

## DISCOURSE

## ELDER ORSON PRATT,

*Delivered in the New Tabernacle,  
Salt Lake City, Sunday After-  
noon, July 25, 1875.*

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I WILL read a few verses in the latter part of the fourth and in the fore part of the fifth chapters of Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. [The speaker read from the 13th verse of the 4th chapter to the 6th verse of the 5th, both inclusive.]

I have read these few passages of Scripture relating to the great day of the coming of our Lord, according as it is predicted by the mouth of the ancient apostle, and also concerning a very important event which will then happen, namely, the resurrection of the righteous dead—those who are in Christ; and also another event closely connected with the resurrection—namely, the ascension of the Saints then living upon the earth, to meet the Lord at his coming. These events are looked for by most of the Christian world, indeed we may say that all the Christian world, who do not spiritualize the Scriptures, are looking for events similar to those here described. They believe, according to the New Testament, that there is a time fixed in the mind of the Almighty, when the heavens shall be parted as a scroll is parted when it is rolled up, and that the heavens, invisible to us now, will be unveiled before the eyes of all people; that the armies of heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect through obedience to the law of God, will be revealed; that the angels who stand in authority in the presence of God and do his bidding will also be numbered with that great company which will be revealed from the heavens. We also believe, and so do the inhabitants of the Christian world at large, that there will be an audible sound of a trumpet—the trump of the archangel—in the heavens at the time this grand scenery is opened to mankind; that at the sound of that trumpet the dead in Christ will come forth from their silent dusty tombs; that at the sound of that trump the Saints then living will be instantaneously caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This doctrine is believed in by Christians generally who do not spiritualize altogether the sense and meaning of the Scriptures.

It may be well for us, in the examination of that great event, the second coming of Christ; to refer to some of the predictions of inspired writers in regard to the time of our Saviour's revelation from the heavens. I do not mean to say the day nor the hour of his coming, for that is unknown, no man that lives on the face of the earth knows anything about the day or the hour; neither will there be any man on the earth prior to the coming of the Lord who will know the day and the hour, for it is hidden from mortal man. However, the age in which that great event will take place is very clearly revealed in both the Old and the New Testament. That age is to be characterized by certain events, predicted by the inspired writers, which are unmistakable in their nature, and which can be easily understood by all, both learned and unlearned. These events are to be so conspicuous that I presume there will not be a nation, people, kindred or tongue upon the face of the whole earth but what will know that, according to the Scriptures, some great event is about to take place, for every people in that day will be more or less enlightened in the Scriptures, for before that great day shall come missionaries will be sent to the uttermost parts of the earth, to testify to all people concerning the gospel of the Son of God, and they will cry in the ears of all living, saying unto them—“Prepare ye, prepare ye, for the great and coming day of the Bridegroom.” They will have a preparatory message to deliver to all nations.

When the Lord, in the meridian of time, came and took upon himself a mortal body, he saw proper to send as his forerunner one of the greatest prophets that ever was born into our world—John the Baptist, and he went, announcing, by the inspiration of the Spirit and by the power of his holy calling, that there was one to come after him who was mightier than he, whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to

unloose; and that when he should come he would thoroughly purge his floor, and that he would baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost. Said John—“I merely come to prepare the way. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord and make his paths straight. I come preaching unto you repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, but he who comes after me, holding higher authority and a greater priesthood, shall baptize you with a baptism that is greater than that of water—the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost.”

Now, if the Lord, when he came the first time, in his humility and meekness, born in a manger, of parents of low estate, saw that it was necessary to prepare the way before him by raising up one of the greatest prophets that ever came into the world, why should it be thought unreasonable that he should also raise up a latter-day prophet to prepare the way before one of the mightiest and grandest events that ever has taken place or that ever will take place on our earth in its temporal condition? If the heavens are to be revealed; if the face of the Son of God is to be unveiled; if the glory of His countenance is to outshine the sun in his strength; if He is to come in flaming fire, while the very heavens themselves shall shake by his power, and the earth reel to and fro like a drunken man, the mountains themselves, feeling his power, are sunk and the valleys are raised up; if all these grand events are to attend the second advent of the Son of God, is it unreasonable that he should raise up a great prophet in the latter days to make preparations for so great an event? Or will he let the world pass on in blindness and darkness without any signs of the times, without any warning voice, without any inspired man sent of God to wake them up from their condition, and to prepare the way for his coming? To me it looks consistent and reasonable that such a preparatory work should be sent forth among the children of men, and it looked consistent to the ancient inspired writers, hence they have left an abundance of testimony on record in this good book (the Bible) concerning this preparatory work.

One of the means which God will use to prepare the way before his second coming is to send angels from heaven with a proclamation, not to benefit a few individuals, not for one nation alone, but to all the inhabitants of our globe, and that too before he comes. Do you want to know where this prediction is recorded? Let me refer you to the fourteenth chapter of the revelations given to St. John on Patmos. Did St. John behold, in vision, the coming of the son of God? He did. How does he describe it in that fourteenth chapter? He said, as you will find by reading the chapter through, that he saw one sitting on a white cloud, having a sharp sickle in his hand. He had reference to the time when Jesus should come in the clouds of heaven; however, before John saw the personage sitting on the cloud, he saw a preparatory work commence, as it is declared in the sixth verse, in which the prophet says—“I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, unto every nation and kindred and tongue and people,” declaring that the hour of God's judgment was come.

Now if that angel does not come and bring the gospel, then the Son of Man will not come; no trumpet will sound and call forth the nations of the righteous from their sleeping tombs; there will be no destroying the wicked as stubble from the face of the earth; no shaking of the heavens and causing the earth to tremble and to remove to and fro. None of these events will transpire if no angel comes, for one is just as certain as the other; and to show that one is to precede the other there must be a time for this everlasting gospel to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people after the angel appears with it. That will take some length of time, however rapidly it may go forth, for the mere preaching of the gospel would be of no benefit, unless there were persons authorized to administer its ordinances. The angel might preach, but who could obey it? No one. It is true that we might repent if we heard the angel proclaim it by his own voice, as he flew from nation to nation and from kingdom to kingdom; and we might also believe in Jesus Christ, but how could we be baptized for the remission of our sins? Would the angel come down from heaven and take every believing penitent person and baptize him himself? How long would it take an angel to go over all the nations and baptize all the penitent believers? It would take ages and ages for him to do it personally. But it is very evident to every one who reflects upon these passages that when that angel comes with the everlasting gospel there will be authority given to man on the earth to administer the ordinances of that gospel, to build up the Christian church again on the earth as it was built in ancient times, a Christian church organized according to the pattern that God has given in the New Testament; a Christian church having apostles in-

spired from heaven; a Christian church with prophets called of God to prophesy future events; a Christian church possessing the gifts and graces of the ancient gospel in all their beauty, power and fullness as they were possessed in ancient times. These works and these ordinances must be administered by man, and not by the angel who brings the gospel. Will that be a preparatory work?

What other preparations are necessary to be made besides the preaching of this gospel to all nations? Supposing that among the nations of the earth there were to be raised up a true Christian church, is there anything particular for that Christian church to do after having received the ordinances of the gospel in order to more fully prepare them for the coming of the Son of God? I answer yes. The Christian churches built up in the four quarters of the earth after the angel comes, will be required to gather from all these nations unto one place. That is something which no Christian denomination believe in, or if they do believe in it they do not practise it, for the members of churches called Christian remain in the respective nations where they receive the truth; it is true that individuals may emigrate, but as churches they do not. But the Scriptures, speaking of the great day of the coming of the Lord, say there is to be a gathering from all the nations of the earth unto one place of those who have taken upon them the name of the Lord Jesus. That great gathering is referred to in the chapter I have quoted from, also in another chapter in which, referring to the downfall of spiritual Babylon, it is declared that there shall be a gathering of the people, and that too by inspiration, by the command of the Almighty; it will not be left to the wisdom of man, but it will be directed by—“Hear ye the word of the Lord,” as declared to John on the Isle of Patmos. He says—“I heard a great voice from heaven saying—‘Come out of her, my people!’” What people? “My people.” Who are God's people? Those who obey the everlasting gospel which the angel brings by authority. “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities;” and now, you who are Saints, you who have obeyed the gospel restored by the angel, come out of her, for the Lord is going to punish great Babylon. How is he going to punish her? By casting her down, and causing her overthrow. After speaking of the bringing of the gospel by an angel, the very next verse says—“There followed another angel.” What, two angels come. Yes, and mark the message of the second one. “There followed another angel, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’”

The description of this fall of Babylon is given in various places in John's revelations. A awful and most terrible judgments will fall upon Mystery Babylon the Great. She is to be punished with plagues of various kinds; a grievous sore will fall upon her people, so much so that they will blaspheme God, but they will not repent of their sins. They are to be punished with having the fountains and rivers turned into blood, and the waters of the great ocean are to become as the blood of a dead man, and every living thing that is therein will die; and one of the last plagues and judgments that will be poured out upon her will be devouring fire, and she will sink as a millstone, and her name will be blotted from under heaven and all that are connected with her.

Before these terrible judgments are sent forth upon the nations of the earth God will save all who receive the everlasting gospel by gathering them to one place, where they can serve him and keep his commandments. He will not merely give them some idea, by reading the Scriptures, that he desires them to gather, but John says there will be a great voice from heaven proclaiming—“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Then there is to be a gathering of the people of God in the latter days? Yes. Do you marvel to see this people coming forth from all the various nations, leaving the homes of their ancestry, the graves of their ancient fathers, leaving their acquaintances and friends and gathering up here into these mountain valleys? Do you see it? Do you marvel at it? Remember, O ye inhabitants of the earth, who are looking upon these things, that you are beholding the fulfillment of prophecy, prophecy spoken by the Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians. Paul saw the gathering; he saw that it would be a new dispensation, a dispensation to come after his day. Let me repeat Paul's words—“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.” Thus you see that all things in Christ are to be gathered together in one. What does this include? Are the inhabitants of heaven to be made one with the inhabitants of the earth that are in Christ? Yes. The dispensation of the fullness of times is to bring about one of the grandest events that our earth has ever experienced—the union of all things in Christ; both in heaven and upon earth. Are the Saints in Christ? As many of you as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ, consequently if you are in Christ, if you live in the dispensation of the fullness of times, you will be required to take part in this great and grand gathering together of those who are on the earth. But how about all things in Christ in heaven, are they to come too? That is what I have been explaining. When Christ comes the inhabitants of heaven will come with him. The spirits of the righteous of all dispensations, who have not already received a resurrection, will then come forth, and when the trump of the archangel shall

sound the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then those spirits which appear in the heavens will take possession of their renewed immortal bodies which will spring forth from the tomb, and they will be with those who are gathered here on the earth. Then the dispensation will be complete—all things in Christ, whether in heaven or on earth, will be gathered in one.

Enquires one—“Do you really think that we poor mortals, frail as we are, with all our imperfections, that have come because of the fall, are going to associate with those high and exalted beings that dwell in the presence of God in the eternal worlds? Are we to be gathered with them?” Yes. Why not be with them? If our hearts are pure as their hearts are pure, if we have received and obeyed the truth, and have been sanctified by it, shall we not have boldness in that day? Or shall we hang down our heads, and shrink with shame, before the face of him who sits upon his throne? If we have received the truth we shall look upon the face of our Redeemer with all the joy that we look upon the face of a kind and benevolent parent here on the earth. There will be no fear, no shrinking, but we shall feel that he is indeed our Redeemer and that we are his sons and his daughters, and that, having obeyed his doctrine, we are prepared to associate with him and to dwell in his presence. Oh, how happy the ancient apostles were when they saw their risen Redeemer! There was no shrinking. They were out fishing on a certain time, and when they had learned that their Redeemer was on the shore, and calling to them, they could not wait for the ship to reach the shore, but they must plunge into the sea, to try and get there as soon as possible. Their Redeemer was there, and instead of shrinking they were eager to behold him once more. Then, do not, for a moment, suppose that the people of God who keep his commandments and live in the latter days, in the great and grand dispensation of gathering, will shrink when the heavens shall unveil the face of the Son of God. They will be prepared to take these resurrected beings by the hand, and they will go forth and salute Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for they are in the kingdom of God. Jesus said, although they were polygamists, that they shall be in the kingdom of God. We shall be very glad, in the day when the heavenly hosts are revealed to men, to take them by the hand and to sit down with them, as Jesus has said—“Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” It will be some pleasure then to be in the company of polygamists, will it not?

Now, as I go along with them after item of the work preparatory to the coming of the Saviour, I want to ask what the belief of this people is, and whether we are or are not fulfilling the word of the Lord which I have quoted? Joseph Smith brought forth the Book of Mormon—the Lord calls it the everlasting gospel, because it is the same gospel which Jesus himself preached to the ancient inhabitants of this continent, and to the people who dwell anciently on the continent of Asia. It was brought forth in these latter days by his power, by an angel sent from heaven, and revealed to this generation. And have missionaries been sent forth? Yes. What for? To carry this Book of Mormon, containing the everlasting gospel, to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. And these missionaries, as far as time would permit, have fulfilled the missions that were given unto them.

We first began to preach this gospel in the little town where this church was organized with six members only, on the 6th day of April, 1830. A few missionaries then began to teach in the neighborhood, next in the county, next in the adjoining county, next in the adjoining States, next in the adjoining Territories, next in British America, and finally across the great ocean among the European nations. Have these missionaries visited and preached to any other people besides those living on the continent of Europe, and those of the United States and the Canadas? Yes. They have preached this same gospel contained in the Book of Mormon on the Islands of the sea, in Australia, New Zealand, the Society Islands, Sandwich Islands—where thousands have received this gospel and been baptized. Missionaries have also carried this everlasting gospel to the northern portions of Europe—Norway, Denmark and Sweden; also into the German States, to Austria, Italy, Switzerland, France, some of the islands of the Mediterranean, to Hindostan, and in fact wherever there has been a sufficient degree of liberty to permit the proclamation of the gospel thither have missionaries, called of God to declare the message of life and salvation to the people, been and proclaimed it.

Wherever we have preached this gospel the word has so been published by command of the Almighty, saying—“Come out, my people, from the nations you now inhabit.” “Where shall we go?” “Go to the place which I have appointed by revelation, by the voice of my servants, by my own voice—to the mountains of the new world, where my kingdom shall be established as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands.” Daniel predicted that, in the last days, the kingdom of God should be established upon the earth, and that, in its commencement, it would be like a little stone cut out of the mountains without hands, but that it would gradually gain power and greatness among the people; and the reason that you have gathered to these mountains from the various nations in which you obeyed the gospel is that you may assist in establishing and building up that kingdom spoken of by Daniel. Not a week has elapsed since some seven or eight hundred, from the northern regions of Europe, arrived in our city. A few days after their arrival we look around and we scarcely notice that there is any addition. Where are

they? Friends have taken them by the hand and invited them to their homes. Any more coming? Yes, numerous hosts are coming. We have sent across the Atlantic ocean between one and two hundred ships, most of them loaded, to the fullest extent that the law would allow, with Latter-day Saints gathering together to one place in fulfillment of the predictions of the ancient prophets.

Says one—“How long will this continue?” Until the people are thoroughly warned. At the present time there are some nations who will not permit any religion to be proclaimed within their borders except that which is established by law. When God shall cast down thrones, which he will soon do; when he shall overturn kingdoms and empires, which time is very near at hand, then other governments will be formed more favorable to religious liberty, and the missionaries of this church will visit those nations. Already we find greater religious liberty advocated in the northern portions of Europe where formerly imprisonment was the penalty of declaring any other religious doctrine than that which was permitted by their laws. Austria, that great Roman Catholic power, containing thirty-one millions of Catholics, is increasing in religious liberty. Spain, which for centuries has persecuted anything but the established religion, where countless martyrs have been tortured and put to death by the so-called “Holy Inquisition,” is at present forming a constitution which proposes to grant a large share of religious liberty. And so we might enumerate what God is doing among these despotic powers, overturning and changing long-established usages and institutions that His servants may go by His own command to deliver the great and last message of the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth preparatory to the coming of his Son.

After the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, which period is set in the mind of God, another scene will open up before the world in the grand panorama of the last days. What is that? The downfall of the Gentile nations. Says one—“Whom do you call Gentiles?” Every nation excepting the literal descendants of Israel. We, the Latter-day Saints, are Gentiles; in other words, we have come from among the Gentile nations, though many of us may have the blood of Israel within our veins. When God has called out the righteous, when the warning voice has been sufficiently proclaimed among these Gentile nations, and the Lord says “It is enough,” he will also say to his servants—“O, ye, my servants, come home, come out from the midst of these Gentile nations, where you have labored and borne testimony for so long a period; come out from among them, for they are not worthy; they do not receive the message that I have sent forth, they do not repent of their sins; come out from their midst, their times are fulfilled. Seal up the testimony among them and bind up the law.” What then? Then the word of the Lord will be—“O, ye, my servants, I have a new commission for you. Instead of going forth to convert the Gentile nations, go unto the remnants of the house of Israel that are scattered in the four quarters of the earth. Go and proclaim to them that the times of their dispersion are accomplished; that the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled; that the time has arrived for my people Israel, who have been scattered for generations in a dark and cloudy day, to gather unto their own homes again, and to build up old Jerusalem on its former heap. And then will commence the gathering of the Jews to old Jerusalem; then the ten tribes in the northern regions, wherever they may be, after having been concealed from the nations for twenty-five hundred years, will come forth and will return, as Jeremiah has said, from the north country. A great company will come, and they will sing in the height of Zion, and “flow together for the goodness of the Lord, for wine and for oil, and for the young of the flock; and their souls shall be as a watered garden and they shall not sorrow any more at all.” What a happy time for them, when they come from their cold quarters in the north! The Jews dispersed among the Gentiles will not come and sing in the height of Zion, or but very few of them, they will go to Jerusalem. Some of them will believe in the true Messiah, and thousands of the more righteous, whose fathers did not consent to the shedding of the blood of the Son of God, will receive the gospel before they gather from among the nations. Many of them, however, will not receive the gospel, but seeing that others are going to Jerusalem they will go also; and when they get back to Palestine, to the place where their ancient Jerusalem stood, and see a certain portion of the believing Jews endeavoring to fulfill and carry out the prophecies they also will take hold and assist in the same work. At the same time they will have their synagogues, in which they will preach against Jesus of Nazareth, “that impostor,” as they call him, who was crucified by their fathers.

After awhile, when tens of thousands of them have gathered and rebuilt their temple, and re-established Jerusalem upon its own heap, the Lord will send forth amongst them a tremendous scourge. What will be the nature of that scourge? The nations that live in the regions round about Jerusalem will gather up like a cloud, and cover all that land round about Jerusalem. They will come into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, east of Jerusalem, and they will lay siege to the city. What then? The Lord will raise up two great prophets, they are called witnesses in the Revelations of St. John. Will they have much power? Yes, during the days of their prophesying they will have power to smite those who undertake to destroy them, and until their testimonies are fulfilled they will be able to keep at bay all those nations besieging Jerusalem, so that they will not have power to take that city. How long will that be? Three and a half years, so says John the Revelator. If any