
“Stand Ye in Holy Places”

D&C 87:1

The revelation known as the “Prophecy on War” was not included in the Doctrine and Covenants until 1876. As a result, critics of the Prophet Joseph Smith have been quick to say that the revelation was not published until after the Civil War. There is historical evidence that points to the Prophet Joseph Smith receiving this revelation on December 25, 1832. For example, the revelation was recorded in the Kirtland Revelation Books on December 25, 1832, and Elder Orson Pratt wrote of reading the revelation as a young missionary:

When I was a boy, I traveled extensively in the United States and the Canadas, preaching this restored Gospel. I had a manuscript copy of this revelation [D&C 87], which I carried in my pocket, and I was in the habit of reading it to the people among whom I traveled and preached. As a general thing the people regarded it as the height of nonsense, saying the Union was too strong to be broken; and I, they said, was led away, the victim of an impostor. I knew the prophecy was true, for the Lord had spoken to me and had given me revelation.¹

The revelation is a prophecy on war, but it is also a prophecy on natural disasters: “The earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightnings also” (D&C 87:6). With natural disasters pending and the Civil War approaching, the Lord instructed His Saints to “stand ye in holy places, and be not moved” (v. 8).

The advice is still appropriate today as we live in a time of wars and rumors of wars and natural calamities. There are reasons for fear and uncertainty on many fronts. Elder Richard J. Maynes in his October 2015 general conference address acknowledged the

¹ Orson Pratt, “Prophecies of Joseph Smith, etc.,” *Journal of Discourses*, 18:224–25.

calamities and illustrated his remarks on the importance of standing in holy places with a story from the life of Elder Taiichi Aoba of the Seventy in Shikoku, Japan:

[Elder Aoba] was asked to teach a class at a youth conference. “Stand Ye in Holy Places” was selected as the theme of the conference. After considering the theme and what to teach, Elder Aoba decided to use his vocation as a teaching tool. His work is making pottery. ...

The [youth] assumed, after watching him, that this would be quite simple. However, none of them were successful in their attempts to make even a simple bowl.

They proclaimed: “I can’t do this!” “Why is this so hard?” “This is so difficult.” These comments took place as the clay flew all around the room. ...

[Elder Aoba] then told them, “Let’s try this one more time.”

This time, Elder Aoba placed the clay in the exact center of the wheel and then started to turn the wheel, making a hole in the middle of the clay. Several of the youth tried again. This time everyone started clapping when they said: “Wow, it’s not shaking,” “I can do this,” or “I did it!” Of course, the shapes weren’t perfect, but the outcome was totally different from the first attempt. The reason for their success was because the clay was perfectly centered on the wheel.

The world in which we live is similar to the potter’s spinning wheel, and the speed of that wheel is increasing. Like the clay on the potter’s wheel, we must be centered as well. Our core, the center of our lives, must be Jesus Christ and His gospel. Living a Christ-centered life means we learn about Jesus Christ and His gospel and then we follow His example and keep His commandments with exactness.²

² Richard J. Maynes, “The Joy of Living a Christ-Centered Life,” *Ensign*, November 2015.