

MODERN PROPHETS AND CONTINUING REVELATION

Modern apostles and prophets are a distinctive characteristic of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Church members view senior Church leaders – Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and the presidents of the Church that followed - as prophets of God in the same way they view Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and the apostles in the day of Jesus Christ. Thomas S. Monson is the current president and prophet of the Church.

Members believe The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a restoration of the Church originally established by Jesus Christ during His mortal lifetime. Part of that restoration includes living prophets and apostles. Along with modern prophets comes continuing revelation and additional scripture. Joseph Smith is perhaps best known for his translation of the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ and for laying the foundation of the Church in the 19th century. Successive presidents of the Church since then have made their own distinctive contributions.

In a recent General Conference address, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said “Some Christians, in large measure because of their genuine love for the Bible, have declared that there can be no more authorized scripture beyond the Bible. In thus pronouncing the canon of revelation closed, our friends in some other faiths shut the door on divine expression that we in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hold dear: the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the ongoing guidance received by God’s anointed prophets and apostles. Imputing no ill will to those who take such a position, nevertheless we respectfully but resolutely reject such an

unscriptural characterization of true Christianity ... One of the arguments often used in any defense of a closed canon is the New Testament passage recorded in Revelation 22:18 ... However, there is now overwhelming consensus among virtually all biblical scholars that this verse applies only to the book of Revelation, *not* the whole Bible ... The fact of the matter is that virtually every prophet of the Old *and* New Testament has added scripture to that received by his predecessors. If the Old Testament words of Moses were sufficient ... then why, for example, the subsequent prophecies of Isaiah or of Jeremiah, who follows him? To say nothing of Ezekiel and Daniel, of Joel, Amos, and all the rest. If one revelation to one prophet in one moment of time is sufficient for *all* time, what justifies these many others? ... Continuing revelation does not demean or discredit existing revelation. The Old Testament does not lose its value in our eyes when we are introduced to the New Testament, and the New Testament is only enhanced when we read the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.”

Belief in prophets and apostles at the head of the Church does not mean, however, that members blindly follow their leaders. While the prophet of God receives revelation and inspiration to guide the Church as a whole, revelation flows at every level, including to the leaders of congregations and to individual families and members. In fact, individual members are expected to seek that kind of divine guidance to help them in their own lives, in their responsibilities in the Church and even in temporal pursuits, including their occupations. Members are also expected to prayerfully seek their own “testimony” or conviction of the principles their leaders teach them .