish an ensign that would bring in the Gentiles and play a role in the gathering of scattered Israel (verse 10-12). This could very well be Joseph Smith. The restored Church of Jesus Christ truly is an ensign that has been sought out by many of the Gentiles and that is seeking out the scattered remnants of Israel and bringing them back into the covenants of the Lord. This part has already been fulfilled.

MISCELLANEOUS OTHERS TOP

A variety of other fulfilled prophecies could be cited. Over forty are listed on a page at FairMormon.org, "[Samples of Prophecies of Joseph Smith that Have Been Fulfilled](#)." One example involves the miraculous survival of Willard Richards at Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844:

Dr. Richards' escape was miraculous; he being a very large man, and in the midst of a shower of balls, yet he stood unscathed, with the exception of a ball which grazed the tip end of the lower part of his left ear. His escape fulfilled literally a prophecy which Joseph made over a year previously, that the time would come that the balls would fly around him like hail, and he should see his friends fall on the right and on the left, but that there should not be a hole in his garment (HC 6:619).

Of the four Latter-day Saint men in that jail when the mob attacked and murdered Joseph Smith, Willard Richards was the only one of the four who was not shot.

SUMMARY^{TOP}

Joseph never claimed to be infallible, and no prophet is. He may have been surprised and frustrated by the delayed fulfillment of some prophecies, such as the establishment of Zion in Missouri, which has yet to come. But those who knew him well knew that he was a prophet of God, and those who have examined carefully the prophetic Book of Mormon or Doctrine and Covenants or Pearl of Great Price will find abundant evidence of heavenly inspiration.

Even in small things we see Joseph acting as a prophet and seer. Newel Whitney, for example, in 1832, had been sick and in bed for four weeks. Donna Hill reports what followed (*Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, NY, 1977, pp. 148-149): "Joseph announced to him one day that if he would agree to start the next morning, they would take a wagon to the river and at once find a ferry to carry them across where a hack [carriage] would be waiting. The hack would take them to the landing where they could board a boat and be traveling up the river before ten o'clock. It all transpired just as Joseph predicted, and they reached home speedily and safely in a very short time."

The scriptures Joseph left us must be given special emphasis in determining his status as a prophet. Hearsay, newspapers, and records written long after the alleged events may appear to show false prophecies, but those sources are much less reliable and useful as a standard than the canonized writings we have, where the claim of prophetic influence is to be taken seriously. The Word of Wisdom and the Civil War prophesy from the Doctrine and Covenants both demand attention - and respect, for they, like the other scriptures given through Joseph, are prophetic indeed.

Mormon Prophets, Called of God but Fallible: Why the Church of Jesus Christ Is and Can Be True even though Church Leaders Make Mistakes - an essay by Jeff Lindsay dealing with the Biblical concept that true prophets are still fallible mortals.

The Nature of Prophets and Prophecy by John A. Tvedtnes, published at [FairMormon.org](https://www.fairmormon.org).
Excellent article!

Samples of Prophecies of Joseph Smith that Have Been Fulfilled - a page at [FairMormon.org](https://www.fairmormon.org).

Joseph Smith's Alleged 56-year Prophecy - Did Joseph really prophesy that the Second Coming would be in 1891? An investigation into more dubious claims of anti-Mormons.

John Tvedtnes's Response to a list of 52 allegedly false prophecies of Joseph Smith by Dick Baer (the list is toward the bottom of that page).

Allegedly Failed Prophecies - answers to a few specific questions at the excellent [FairMormon.org](https://www.fairmormon.org) site.

"A War on the Civil War Prophecy" by Kerry Shirts

[The Leonid Meteor Prophecy](#), an article at the [Eyring-L site](#). Also see "[An 1833 Meteor Shower Fulfills a Prophecy](#)" (archived). For further background, see "[Spectacular Meteor Shower Might Repeat](#)" by John P. Pratt and "[The History of the Leonid Meteor Shower](#)" at ClassicalAstronomy.com.



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Scott Paxman

very good list

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This is a whole new testament.. thanks Jeff.

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