



# The Gospel Doctrine Class



Doctrine & Covenants - Lesson 3

I Had Seen A Vision

*“After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God.” (Joseph Smith History 1:15)*

## Joseph Smith—History 1:1–26

*A study of this lesson will help us strengthen our testimonies of the First Vision and of Joseph Smith’s calling as the prophet through whom God restored the fulness of the gospel to the earth.*

John A. Tvedtnes: "In view of the evidence from the ancient texts ... it seems clear that the general apostasy in the early Church was the result of individual apostasy by dissident Christians who not only rejected the Lord's chosen servants, but sometimes set themselves up in their place. With the passing of the apostles and other recognized authorities of the early Church, these rebellious individuals filled the void and brought their own opinions, rather than the Lord's revealed truth, into the Church." (Rejection of Priesthood Leaders as a Cause of the Great Apostasy, Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research)

President Joseph Fielding Smith: "This condition also led to the universal belief, which the world holds even now, that the canon of scripture is full and there is to be no more scripture, notwithstanding the Lord has revealed through his servants that revelation is to continue." (Essentials In Church History, p8)

John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism said: "It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries.... From this time they almost totally ceased.... The Christians had no more of the spirit of Christ than the other heathens." (quoted in The Great Apostasy, p161-162)

President Hugh B. Brown: "The Church of England and other Protestant churches frankly admit the fact of the Apostasy. Our question is, if the 'Mother Church' was without divine authority or spiritual power, how could her children derive from her the right to officiate in the things of God?" (The Abundant Life, p97)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "Beginning in the 14th century, the Lord began to prepare those social, educational, religious, economic, and governmental conditions under which he could more easily restore the gospel for the last time." (Mormon Doctrine, p717)

Elder James E. Talmage said that the Renaissance was not a chance occurrence, but rather "a development predetermined in the Mind of God to illumine the benighted minds of men in preparation for the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was appointed to be accomplished some centuries later." (Jesus the Christ, p749)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote that "the Protestant churches of Europe freed themselves from the yoke of Rome, only to create their own state churches, which in turn compelled all nationals to worship as decreed by the particular brand of Protestantism that prevailed in their nation. There was no religious freedom as such, nor could there be as long as the civil law dictated forms and systems of worship" (Millennial Messiah, p93)

Elder Russell M. Ballard: "God inspired the earlier explorers and colonizers of America and the framers of the Constitution of the United States to develop a land and governing principles to which the gospel could be restored." (Ensign, Nov 1994, p66)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "America was discovered, colonized, and made into a great nation so that the Lord would have a proper place both to restore the gospel and from which to send it forth to all other nations. As a prelude to his coming, and so the promised work of restoration would roll forward, the foundations of the American nation were laid in the days of the Renaissance and the Reformation." (Millennial Messiah, p93)

President Joseph Fielding Smith: "It was necessary, therefore, that one should be chosen and clothed with power from the Father to re-establish the Church of Jesus Christ on the earth. In choosing a representative to stand at the head of this 'great and marvelous work about to come forth unto the children of men,' the Lord did not select one who was versed in the learning and traditions of the world." (Essentials In Church History, p20)

## Next Week’s Reading Assignment

Joseph Smith—History 1:27–65;  
D&C 3; 5; 10; 17; 20:5–15; 84:54–62;  
Our Heritage, pages 5–10