
Christian Restoration Continues

Part 4: Abandonment and Renewal

As Narrated by Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

Restoring ended when Joseph Smith was killed. His death began a steady loss of light and truth.

The prophecies and covenants of God assured the patriarchal fathers, from Adam to Abraham, that a full restoration would happen.

Joseph worked on a new version of the Bible. Not a translation from Greek and Hebrew, but an inspired, revelatory commentary that added lost material and clarified ambiguous passages. He was commanded to do this work, which was called “the fullness of the scriptures.” The “fullness of the scriptures” was not published during Joseph’s lifetime.

On July 17, 1840, four years before his death, Joseph Smith explained, “God had often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the Church. Said the Lord would cut his work short in righteousness and except the church receive the fullness of the Scriptures that they would yet fall.” Following that warning, there was a mission to raise money to publish scriptures. In October 1840, a letter in the newspaper, *Times and Seasons*, asked for support to publish “the new translation of the Scriptures.” The publication was to include a corrected edition of the Book of Mormon and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. All efforts failed to put the Joseph Smith Translation in print, and Joseph died without it being published.

In January 1841, the Lord commanded a temple be built, but when Joseph was killed in June 1844 it was less than half completed. Without the temple, Joseph Smith could not finish an educational ceremony intended for the temple. Brigham Young gained control of the restoration and admitted the temple rites were incomplete. He said Joseph Smith told him, “Bro Brigham this is not arranged right but we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed[.]”

On January 13, 1856, Brigham Young explained it would require a resurrected Joseph Smith to return before the temple rites could be properly arranged. “After Joseph comes to us in his resurrected body he will more fully instruct us concerning the baptism for the dead and the sealing ordinances.” Young explained, “I tell you there will not be much of this done until Joseph comes.”

After Brigham Young died, his successor, John Taylor explained on October 12, 1883 that the death of Joseph Smith interrupted the restoration, including sorting out and correcting temple ceremonies. Taylor said: “The reason why things are in the shape they are is because Joseph felt called upon to confer all ordinances connected with the priesthood. He felt in a hurry on account of a certain premonition that he had concerning his death, ...Had Joseph Smith lived he would have had much more to say on many of those points which he was prevented from doing by his death.”

Other than the LDS Church, all the splintered restoration groups completely discontinued temple rites. During the 1800s the LDS acknowledged their temple ordinances were unfinished and needed much more for completion. Eventually, they abandoned any idea of finishing temple rites and began claiming they had the “fullness.” Even so, the LDS incomplete rites have been revised, cut, and shortened to remove controversial materials.

If the restoration work is to be completed, it will not happen in any of the existing corporate “Mormon” organizations. They are not capable of continuing the restoration. Moving forward will require believers to acknowledge that the religion has been adrift, and is incomplete, or in other words acknowledge an apostasy.

Continuing the restoration has been left for others who are willing to face the disappointments of history. These others are now working to participate in moving along the unfinished work.