

THE THREE VISITORS' EXPLANATION OF DANIEL CHAPTER 12

The Three Timespans in Daniel 12

The Book of Daniel is filled with cryptic prophecies, most about a series of kingdoms that have afflicted the Lord's people over time. The first kingdom was Babylon. Other kingdoms followed. In his last vision, the Lord commanded the prophet to seal the remaining prophecies in a book. He said, "*Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end*" (Dan 12:4). Daniel's prophecies were already steeped in esoteric symbolism that made them hard to decipher, yet the Lord commanded him to seal the rest in a book that would stay locked until the end.

While the Lord may have revealed more things to Daniel, which the prophet actually placed in a sealed book, the command to seal up the book is more likely the prophecy that a sealed book exists and will be revealed near the end. This conclusion is confirmed by John's revelation. He saw a sealed book that only Jesus could open (Rev 5:1). Isaiah also prophesied about a sealed book, foretelling a time when both a learned man and an unlearned one would confess that they could not read it (Is 29:11-12 KJV¹). Daniel's 12th chapter is a revelation about when the sealed book will be revealed.

That chapter contains three different time periods. Over the two millennia since Daniel prophesied, numerous commentators have advanced interpretations about these three periods. In 2017, three men miraculously appeared to a small group in Brazil. Among them were four men who had seen Moroni. Only months before, the angel had given the golden plates, which Joseph Smith used to translate the Book of Mormon, to one of them, whose name is Mauricio Berger. The other three witnessed the event. They saw Moroni, heard his instructions, and handled the golden plates.

On one occasion, the three visitors taught the meaning of Daniel's three time periods. They explained that each concerned the golden plates and revealed the event that marks the end of each interval. In two cases, they revealed the date on which the timespans terminated and in one, they showed how to calculate it. The miracles surrounding their appearances testify to the divinity of their interpretation. However, their computation is foreign to the traditional Restoration interpretation and appears just as cryptic as Daniel's book, but their conclusions are clear.

The First Timespan in Daniel 12

The first timespan in Daniel's twelfth chapter is mentioned in the vision of three persons, one, who was clothed in linen and standing on the waters of a river, and two other personages, each on opposite river banks. One on a river bank asked the man on the waters, "*How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?*" (Dan 12:6). By asking the question about when the end of these wonders would be, the man was asking when the sealed book would be revealed. Daniel heard the answer: "*It shall be for a time, times, and*

¹ Isaiah's 29th chapter in the Inspired Version is really Nephi's commentary on Isaiah's prophecies, which is also contained in the 11th chapter of 2 Nephi.

an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (Dan 12:7). Daniel's first timespan is "a time, times, and an half."

The time period for the book to remain sealed is the same length that John saw the church hide from the devil in the wilderness: "To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (Rev 12:14). It is also the same period that Daniel's little horn reigns. Daniel said, "He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan 7:25). "Dividing of time" is substituted in this last prophecy for "half a time."

The phrase "time, times and half of time" means "year, two years and half a year." It totals 3 1/2 years. The reason is, "time" in Hebrew can mean a "year." The plural, unless specified, is two. Times means two years and seven times (Lev 26:18-28) means seven years. Similarly, "dividing of times," unless the amount is indicated, specifies half a year. That is why Daniel's prophecy about how long the little horn would reign is the same length of time for the coming forth of the sealed book.

Since the Hebrew calendar contains 360 days, three and a half years equal 1260 days (3.5 X 360 = 1260). John the Revelator confirms this understanding. He not only said that the church would fly into the wilderness to be fed for time, times and half a time, but he also saw that the woman "fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev 12:6 KJV). John's use of both terms for the same event confirms that "time, times, and a half" is the same as 1260 days.

John also "saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev 13:1-2). This creature is the same beast that Daniel saw in a progression of four beasts. He wrote, "I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Dan 7:7). Daniel's first beast was a lion (Dan 7:4). John's beast had the mouth of a lion. Daniel's second beast was a bear (Dan 7:5). John's had the feet of a bear. Daniel's third beast was a leopard (Dan 7:6). John's beast had the appearance of a leopard. These facts help us understand that Daniel's fourth beast is a combination of the previous three. Many Bible commentators have shown how Daniel's fourth beast, which was Rome, had the appearance of the third beast, which symbolized Greece, the feet of the second, which was Persia, and the mouth of the first, which symbolized Babylon.² Those similarities, coupled with the fact that both beasts had ten horns, confirm that the two are the same.

Both prophets saw similar things develop on their respective creatures. John saw that his beast "was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and

² Daniel Macgregor, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Independence, MO; Herald House, 1923) 62.

power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev 13:5-7). The mouth that appeared on John's beast did the same things as Daniel's little horn: "*He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws*" (Dan 7:25). They both spoke against God. They both fought against His saints, and they both reigned for prophetic 1260 days.

The reason that we can conclude that the little horn reigned for the same timespan that the mouth spoke blasphemies is that 42 months equals 1260 days. Since each Hebrew month contains 30 days, 42 months of 30 days equal 1260 days. This conclusion is confirmed by another prophecy containing 42 months. John also revealed that the Gentiles would tread the Holy City under foot: "*But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months*" (Rev 11:2). According to John's revelation, two witnesses bear their testimony for those 42 months, but the prophesied length is given as 1260 days: "*I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth*" (Rev 11:3). The 42 months is the same timespan as the 1260 days.

Daniel's Little Horn

Daniel's prophecies paint a detailed picture about what would happen to Christ's church and its members. The prophet saw four beasts, which represent the succession of four kingdoms: "*These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth*" (Dan 7:17). In a different but related prophecy, Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He saw a statue that was divided into five different parts: 1) a head of gold, 2) a torso of silver, 3) hips and thighs of brass, 4) legs of iron, and 5) feet of clay and iron. The first four parts symbolized four successive kingdoms (Dan 2:39-40). Daniel further revealed that the golden head represented Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon: "*Thou art this head of gold*" (Dan 2:4). History reveals that from the days of King Nebuchadnezzar, four consecutive kingdoms ruled the Jews: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The last, Rome, also persecuted the church that Jesus built and His disciples enlarged.

Rome eventually fell, but it was not conquered by a succeeding empire. Instead, it was invaded by ten barbarian tribes, who each captured part of Rome's territory. The last of those tribes was the Lombards, who left the city in 570 AD so destitute and stripped of wealth that there remained no incentive for others to invade it. The division of Rome by these ten tribes was accurately predicted in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in which the iron legs ended in ten toes. They "*were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.*" Daniel added that these ten kingdoms "*shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay*" (Dan 2:42-43). The division was also foretold in both Daniel's fourth beast and John's beast. Each had ten horns (Dan 7:7; Rev 13:1). Daniel was specifically told that the ten horns represent "*ten kings that shall arise*" (Dan 7:24).

The division of the western portion of the Roman Empire by ten kings left that territory devoid of good government and cohesive oversight. The Bishop of Rome stepped into that void and gradually amassed political sovereignty over the citizens of all ten kingdoms. Daniel foresaw that development. Speaking of the fourth beast, he said, "*It had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn*"

(Dan 7:7-8). After the vision ended, Daniel received the interpretation. He was told, *“The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings”* (Dan 7:24). The Roman Pontiff is the only power that rose after the fall of the Roman Empire. He also spoke against the Most High, made war against the saints, claimed that he could change times and laws, and obtained power over Europe’s citizens and sovereigns. In addition, the Papacy trampled the Holy City underfoot. That ecclesiastical office also pursued the church until it fled into the wilderness, oppressing and dispersing the Lord’s people until they were finally able to flee across the Atlantic to America.

The Papacy’s tyrannical reign would last. Daniel had revealed that the saints *“shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time”* (Dan 7:25), implying that afterward its power over them would be removed. That is exactly what Daniel revealed in his last chapter. He prophesied that the sealed book would be revealed after the wicked one finished scattering them: *“When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished”* (Dan 12:7). These prophecies all state that the Roman Pontiff would reign for 1260 days, disperse the Lord’s people and drive the church into the wilderness, but when he had succeeded in thoroughly scattering them, his power would end and the sealed book would appear.

The Beginning of the First Timespan

The Lord revealed how to interpret prophecies that foretell timespans stated in days. When He ordered Ezekiel to lay on his left side for *“three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel”* (Ezek 4:5), He explained the reason why: *“I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days”* (Ezek 4:50). The Lord was even more clear when He commanded Ezekiel to *“lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year”* (Ezek 4:6). The Lord’s instructions clearly reveal that one day in a prophecy is equal to one year. That revelation helps us understand that 1260 prophetic days represents 1260 years. The Inspired Version confirms this conclusion. When Joseph Smith published the New Translation, he changed the word *“days”* to *“years”* in one place to make the interpretation clear: *“a thousand two hundred and threescore years”* (Rev 12:5).

If we are to accurately discover when the sealed book will be revealed, we must correctly identify when the interval of 1260 years began. Unlike the conquests of Babylon, Persia and Greece by their respective successors, the fall of Rome happened over a number of years. Likewise, the rise of the Papacy took time. This development makes it more difficult to identify the beginning date. We must more closely examine the prophecies that describe Rome’s fall and the emergence of the Roman Pontiff.

Daniel specifically states that the little horn would appear after the Roman Empire had been invaded by ten kings. He adds that the same little horn would speak blasphemies and oppress the saints for 1260 days (Dan 7:25). John agrees. He revealed that the great mouth would speak against God and fight the saints for the same interval (Rev 13:5). We conclude that the beginning of the timespan identified in these prophecies is the division of Rome by ten invading separate kings. The completion of that series of invasions would also precipitate the rise of the Papacy as a supreme power.

History records that the collapse of the Roman Empire happened as ten tribal kings invaded it and captured parts of its territory. The reformers realized how their invasion

fulfilled Biblical prophecy. Sir Isaac Newton, in his analysis of Daniel, identified the ten conquering kingdoms. They were 1) the kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in Spain and Africa; 2) the kingdom of the Suevians in Spain; 3) the kingdom of the Visigoths; 4) the kingdom of the Alans in Gallia; 5) the kingdom of the Burgundians; 6) the kingdom of the Franks; 7) the kingdom of the Britains; 8) the kingdom of the Hunns; 9) the kingdom of the Lombards; and 10) the kingdom of Ravenna.³ Daniel's prophecy added that after Rome was divided by ten kingdoms, the little horn would appear and "*subdue three kings*" (Dan 7:24). The Papacy fulfilled this prophecy when it won control of Ravenna, Lombardia, and Rome. The reformers observed, "*In the eighth century, by rooting up and subduing the Exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the Senate and Dukedom of Rome, he [the pope] acquired Peter's Patrimony out of their dominions; and thereby rose up as a temporal Prince or King, or horn of the fourth beast.*"⁴ Even modern non-religious historians agree that the Lombards, the last kingdom to divide Rome, was broken by "*the rock of the papacy.*"⁵

The Lombards siege began on Rome in 568. After taking everything of value, they left the city in 570. That year corresponds with the rise of the Roman Bishop as the head of the Roman Catholic Church. It marks the beginning of the first timespan. Measuring 1260 years from 570 brings 1830. The Book of Mormon was published in 1830, announcing to the world that it is attached to sealed plates, the same sealed plates that contain the sealed book.

The Rise of the Papacy

While the apostles initially presided after Jesus' ascension, Peter, James, and John appointed James, Jesus' brother, as the head of the church. About 170, Clement of Alexandria reported, "*Peter, James and John, after the Ascension of the Saviour, did not claim pre-eminence because the Saviour had specifically honoured them, but chose James the Righteous as Bishop of Jerusalem.*"⁶ Symeon, the son of Clopas, who was Jesus' uncle, succeeded James,⁷ while "*Justus, one of the vast number of the circumcision,*" followed Symeon.⁸ Hebrew priesthood occupied the bishopric in quick succession, twelve more in all, before the second Jewish revolt, making a total of 15 Jewish bishops of Jerusalem.⁹ In 135, the Roman Emperor Hadrian banned all Jews from both Jerusalem and Palestine, including the holy family. Whatever influence Jesus' family wielded in the church at Jerusalem, it was lost with the banishment of all Jews. In 318, a delegation from the holy family petitioned Silvester, the Bishop at Rome and asked that a descendant of the holy family always head the church: "*Through their chief spokesman Joses (said to be a descendant of Jesus' brother Jude), The Desposyni argued strongly that the Church should rightfully be centred in Jerusalem, not in Rome. They argued that the Bishop of Jerusalem should be a true hereditary Desposynos.*"¹⁰ Instead, the Roman Bishop began to garner authority over the

³ Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel* (Cave Junction, OR: Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, 1991) p 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵ Will Durant, *Story of Civilization, Vol IV, The Age of Faith* (NY, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1950) 452.

⁶ Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 2, 1.2 (NY: Penguin Books, 1989) 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.11, 79.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.35, 97.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4. 5, 107.

¹⁰ Laurence Gardner, *Bloodline of the Holy Grail* (Rockport, MA: Element, 1996) 158.

entire church. In time, two different Roman emperors decreed that the Pope is the sovereign of the church. The first was in 533, when Emperor Justinian named the Roman Bishop the head of all the churches in Christendom. He wrote John II, "*Therefore, We have exerted Ourselves to unite all the priests of the East and subject them to the See of Your Holiness . . . For we do not suffer anything which has reference to the state of the Church, even though what causes the difficulty may be clear and free from doubt, to be discussed without being brought to the notice of Your Holiness, because you are the head of all the Holy Churches.*"¹¹ The decree did not stop the Patriarch of Constantinople from occasionally asserting his preeminence. After all, his city was now the capital of the Empire. For that reason, Emperor Phocas reiterated that decree in 607: "*Whereas the church of Constantinople had claimed to be the first of all the churches, Boniface obtained from the emperor Phocas, that the Romish church, the apostolic seat of the blessed apostle Peter should be the head of all the churches.*"¹²

The two Imperial edicts that decreed the Roman Pontiff to be the head of the church identify the period in which that office emerged as the sole administrative authority in the West and marks the rise of Daniel's little horn and John's blasphemous mouth. The mid-date of that interval is 570, the same year in which the Roman Empire was finally divided among ten kings. It marks the beginning of the 1260 days. Adding 570 and 1260 equals 1830, the date when the Lord restored His church and brought it from the wilderness.

The Papacy's Dominion Curtailed

Just as Daniel prophesied, 1830 also marks the end of the little horn's ability to scatter the Lord's people. By the middle of the 19th century, millions had escaped papal power by gathering to America where its Constitution guaranteed religious freedom. More significant to Daniel's prophecy, the Papacy was losing its temporal power throughout Europe. It began when France confiscated all papal property in November 1789. In 1793, which is 1260 years from Justinian's decree in 533 that began the Pope's rise to absolute power, France officially abolished the Roman Catholic Church during the Reign of Terror, and became a godless nation: "*Roman Catholic churches were burned and thousands of priests, monks and nuns were slain. It was the plague of infidels.*"¹³ Likewise, 1260 years from 607, the second Imperial decree appointing the Pope as head of the church, is 1867. In April of that year, Guiseppe Garibaldi led Italian troops in an invasion of the remaining Papal States, freeing them in a series of victories. "*Thus, the temporal power was vanquished and shut up in Rome.*"¹⁴ Like 570, 1830 is the mid-date of the period when the Papacy lost its temporal power (1793 to 1867). Interestingly, three years later, on September 20, 1870, Italian troops entered Rome and ended over 1200 years of papal political rule altogether. 1830 is also the mid-date between the date when the Pope's temporal dominion began its decline and when it ended.

¹¹ Henry Agyleaus, *The Civil Law, Including the Twelve Tables: The Institutes of Gaius, the Rules of Ulpian, the Opinions of Paulus, the Enactments of Justinian, and the Constitutions of Leo*, Vol. 6 (NY, NY: AMS Press, 1973) 12.

¹² Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History: Ancient and Modern*, Vol.1 (A. H. Maltby: New Haven, CT, 1832) 65.

¹³ Harold Hemenway, *European History Foretold* (Xulon Press: Maitland, FL, 2007) 130.

¹⁴ John Thomas, *The Roman Question or the Fall of the Papacy* (Birmingham, NJ: William H Davis, 1869) 8.

A far more significant curtailment to the Papacy's dominion was the end to the darkness that the apostasy cast over Christendom. It happened on the banks of a river just as Daniel's prophecy foretold. The first of Daniel's timespans was revealed in the answer to one of two people standing on opposite banks of a river. The man standing on the river gave the reply: "*When he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half*" (Dan 12:7). This image elicits John the Baptist baptizing the repentant in the Jordan River to prepare them for Jesus' advent in Judea. That image was repeated on May 15, 1829, when John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey on the banks of the Susquehanna River in answer to their question. He authorized them to first ordain and then baptize each other. Afterward, the Baptist said that "*he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the priesthood of Melchisedec, which priesthood he said should in due time be conferred on us—and that I should be called the first elder, and he the second.*"¹⁵

The angel's promise was fulfilled on April 6, 1830, at the organization of the restored church. After the members unanimously accepted Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey in their callings, the two ordained each other to the Melchisedec priesthood. Joseph wrote, "*I then laid my hands upon Oliver Cowdrey and ordained him an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, after which he ordained me also to the office of an elder of said church.*" Some suppose that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey received the Melchisedec priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John in late Spring 1829, but only a short time before the organization of the church, Joseph testified that the two had not received that priesthood. He said, "*We now became anxious to have that promise realized to us, which the angel that conferred upon us the Aaronic priesthood had given us; viz., that provided we continued faithful we should also have the Melchisedec priesthood, which holds the authority of the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost,*" adding that after prayer in Mr. Whitmer's home "*the Lord came unto us in the chamber, commanding us that I should ordain Oliver Cowdrey to be an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ, and that he also should ordain me to the same office.*"¹⁶ The promise that John the Baptist made on the banks of the Susquehanna River was fulfilled as prophesied by Daniel. 1830 is also the year of the Book of Mormon's publication, fulfilling Daniel's first timespan associated with the sealed book.

The three visitors announced that Daniel's "*time, times, and an half*" terminated on Tuesday, April 6, 1830, beginning the first invitation. Other elders were ordained that same day. They were commissioned to preach the gospel, repeating the same message that John the Baptist declared: "*Repent, repent and prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (D&C 32:2f). As the number of elders increased, the Lord sent them first to the Gentile nations. He said, "*Call upon all nations; firstly upon the Gentiles*" (D&C 108:3a). They invited people to prepare for Jesus' return. As they preached the gospel, they lifted the ensign of that first invitation, which is the Book of Mormon. It contains the fullness of the gospel (D&C 26:2a) and became the standard around which believers could assemble: "*I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me*" (D&C 45:2d).

¹⁵ *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence, MO: 1967) 36, hereinafter notated RLDS CH 1:36.

¹⁶ *Times and Seasons*, Vol 3, No. 22 (September 15, 1842) 915.

The Second Timespan in Daniel 12

The three visitors applied their computations to the second timespan in Daniel's twelfth chapter. That prophecy says, "*From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days*" (Dan 12:11). They declared that this interval ended on April 6, 2007. On that date, Moroni appeared to Mauricio Berger and gave him the golden plates, the interpreters, and the sword of Laban. It began a period of angelic instruction that, among other things, taught the role of the sealed portion. The goal of that angelic tutelage was to prepare a translator, as well as designate three witnesses, who like the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon in 1830, both saw Moroni and handled the plates. The visitors also said that April 6, 2007, is the beginning of the second invitation. Its ensign is the Sealed Book of Mormon, which will be translated in Brazil. The English version will be published in the land of Zion.

The spokesman for the three visitors explained that the "*abomination that maketh desolate*" mentioned in the cited verse refers to the great apostasy: "*It was not long before the great apostasy was instituted, which the prophecy mentions as a desolating abomination.*" That departure from the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by the Lord's apostles was gradual and can be identified in three ways.

The first evidence of a complete apostasy is the appearance of a blasphemous usurper. Daniel prophesied that the "*little horn,*" which refers to the Papacy, would grow so boastful that it would claim to change God's laws: "*He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws*" (Dan 7:25). John the Revelator foretold how he would say sacrilegious profanities: "*He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven*" (Rev 13:6). Paul revealed that he would claim to be God: "*There shall come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*" (2 Thes 2:3-4). These audacious profanities did not occur during the emergence of the Roman Pontiff as the sole governor of Western Civilization, but they eventually happened. Pope Nicholas I had the insolence to say such things. In 863, he wrote the Byzantine Emperor Michael, "*It is evidently enough shown that the Pontiff, whom it is clear was called God by the pious Prince Constantine (which we have related above), cannot be bound nor loosed by the secular power: and it is manifest that God cannot be judged by men.*"¹⁷ In 864, Nicholas wrote the bishops in France, "*Again, if prelates of the church be called and counted of Constantine for gods, I then, being above all prelates, seem by this reason to be above all gods. Wherefore no marvel, if it be in my power to change time and times, to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, yea with the precepts of Christ.*"¹⁸ These two pompous and profane outbursts are one confirmation of an absolute apostasy.

¹⁷ John Harvey Treat, *The Catholic Faith, Or, Doctrines of the Church of Rome Contrary to the Primitive Church* (Nashotah, WI: The Bishop Welles Brotherhood, 1888) 436.

¹⁸ John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, Vol. 4—Part 1 (London: Steeleys, 1856) 159.

Taking Away the Eternal Sacrifice

The English word *apostasy* comes from the Greek word *apostasia*. It appears two places in the Greek New Testament: *“the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses”* (Acts 21:21), where it is translated *“forsake;”* and *“there shall come a falling away first”* (2 Thes 2:3), where it is translated *“falling away.”* It is Strong’s word 646 and is derived from two words, *apo* and *histémi*. Together they mean to *leave a previous standing*.

In the beginning, God commanded Adam and Eve to worship Him. The Bible states, *“He gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God”* (Gen 4:5). They worshiped Him by sacrificing *“the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord”* (Gen 4:5). They passed that form of worship to their children. According to Paul, the Gentiles once *“knew God”* (Rom 1:21), but *“they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”* (Rom 1:21-22). Their apostasy caused them to worship and serve *“the creature more than the Creator”* (Rom 1:25).

The Hebrews continued the true worship of God and sacrificed according to the Mosaic Law. When Jesus perfected those sacrifices by His infinite and eternal sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, He fulfilled the need for people to continue to offer liturgical sacrifices. Instead, they worshiped the heavenly Father in the name of their eternal sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Jacob taught, *“They believed in Christ, and worshipped the Father in his name; and also, we worship the Father in his name”* (Jac 3:5). Those who worship the Father in Jesus’ name come without outward ritual, but with inward gratitude. It is not a temporal observance, but a spiritual adoration. Jesus explained, *“The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. For unto such hath God promised his Spirit. And they who worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:25-26). Just as the ancient Gentiles *“changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man”* (Rom 1:23), the apostasy that overtook Christianity changed the spiritual worship of the heavenly Father into the adoration of relics and images.

Paul revealed that the apostasy, or *“falling away”* as he called it, could not happen as long as the Roman Empire remained. He prophesied, *“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, and he it is who now worketh, and Christ suffereth him to work, until the time is fulfilled that he shall be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed.”* (2 Thes 2:7-8). Tertullian explained what the early Christians understood Paul to mean: *“We know that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth—in fact, the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes—is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman empire.”*¹⁹ When the Roman Empire was finally taken out of the way through its division by ten kingdoms, no power remained to restrain the iniquity that was already afoot during the lives of the apostles. Once that Empire vanished, Satan could elevate one ecclesiastical ruler who would both change true worship and boast himself as God.

In 590, only 20 years after the tenth invading kingdom conquered Rome, Pope Gregory instituted thirty masses for Justus, a sick and disobedient monk who subsequently died. Believing that the ascetic would remain in purgatory until fully punished, he conceived the ritual, saying, *“We must come by charity to his aid, and as far as possible help*

¹⁹ Tertullian, *Apology*, Ch. 33 as quoted in Ante-Nicene Father, Vol 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 43, hereinafter notated ANF 3:42.

*him to escape this chastisement.”*²⁰ After the thirtieth mass, Justus reportedly appeared, saying that he had been released from purgatory. The claimed vision precipitated the belief that the Mass dismissed sins. Five years later, Gregory rebuked a woman who disbelieved that the bread and wine were transformed into the Savior’s body during the Mass. Immediately thereafter, the Pope claimed that a miracle changed some of the host in his possession into flesh and blood.²¹ His testimony propagated the belief that each Mass sacrificed Christ’s body and blood for people’s sins. By the end of Gregory’s pontificate in 604, the Mass had been canonized as a recurrent sacrifice for sins. Today, the Catholic Catechism teaches, *“Each time Mass is offered, the Sacrifice of Christ is repeated. A new sacrifice is not offered, but by divine power, one and the same sacrifice is repeated . . . In the Mass Christ continues to offer Himself to the Father as He did on the cross.”*²²

The sublime news that Jesus gave an infinite and eternal sacrifice that paid the demands of God’s justice for the sins of each and every person was replaced with the presumption that any priest’s pronouncement sacrificed bread and wine, no longer emblems, but actual flesh and blood, for the sins of people. The introduction of the Mass by Pope Gregory changed the true worship of the Father by replacing the infinite, eternal, and last sacrifice of Jesus’ death on the cross with a finite, temporary, and repeated liturgical rite. As a result, when the Roman Pontiff Gregory I, introduced the Mass as a repeatable sacrifice for sins, he took away the daily sacrifice of the Lamb, which in Mosaic times symbolized Jesus’ atoning death on the cross. This was a second confirmation of a complete apostasy.

The Worship of the Dead

The third evidence of an absolute apostasy is the worship of dead people, especially the adoration of their images or statues. That sacrilegious observance began in ancient times. Hermes Trismegistus, who lived in Egypt about the time of King Solomon, reported, *“Because our ancestors went far astray in the conception of the gods, on account of their lack of faith and neglect of divine worship and true religion, they invented the art of creating gods. They also brought in a power derived from the nature of the universe as a supplement to this technique, suitable for their purpose, and by this addition (since they could not create souls) they called on the souls of angels or demons and made them inhere in sacred images and divine mysteries, so by their means the idols could have the power of doing good or inflicting harm.”*²³ Their images and statues became the idols and false gods that shrouded the post-diluvian world in spiritual darkness. That is why Apostle Paul exclaimed, *“The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God”* (1 Cor 10:20). John foresaw a time when apostate Christians would worship idols, even refusing to repent *“that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk”* (Rev 9:20).

The veneration of dead people began its invasion of Christianity during the oppressive reign of Emperor Decius (249-251). The persecution in Egypt grew so severe that thousands fled to the deserts, claiming to martyr their appetites instead of being

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_Masses.

²¹ <http://sspx.org/en/news-events/news/miraculous-mass-st-gregory-great-4571>.

²² Dave Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1994) 369.

²³ Augustine, *City of God* (NY, NY: Penguin Books, 1981) 334.

martyred for their testimony of Jesus. Strangely, people overlooked the cowardliness that motivated these ascetics and praised their self-immolation. The anchorites who survived their austere life received the same adoration from Christians as the martyrs. Some believed that their prayers, or even their discarded objects, bestowed relief and cures. A half-century later when Diocletian's persecution broke out, Christians began praying in the cemeteries, *"for avoiding the danger of the persecution, and for want of Churches, which were all thrown down."*²⁴ They particularly valued the tombs of martyrs and ascetics. Emperor Julian's oration against Christians complained, *"You have filled the whole world with tombs and sepulchres, and yet in your scriptures it is nowhere said that you must grovel among tombs and pay them honour;"* adding, *"If, then, Jesus said that sepulchres are full of uncleanness, how can you invoke God at them?"*²⁵ His complaint excited the heathens to *"demolish the sepulchre of John the Baptist in Phœnicia, and burn his bones."* Christians gathered what remains they could salvage and sent them *"to Athanasius, who hid them in the wall of a Church; foreseeing by a prophetic spirit, as Ruffinus tells us, that they might be profitable to future generations."*²⁶ In time, other bishops began placing the bones of the martyrs in their churches. *"Emperor Constantius began this practice about the year 359, causing the bodies of Andrew the Apostle, Luke and Timothy, to be translated into a new Church at Constantinople."* Soon, the search for bones or their fragments, as well as relics of the martyrs, some of which were only remotely attached to them, were distributed throughout Christendom.

As relics grew scarce, Christians began creating images of them. They regarded them the same way that the pagans deemed their depictions of the gods. The heathens *"imagined that, after the forms of consecration, the invisible power of the god, to whom any image was dedicated, was brought to reside in it, and to entitle it to the same respect as if it had been the god himself in person. At length, therefore, Christians came to be idolaters in the same gross sense in which the Heathens had ever been so; being equally worshippers both of dead men and of their images."*²⁷

The Papacy Champions Icons

Some priests resisted the growing trend toward idolatry, but Gregory I, who took office in 592, became the first Pope to encourage their use: *"When Serenus, bishop of Marseilles . . . not only ordered that no person should fall down before them, or pay homage, but that they should be removed from the churches of his diocese, Gregory disapproved of his conduct, praising his zeal, but blaming him for breaking the images."*²⁸ A century later, Pope Constantine became the first pontiff to openly endorse the veneration of images. In 714, he approved the image of the Mother of God that Egwin the Monk set up in his church after purportedly seeing a vision: *"The matter was debated; and brought before the Pope, in his See Apostolic: there, Egwin was sworn to the truth of his vision; thereupon, Pope Constantine*

²⁴ Newton, 207.

²⁵ Julian the Apostate, *Against the Galileans*: remains of the 3 books, excerpted from Cyril of Alexandria as quoted at http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/julian_apostate_galileans_1_text.htm#138.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 125

²⁷ Joseph Priestly, *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, (London: The British and Foreign Unitarian Association, 1871) 126.

²⁸ Priestly, 126.

*sent his Legate Boniface into England, who called a Council at London; wherein, after proof made of Egwin's visions, there was an act made for image worship.”*²⁹

While image worship invaded the western part of the Empire, it was better resisted in the East. Philippicus Bardanes seized the throne at Constantinople in 711. It was during a 20-year span of acute instability. He opposed the adoration of images and deposed the orthodox patriarch, Cyrus of Constantinople, installing John VI, also an opponent of icon worship. The new emperor also tried to remove images from the Vatican. He testified, “*As I perceived the people fast verging to the worship of images, I sent to Rome a mandate to remove all images of that nature from places of worship. The prisoner, who then went by the name of Constantine, the Universal Bishop, immediately opposed my decree, ordered six pictures of council to be placed in the porch of St Peter's, assembled a council at Rome, and condemned me as an apostate.*”³⁰ King James I reported, that meanwhile, the Lombards invaded Italy and left the Papacy with only the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Duchy of Rome. He added that Constantine condemned Bardanes to reassert his authority in the West: “*Pope Constantine grips this occasion whereon to ground his greatnesse, and shake off the yoke of the Emperour his Lord, Undertakes against Philippicus the cause of Images: by a Council declares the Emperour Heretique.*”³¹

The fight over venerating images took a more aggressive turn only a few years later when Leo III successfully attacked Constantinople. He forced the abduction of Theodosios III and became Emperor in 717. His conquest ended 20 years of severe political instability and saved the empire from extinction. He strengthened the military and rebuilt administrative networks, but his most striking legislative reforms concerned Christianity. He issued a series of edicts between 726 and 729 against worshipping images. Most clergy openly resisted his decrees, but political reality required them to conform. The Islamic caliphates, which were a constant threat on the southern border, abhorred image worship. In 721, Caliph Yezid II had issued an edict for his realm requiring all images and pictures to be removed from tolerated churches.³² An internal quarrel over icons in the Byzantine Empire would not have only destabilized it. It would have reignited Islamic fanaticism. Pope Gregory II saw it as an attack on proper worship and opposed Leo's iconoclastic efforts. He wrote, “*How can they love Christ who insult the visible effigies of his divine person? Do not they who dishonour the image dishonour him who that image represents?*”³³ Gregory also summoned two councils at Rome, one in 730 and the other in 731, to anathematize and excommunicate those who opposed worshipping images. The citizens in Ravenna supported the Pope and revolted against Leo in 727. The Emperor sent a large fleet, but it was destroyed in a violent storm, allowing the Exarchate of Ravenna to effectively detach from the Empire. The conflict over the worship of images was threatening a fast and irreversible division.

²⁹ Joseph Hall, *The Work of Joseph Hall, Vol 9—Polemical Works* (London: C. Whittingham, 1808) 262.

³⁰ Reverend W. Gregory, *By Special Commission: The Trial of Antichrist* (Dublin: P. Dixon Hardy and Sons, 1844) 42.

³¹ King James I, *The Political Works of James I* (Union, N.J.: Lawbook Exchange, 2002) 185.

³² Thomas Greenwood, *Cathedra Petri: A Political History of the Great Latin Patriarchate*, Vol. 2 (London: Thickbroom Brothers, 1859) 468.

³³ *Ibid.*, 471.

The Little Horn

Daniel prophesied that the little horn “*shall subdue three kings*” (Dan 7:24). The Papacy’s conquest of three kingdoms did not happen immediately after the division of the Empire when the Pope was rising as the sole governor of Rome and establishing the Papacy as the head of the church. It waited for almost two centuries and required the help of the Franks. That unholy alliance created the second Roman Empire.

Clovis united the Franks under his rulership, establishing the Merovingian dynasty. He converted to Christianity and was baptized on Christmas Day, 508. The entire Frankish kingdom quickly converted. In return, the church agreed that “*a new ‘holy empire’ would be established under the Merovingians.*”³⁴ Clovis’ descendants ruled the Franks until the death of Dagobert II. By then, the Merovingians came to believe that they were not just the descendants of the Desposyni, but literal descendants of Jesus, having the inherent right to Christendom’s sovereign.

Pepin the Fat, the powerful Mayor of Heristal, opposed Dagobert. On December 21, 679, one of Pepin’s men impaled King Dagobert with a lance during a hunt, which assassination the Church at Rome quickly approved.³⁵ Pepin received rulership of the Franks in Austrasia. His son, Charles Martel, secured the support of all the Franks with a victory over the invading Islamists in 732, establishing the Carolingian dynasty. Charles Martel died in 741 and his son, Pepin the Short, succeeded him.

In 752, the Lombards, pretending to favor the Pope, took the Exarchate of Ravenna. The Pope expected the Lombards to give the realm to him, but the Lombards kept it for themselves. Pope Stephen III persuaded Pepin the Short to force the Lombards to give Ravenna and Pentapolis to him. The Pope’s request angered Aistulphus, King of the Lombards. He attacked Rome. Pepin besieged the Lombards and forced them to surrender the kingdom to the Pope: “*The keys were sent to Rome, and laid upon the confession of St. Peter, that is, upon his tomb at the high altar.*”³⁶ Thus, the Roman Pontiff gained Ravenna as a perpetual possession, which was the first kingdom that the little horn subdued.

In 773, the Lombards again invaded the Pope’s countries. Pope Adrian asked Charlemagne, Pepin’s son to protect him. Charlemagne attacked and conquered the Lombards, not only restoring the countries that had been taken from the Pope, but granting him lordship over the kingdom of the Lombards. In return, the Pope made Charlemagne *Patricius*. That title gave Charlemagne and his successors the authority to confirm the elections of all Popes thereafter. “*This kingdom of the Lombards was the second kingdom which fell before the little horn,*”³⁷

Leo III became Pope in 796. A few years later, he sent Charlemagne the golden keys of the Confession of Peter and the banner of the city of Rome, a subtle request for the king’s help in subduing Rome’s senate and citizenry. In a misunderstanding around the reasons for the gift, some of the clergy accused Pope Leo of crimes. Rome’s citizens “*seized him, stript him of his sacerdotal habit, and imprisoned him in a monastery.*”³⁸ In 800, Charlemagne came to Rome with France’s nobles and bishops and presided over a council

³⁴ Gardner, 173

³⁵ Ibid., 223.

³⁶ Newton, 79.

³⁷ Ibid., 80.

³⁸ Ibid., 81.

of Italian and French Bishops. The council refused to hear the Pope's accusers. In an attitude that foreshadowed Nicholas' blasphemous claim 60 years later, it declared, "*He who was the supreme judge of all men, was above being judged by any other than himself.*"³⁹ Leo proclaimed his innocence and was acquitted. On Christmas Day, the people and Senate voted Charlemagne their Emperor: "*The Pope crowned him, and anointed him with holy oil, and worshipped him on his knees after the manner of adoring of the old Roman Emperors.*"⁴⁰ That coronation fulfilled the Roman Church's agreement to establish a new empire among the Carolingians and conferred on them the title of Emperor, which had been the exclusive title of Roman Emperors, who were still ruling in Constantinople. It also established the Holy Roman Empire, by which the Papacy could enforce its decrees in the West.

Charlemagne did not reign in Rome, but bestowed the city and the Duchy on the Pope. This is the third kingdom that the little horn subdued. Sir Isaac Newton concluded, "*Now the Senate and people and principality of Rome I take to be the third King the little horn overcame, and even chief of the three . . . This city was the Metropolis of the old Roman Empire represented in Daniel by the fourth beast; and by subduing the Senate and people and Duchy, it became the Metropolis of the little horn of that Beast, and completed Peter's Patrimony, which was the kingdom of that horn.*"⁴¹

Completing the Great Apostasy

In 858, Michael, the Byzantine Emperor, banished Ignatius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, "*to the Island of Terebinthus*" and "*put Photius in his Place.*"⁴² The Patriarch had refused Michael's order to confine the Emperor's mother and sister to a nunnery. Ignatius appealed to Pope Nicholas I, asking him "*to restore Ecclesiastical Discipline, and wholly suppress the Remains of the Sect of the Iconomachians.*"⁴³ Iconomachians, or iconoclasts, refer to people who advocate breaking and eliminating Christian icons and images. The fight between the Pope, Emperor, and Patriarch took a series of turns during the next eight years. Michael even sent troops to invade Rome and execute Nicholas, but a storm destroyed his fleet. The Emperor also ordered the Kingdom of Ravenna to attack Rome, but the Italians, resenting the decree, rebelled: "*The people of Rome, Campania, Ravenna and Pentapolis, with the cities under them, revolted and laid violent hands upon the magistrates.*"⁴⁴ The citizens of Rome pledged to defend the Pope with their lives: "*The Romans revolted absolutely from the Greek Emperor, and took an oath to preserve the life of the Pope, to defend his state, and be obedient to his authority in all things.*"⁴⁵ As a result, the Papacy remained the only cohesive temporal administrator in the West. It was during that time, in 863, that Pope Nicholas wrote the Byzantine Emperor Michael, stating that he was above all gods and could not be judged by any man. The next year, in 864, he repeated that same claim to the Bishops of France in another dispute, adding the prophetically fulfilling pronouncement: "*Wherefore no marvel, if it be in my power to change time and times, to alter*

³⁹ Newton, 82.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 82-83.

⁴¹ Ibid., 84-85.

⁴² Lewis-Elles Du Pin, *The History of the Church*, Vol. 3 (London: Bernard Lintot, 1724) 9.

⁴³ Ibid., 9

⁴⁴ Newton, 77.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 77-78.

*and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, yea with the precepts of Christ.”*⁴⁶ The apostasy had become complete. The Papacy had subdued three kingdoms and boasted that he could “*change times and laws*” (Dan 7:25), all in an effort to sanction the pagan practice of worshipping images.

The fall of the Roman Empire, which the Lombards finished in 570, opened the way for the Papacy to rise as Paul’s “*man of sin*” (2 Thes 2:3-4). Almost immediately, it replaced the eternal sacrifice that Jesus wrought for sins and instituted the Mass, a continual, repetitive and liturgical sacrifice. Just a few years later, it began endorsing the worship of dead people and their images. In 713, the Papacy sanctioned image worship and, after a 150-year dispute, reached the pinnacle of insolence by claiming to be God, completing the apostasy by 864. It was during that same time that the Papacy subdued three kingdoms as Daniel prophesied, established a second Roman Empire, which lasted until 1806, and bestowed the title of Emperor on its king.

The middle year of the interval of the Pope’s rise as the “*man of sin*” is 717. $(570 + 864)/2 = 717$. That is the same year that Leo III obtained the Imperial throne and began his attack against icons. That assault motivated the Papacy to openly advocate the worship of dead people, leading the Papacy to eventually claim that it was above all other people or gods and was, in fact, as God. Measuring 1290 prophetic days, or 1290 years, from 717 gives 2007 as the end of the second prophetic time period when the second part of Mormon’s golden plates was revealed.

The Third Timespan in Daniel 12

The third timespan is 1335 years. Daniel said, “*Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days*” (Dan 12:12). The three visitors did not interpret this interval, but only said that at its end, Jesus will appear in His Temple and read the sealed book.

John saw Jesus open the sealed book: “*I saw in the right hand of him that sits on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals*” (Rev 5:1). No one in heaven or earth was able to open the book, causing John to weep: “*One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof*” (Rev 5:5). The Lion of Judah is Jesus, which fact was confirmed when John next saw “*a Lamb as it had been slain*” (Rev 5:6). He took the sealed book because He was the only one worthy of opening it. As Jesus opened the seals, John saw the events that would transpire on earth until the end of time.

Nephi testified that he saw the things that John beheld: “*The things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write, are many things which thou hast seen; and behold, the remainder shalt thou see*” (1N 3:246-147). Afterward, the Lord added, “*Also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel*” (1N 3:249-250). Apparently, others who lived before Nephi had seen all things from the beginning until the end. More important, they had recorded them in a sealed book. Later, Nephi explained, “*For the book shall be sealed by the power of God, and the revelation which was sealed, shall be kept in the book until the own due time of*

⁴⁶ John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, Vol. 4—Part 1 (London: Steeleys, 1856) 159.

the Lord, that they may come forth: for, behold, they reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof” (2N 11:130).

The brother of Jared was one person to whom the Lord revealed all things. Moroni wrote, *“When the Lord had said these words, he shewed unto the Brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and the Lord withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth” (Eth 1:90).* The Lord told him, *“Write these things and seal them up, and I will shew them in mine own due time unto the children of men” (Eth 1:92).* That book was discovered by Nephites and given to King Mosiah, who translated them. Moroni wrote them in the plates that he prepared: *“I have written upon these plates the very things which the Brother of Jared saw; and there never was greater things made manifest, than that which was made manifest unto the Brother of Jared; wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me to write them; and I have written them. And he commanded me that I should seal them up” (Eth 1:98-99).* Moroni included the two interpreter stones: *“He also hath commanded that I should seal up the interpretation thereof; wherefore I have sealed up the interpreters, according to the commandment of the Lord” (Eth 1:99).* That sealed book was included in the plates that Moroni gave to Joseph Smith in 1827 and, 180 years later, to Mauricio Berger in 2007.

The sealed book cannot be opened except by Jesus. According to the three visitors, the Savior will read it in the Temple, which is to be built on the spot in Independence, Missouri that Joseph Smith and seven others dedicated on August 3, 1831.⁴⁷ Those words will resound from the housetops. Nephi testified, *“The day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed, shall be read upon the housetops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ; and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be, even unto the end of the earth” (2N 11:131-132).* The Book of Mormon adds, *“Then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John, be unfolded in the eyes of all the people” (Eth 1:113).* Whether the things that John prophesied play out as the sealed book is read or are merely disclosed to the hearers is not clear, but those who are present will be blessed. They will know that the entire course of history has been orchestrated by the universe’s architect, the purpose of which is to bring forth the kingdom of God on earth over which He can reign in peace and righteousness.

Because the three visitors gave no clue by which one can ascertain the beginning date for calculating the third timespan, the date for the opening of the sealed book remains unknown. All that we can conclude is that those gathered there must be pure in heart: *“In that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the Brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the Brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are” (Eth 1:101).* That purification requires the unification of the saints, the establishment of the holy city, and the building of the Temple. The second invitation is the beginning of those events. Its ensign is the revelation and translation of the preface to the sealed book, which is entitled the Sealed Book of Mormon, the purpose of which is to teach the saints how to build up Zion in righteousness according to Jesus’ teachings to the Nephites. Those who exercise faith in Jesus and His teachings will be sanctified. They will also repeat the

⁴⁷ RLDS Church History 1:209.

conditions that the Nephites enjoyed, *“There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God”* (4N 1:17-19).