

A Religious Proclamation by Joseph Smith, December 1841

On January 19, 1841 Joseph Smith received a revelation at Nauvoo, Illinois. It gave instructions on various topics including making a proclamation to the world.

I say unto you, that you are now called, immediately to make a solemn proclamation of my gospel, and of this stake, which I have planted to be a corner stone of Zion, which shall be polished with that refinement which is after the similitude of a palace. This proclamation shall be made to all the kings of the world, to the four corners thereof; to the Honorable president elect, and the high minded Governors of the nation in which you live, and to all the nations of the earth scattered abroad. Let it be written in the spirit of meekness and by the power of the holy ghost which shall be in you, at the time of the writing of the same; for it shall be given you by the holy ghost to know my will concerning those kings and authorities, even what shall befall them in a time to come. For behold I am about to call upon them to give heed to the light and glory of Zion, for the set time has come, to favor her.

Call ye, therefore, upon them with loud proclamation and with your testimony, fearing them not, for they are as grass, and all their glory as the flower thereof, which soon falleth away, that they may be left also without excuse, and that I may visit them in the day of visitation when I shall unveil the face of my covering, to appoint the portion of the oppressor, among hypocrites, where there is gnashing of teeth; if they reject my servants, and my testimony, which I have revealed unto them.

And again, I will visit and soften their hearts - many of them for your good, that ye may find grace in their eyes, that they may come to the light of truth, and the gentiles to the exaltation or lifting up of Zion; for the day of my visitation cometh speedily, in an hour when ye think not of, and where shall be the safety of my people? and refuge for those who shall be left of them? Awake! O Kings of the earth! Come ye, O! come ye with your gold and your silver, to the help of my people, to the house of the daughter of Zion. And again, verily I say unto you, let my servant, Robert Blashel Thompson, help you to write this proclamation, for I am well pleased with him¹

William H. Harrison was elected to become the ninth president of the United States. He is mentioned in the revelation as “the Honorable president elect.” Harrison took the oath of office on March 4, 1841 and died a month later on April 4. He was succeeded by John Tyler as the tenth president.

¹“The Book of the Law of the Lord,” MS 22507, 3-4, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. See LDS D&C 124:2-12.

Robert B. Thompson was the scribe named in the revelation. He died on August 27, 1841. The Book of the Law of the Lord has under the date of December 22, 1841, "this evening Joseph the Seer commenced giving instructions to the scribe [Willard Richards] concerning writing the Proclamation to the Kings of the earth mentioned in the Revelation given January 19, 1841."²

There is a draft for the proclamation preserved. The Proclamation quotes passages of Scripture such as Isaiah 49:22-23 which is repeated in the Book of Mormon (LDS 1Nephi 21; 2 Nephi 6:6-7) that refers to the future glory of Zion in Isaiah chapters 60-62. Also quoted is Acts 22:16 and the text "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens" from Habakkuk 3:3. The handwritten manuscript is as follows:

A Religious Proclamation

From Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of the Most High God, to the President of the United States of North America - the Governors of the Several States - the Emperors, Kings, and Princes of the Earth - the Executives of all nations - the Chiefs of all tribes - and all occupying high places in the administration of governments.

"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing - fathers, and their queens thy nursing - mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."

(Isaiah—LX, LXI, LXII.)

Now in obedience to a revelation given January 19th, AD. 1841, I proceed to call upon you to yield yourselves as obedient subjects to the requirements of heaven, in ~~fulfilling~~ contributing to the fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets - to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of and abandon your sins, be immersed for the remission of sins, receive the imposition of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and, in fine, to embrace the gospel in its beauty & fulness. "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on th[e] name of the Lord." This is more honorable than the diadems of kings or the pearls of princes – it will confer upon you an excellence unsurpassed, a glory which you never knew. "God came from Teman, and the Holy one from mount Paran," and, as his glory covered the heavens, so now will it envis[i]on the earth, and illumine the holy city, until all the obedient shall ~~bask in the~~ rejoice in the brightness of his coming, and bask in the sun – shine of God's benignity. Hasten then to Zion! and contribute to the erection of temples, sanctuaries, and palaces, such as this world never saw – ~~illegible~~ with their walls finished with th[e] pencil of Raphahel [*sic*; Raphael] decorated with gold, and pearls, and precious

² "The Book of the Law of the Lord," 36. See Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841-April 1843* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011), 17.

stones, beautified by the finger of God. Tho' your minds are yet darkened, and your eyes dim of sight, by the traditions, superstitions, and follies of the ages, injured upon you by the Papal See, and hierarchy of Rome; th[e] Patriarch, and [illegible] ecclesiastical council, of Constantinople; and th[e] priesthood of th[e] protestant sects; the Lord of heaven addressed you as intelligent beings, and direct you to come out from among them, that you may become the elite of the kingdom –bright, and shinning lights in your Father's house.³ [The draft of the Proclamation ends at this point and was not finished in Joseph Smith's lifetime.]

Apparently it was not until November 1843 that the command to write a Proclamation was taken up again. On November 15 Joseph Smith “spoke of Proclamati[o]n to the Kings.” Six days later on the twenty-first Smith again gave instructions for Willard Richards, W. W. Phelps, John Taylor and Orson Hyde to write a proclamation to the kings of the earth.⁴ Finally in 1845 a Proclamation was worked on by Apostle Parley P. Pratt when he wrote a Proclamation on behalf of the Council of Twelve. It was published in New York and dated April 6, 1845:

Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-Day Saints. To all the Kings of the World; To the President of the United States of America; To the Governors of the several States; And to the Rulers and People of all Nations: Greetings

Wilford Woodruff, while he was in England, referred to Pratt's work and recorded in his journal: “This is the proclamation to All the Kings of World & rulers & people of All nations. May the Lord make it a blessings to All nations. This Proclamation is made by the Twelve Apostles in fulfillment of the Revelations & Commandments of God. See Doctrins [Doctrine] & Covenants sections CIII: 1 paragraph Math 22 ch. 5 vers. This is A warning to the whole gentile world that they may be left without excuse in the day of Gods Judgment upon the nations. I thank God that I am an instrument in his hands of printing & Circulating this important Proclamation through Britain & Europe.”⁵

³ "A Religious Proclamation," Joseph Smith Collection, MS 155, Box 5, folder 17, Church History Library.

⁴ Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Brent M. Rogers, eds., *Journals, Volume 3: May 1843-June 1844* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2015), 130, 132.

⁵ Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, typescript, 1833-1898, 9 vols., 1983-85 (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books), 2:608, entry of October 22, 1845, original in the Church History Library, Salt Lake City.