

THE GREAT APOSTASY & RESTORATION: Why Prophets Are Essential

I. GOD ALWAYS WORKS THROUGH PROPHETS

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7)

Biblical Pattern: Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus Christ, the Apostles—God always calls prophets to receive and deliver revelation. **When prophets die without replacement, revelation ceases, and apostasy follows.**

II. THE BIBLE PROPHECIES APOSTASY

1. The "Falling Away" (2 Thess 2:1-3)

"Let no one deceive you... For that day [Second Coming] will not come, unless the rebellion [apostasia] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed." (ESV)

Apostasia (ἀποστασία): Abandonment of the faith. Paul says Christ's return cannot happen until the apostasy occurs.

2. Wolves Among the Flock (Acts 20:29-30)

"I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things." (ESV)

→ Apostasy begins after the apostles die, from within the Church.

3. Turning from Truth to Myths (2 Tim 4:3-4)

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine... they will turn away from... the truth and wander off into myths." (ESV)

→ Greek philosophy (Trinity), lost ordinances (baptism for the dead), doctrinal corruption.

4. False Teachers (2 Peter 2:1-3)

"But false prophets also arose... just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies."

III. THE APOSTASY ACTUALLY HAPPENED

Evidence 1: Loss of Apostolic Authority

When apostles died (64-100 AD), were they replaced? NO.

- Bishops succeeded apostles but did not hold the same keys
- Bishops had local authority only; apostles had universal authority
- Acts 1:15-26: Apostles replaced Judas—showing Quorum of Twelve should continue

"The bishops were not apostles... only held authority over their local congregations. Unlike the apostles, the bishops' jurisdiction was very limited." (Saints Unscripted)

Evidence 2: Lost Doctrines

A. Deification/Theosis (Becoming Like God):

"He has granted to us... promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4)

Early Church: Athanasius: "God became man so that man might become God." Irenaeus, Origen, Gregory taught deification. **Now neglected in Western Christianity.**

B. Baptism for the Dead:

"Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised... why are people baptized on their behalf?" (1 Cor 15:29)

Paul mentions it without condemnation. Tertullian (c. 155-220) accepted the practice. **Now abandoned by mainstream Christianity. LDS restored it.**

C. Nature of God (Three Separate Beings):

- Jesus's baptism: Father (heaven), Son (water), Holy Spirit (dove)—three locations (Matt 3:16-17)
- Stephen saw Jesus at God's right hand (Acts 7:55-56)—two beings
- Trinity created 300+ years later using Greek philosophy (Nicaea 325, Constantinople 381)

Evidence 3: Lost Church Organization

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists... until we all attain to the unity of the faith." (Eph 4:11-14)

→ **Have Christians attained "unity"? No—33,000+ Protestant denominations. Therefore, apostles/prophets should still exist.**

IV. THE CATHOLIC PROBLEM

Catholic Claim: Apostolic Succession

Unbroken line of bishops from apostles preserves authority and doctrine.

Why It Fails:

1. **Bishops ≠ Apostles:** Bishops had local authority only; apostles held keys for entire Church + received revelation
2. **Massive Doctrinal Corruption:** If succession preserved truth, how did doctrine change?
 - Trinity (Greek philosophy, not biblical)
 - Lost baptism for the dead
 - Lost deification doctrine
 - Infant baptism (not apostolic)
 - Celibate priesthood (contradicts 1 Tim 3:2)
 - Papal infallibility (not biblical/apostolic)
3. **"Gates of Hell" (Matt 16:18):** Greek = "gates of Hades" (death). Jesus promised death wouldn't ultimately prevail—Church would be restored (Acts 3:19-21).

V. THE PROTESTANT PROBLEM

What Protestants Did

- Rejected Catholic apostolic succession ✓ (correct)
- Rejected authority of bishops/popes ✓
- Claimed "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture alone)

The Fatal Problem:

Who gave Luther, Calvin, and the Reformers authority to ordain ministers?

Luther: Ordained Catholic priest (1507). Only bishops can ordain priests. Luther was a priest, not bishop. **No authority to ordain.**

Calvin: Never ordained as priest. Simply declared himself a minister. Claimed God raised Luther as an "apostle" through extraordinary intervention (pure speculation—no biblical precedent).

Protestant "Solution":

- Priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9)—but this refers to spiritual priesthood (offering prayers/worship), NOT priesthood office to administer ordinances
- Community-based ordination—contradicts Heb 5:4: "No one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God"

Result: 33,000+ denominations without divine authority, all claiming to follow Scripture but teaching contradictory doctrines.

Some Protestants Saw the Problem

Roger Williams: Believed there was no regularly constituted church; **waited for new apostles.**

The Seekers (17th c.): Believed Catholic Church lost authority; **waited for Christ to restore His Church.**

→ They were RIGHT—but didn't live to see the restoration.

VI. THE BIBLE PROPHECIES RESTORATION

Acts 3:19-21 — "Restitution of All Things"

"Repent... that times of refreshing may come... and that he may send the Christ... whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by... his holy prophets." (ESV)

Greek: *Apokatastasis pantōn* (ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων) = "restore to original condition"

What Must Be Restored:

- Apostolic authority (priesthood keys)
- Office of apostle and prophet
- True doctrines (nature of God, deification, plan of salvation)
- Saving ordinances (baptism for the dead, temple work)
- Direct revelation from God

VII. THE LDS RESTORATION

Joseph Smith's First Vision (1820)

Joseph Smith prayed to know which church was true. **God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared** and told him **none of the churches were true**—they had all apostatized.

Restoration of Priesthood Authority

John the Baptist (May 15, 1829): Restored Aaronic Priesthood
Peter, James, John (1829): Restored Melchizedek Priesthood + **keys of the kingdom**

This is the biblical pattern: Authority transmitted by those who hold it (Moses→Joshua; Jesus→Twelve; Apostles→Timothy, Titus).

Restoration of Church Organization

LDS Church (est. 1830):

- First Presidency (President/Prophet + 2 Counselors)
- Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- Quorum of the Seventy (evangelists)
- Bishops, Teachers, Deacons

Matches Eph 4:11-14: Apostles ✓, Prophets ✓, Evangelists ✓, Pastors/Teachers ✓

No other church has this.

Doctrines Restored

- **Nature of God:** Father & Son = separate, glorified beings with bodies (D&C 130:22)
- **Deification:** Humans can become like God (partakers divine nature)
- **Baptism for the dead:** Temple ordinances for deceased
- **Plan of salvation:** Pre-mortal existence, purpose of life, degrees of glory

VIII. WHY LDS IS THE ONLY LOGICAL SOLUTION

	Catholics	Protestants	LDS
Authority	Claims succession but lost doctrines	Zero authority—self-appointed	Divine ordination by angels

Apostles	None (bishops not apostles)	None	Quorum of Twelve ✓
Prophets	None	None	Living Prophet ✓
Revelation	Ceased after apostles	Ceased (Sola Scriptura)	Continuing revelation ✓
Nature of God	Trinity (Greek philosophy)	Trinity	Biblical: 3 separate beings ✓
Baptism for dead	Lost	Lost	Restored (temples) ✓
Deification	Neglected in West	Rejected	Restored ✓

IX. THE BOTTOM LINE

The Biblical Facts:

1. Apostasy was prophesied (2 Thess 2:3, Acts 20:29-30, 2 Tim 4:3-4)
2. Apostasy happened (lost authority, doctrines, ordinances, organization)
3. Catholics lost authority despite claiming succession
4. Protestants never had authority (self-appointed)
5. Bible prophesies restoration (Acts 3:19-21, Amos 3:7)
6. LDS restoration fulfills prophecy (divine authority, living prophets, true doctrines)

The LDS Restoration Is:

- ✓ Prophesied in Scripture (Acts 3:19-21)
- ✓ Authorized by divine ordination (Peter, James, John)
- ✓ Organized biblically (Eph 4:11-14)
- ✓ Doctrinally consistent with early Christianity
- ✓ The only church with living apostles & prophets receiving revelation

Sources: Gospel Coalition, BibleRef, Wikipedia (Apostolic Succession, Great Apostasy, Baptism for Dead, Theosis), Catholic Answers, Britannica, Stanford Encyclopedia, Saints Unscripted, LDS sources (D&C 130:22, Church History)