

It is true they were rebellious and ignorant, and it is true they were self-willed, and many of them were very corrupt; it is true they could not endure the light of the blessings of the Gospel; and it is also true that when God would have made of them a kingdom of priests they could not receive that priesthood, nor be governed by its influence. He then took from them the Melchizedek Priesthood, leaving them the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, because they would not and were not competent to magnify the duties of the greater, and of that they were necessarily deprived. What then? God did the best he could with them, as he has done with every nation and every people; he, however, sent prophets among them from time to time.

Now we will pass on. What was the message that Jesus came to proclaim to the people? A message of destruction? A message of death? A message of condemnation? No, no; it was a message of glad tidings and great joy to all peoples. And what did he tell his disciples to go and preach? Destruction to all people? No; his commission to them was: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Where? To all the world. And what was the nature of that Gospel? Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, which would place men in a position whereby they could have communication with God their heavenly Father, having a hope blooming with immortality and eternal life that entered within the veil, whither Christ their forerunner had gone. Hence it was a message of mercy, salvation and exaltation to all people who would receive it.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." If they were condemned, if they suffered the wrath of God, it was not because they had not life and salvation held out to them; it was because they rejected that life and salvation through the preaching of his word and the atonement of his only begotten Son. Was there anything injurious in this? No, nothing of the kind. It was in the interests of humanity; it was for the welfare of the world; it was to teach man, through those heavenly principles which he had communicated, the laws of God, to put them in possession of those rich treasures of eternal life, opening the kingdom of heaven to the believer who would obey his laws and be governed by them. This is the message that God has always proclaimed to the people.

When Joseph Smith came, what did he preach? Just the same as all the others had done. Was it because of any peculiar philosophy, or any remarkable intelligence that he had in and of himself in the first place to comprehend those principles that he revealed? No. It is true that he was a chosen instrument of the Almighty for that purpose; it is true that being one of the seed of Abraham, that peculiar blessing belonging to him. It is true that Abraham in former years through his genealogy was made acquainted with the rights pertaining to the priesthood, and that Joseph Smith had those rights in common with Abraham, being one of his seed. And it is true that he was selected for this purpose; but until the Lord made himself known unto him and revealed his purposes, he knew nothing about the things of