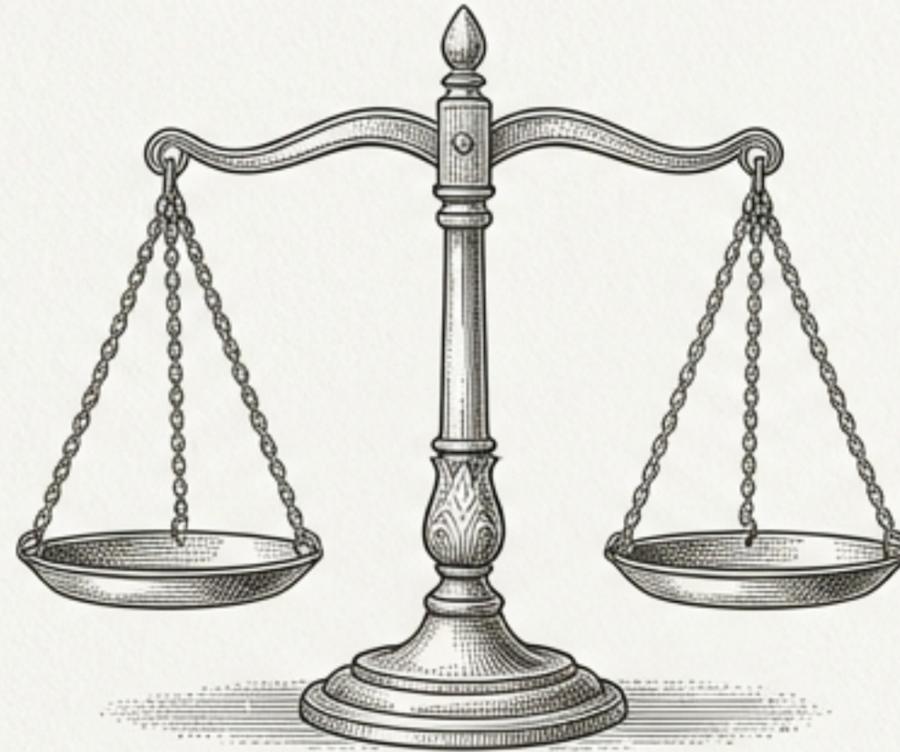


# The Prophecies of Joseph Smith: An Examination of the Evidence



**Weighing the prophetic claims against the  
scriptural standard and the historical record.**

# The Biblical Test for a Prophet

**A**nd if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22

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**Takeaway:** The standard is absolute: **A single failed prophecy invalidates a prophet's claim.** This is the scriptural standard against which all subsequent evidence will be measured.

# Exhibit A: The Second Coming in 1891

## THE CLAIM (February 1835):

"...the coming of the Lord, which was nigh—even 56 years should wind up the scene."

+ 56 Years

1835

1891

**FAILED**

## THE OUTCOME:

The Second Coming did not occur.

## THE APOLOGETIC DEFENSE:

Garamond

Apologists claim the prophecy was conditional on Joseph Smith living to that age.

## THE REBUTTAL:

Source Serif Pro

The original record makes no such condition. It is a direct and unconditional statement. Furthermore, numerous patriarchal blessings from the era reinforce the teaching that Jesus would return during the lifetime of early members.

# Exhibit B: The Utter Overthrow of the U.S. Government

## THE CLAIM (1843):

I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of Israel... that in a few years the government will be **utterly overthrown and wasted**... not be so much as a **potsherd left**.

## SUPPORTING CLAIM:

I prophesied... that if Congress will not hear our petition... they shall be **broken up as a government** and God shall damn them and there shall be nothing left of them **not even a grease spot**.



## THE CONTEXT:

Conditional on no reparations for Missouri persecutions. None were provided.

## THE OUTCOME:

Nearly 180 years later, the U.S. government remains a world power.

## THE REBUTTAL:

The government was preserved, not “utterly overthrown” or left without “a grease spot.” The apologetic defense of the Civil War fails to meet the prophecy’s explicit language of total annihilation.

# Exhibit C: The “Everlasting” United Order

## THE CLAIM (D&C 104):

“A commandment... to be a United Order, and an **everlasting order for the benefit of my church... until I come.**”

**THE THREAT (D&C 104):** “I have cursed them with a **very sore and grievous curse**... shall break the covenant... he shall be cursed in his life.”

## THE OUTCOME:

“The United Order collapsed within a few years and is not practiced by the mainstream church today.”

## THE REBUTTAL:

If the order was ‘everlasting until I come,’ the modern church is in direct violation of a canonized, everlasting covenant and is subject to the promised curse. The prophecy failed, and its terms are now ignored.

# Pattern of Failure: When Prophecy Fails, Blame the Followers

## Case Study: The Failure to Reclaim Zion

### PROMISE

Revelations promised Zion would not fall (D&C 97) and could be reclaimed by power.  
“The Redemption of Zion must needs come by power.” (D&C 103)



### FAILURE

The “army” of Zion’s Camp was outnumbered, faced disease, and retreated without reclaiming any land.



### BLAME REVERSAL

After the failure, God declares it was due to the “transgression of my people... full of all manner of evil.” The leadership is explicitly exempted: “I speak not concerning those who are appointed to lead my people... for they are not all under this condemnation.” (D&C 105)

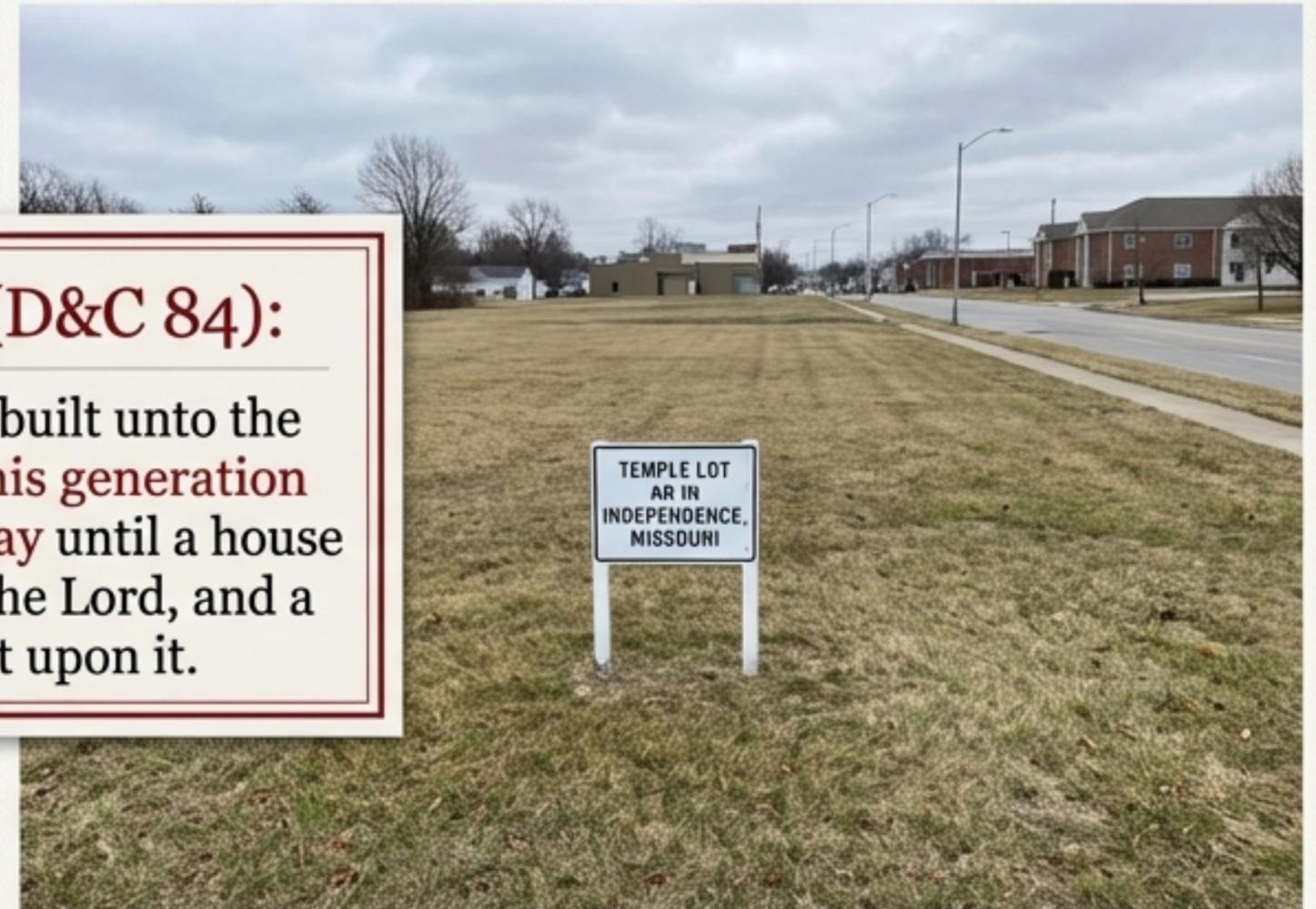
**Analysis:** This establishes a pattern of “blame reversal.” When a prophecy made by leadership fails, the responsibility is deflected onto the followers’ unworthiness.

# Exhibit D: A Temple in Zion “In This Generation”



**THE CLAIM (D&C 84):**

...a house shall be built unto the Lord... and verily **this generation shall not all pass away** until a house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it.



**THE APOLOGETIC DEFENSE:**  
 “Generation” has a flexible, non-literal meaning, such as “the generation of the latter days.”



**THE REBUTTAL:** The language is specific and was intended to be understood by its original audience as within their lifetimes. Reinterpreting “generation” is an attempt to salvage a clear failure, especially since subsequent prophets have repeatedly told youth that *they* are the “chosen generation.”



# Corroborating Evidence: The Zelfh Revelation

## 1 GEOGRAPHY

Firmly places Book of Mormon events (Hill Cumorah) in upstate New York, contradicting modern apologetic theories that place them in Mesoamerica.

The revelation specifies his territory was known **"from the Hill Cumorah, or eastern sea, to the Rocky Mountains."**



## 3 HISTORY

Directly relies on the debunked 19th-century **"Mound Builder" myth**, the popular theory that a sophisticated, non-Indian race was exterminated by the ancestors of modern Native Americans.

## 2 THEOLOGY

Reinforces a literal, race-based curse, where righteousness is linked to physical appearance. Zelfh is identified as a **"white Lamanite"** from whom **"the curse was taken."**



# Exhibit E: Treasure in Salem, Massachusetts



## THE CLAIM (D&C 111):

“I have much treasure in this city for you... and its wealth pertaining to **gold and silver shall be yours**. Concern not yourself about **your debts** for I will give you power to pay them.”

## THE REBUTTAL:

The apologetic claim that the “treasure” meant “converts” directly contradicts the plain text of the revelation, which explicitly mentions “gold and silver” in the context of paying the church’s “debts.”

## THE OUTCOME:

**No treasure was ever found.**  
The mission was a complete financial failure.

# Exhibit F: The Canadian Copyright Sale



## THE CLAIM:

God grants a “privilege” to sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon in Canada.

## THE OUTCOME:

The mission failed; they were unable to sell the copyright.



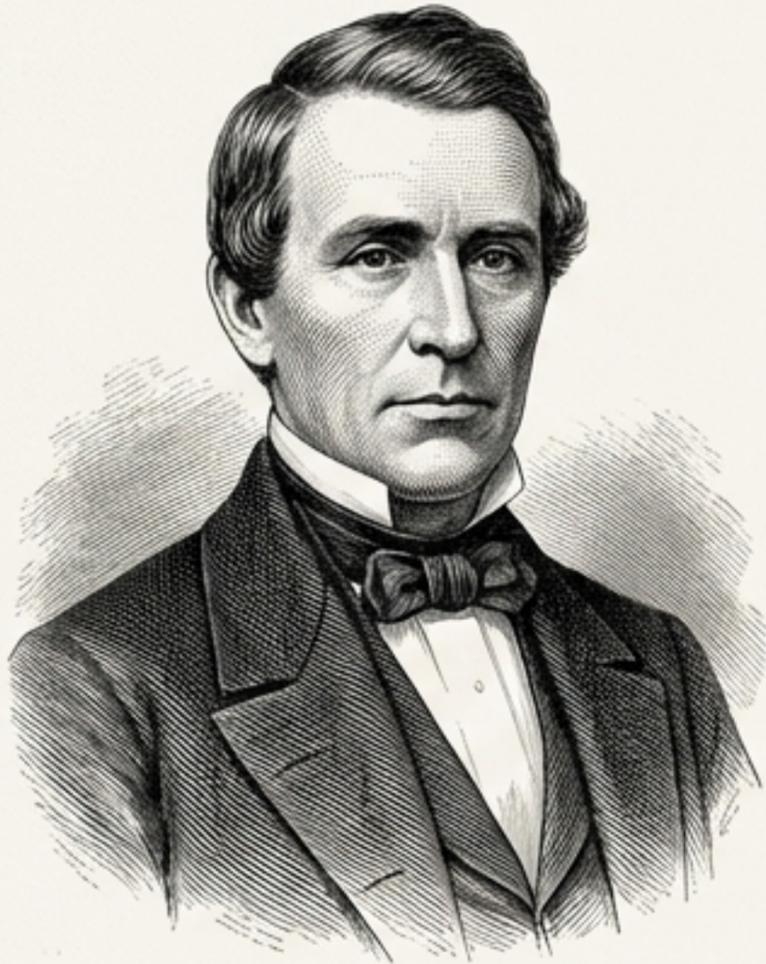
## THE BUILT-IN EXCUSE:

The revelation contains a condition: it will only work work “**if the people harden not their hearts** against the enticings of my spirit and my word.”

## THE REBUTTAL:

This creates an **unfalsifiable prophecy**. If it succeeds, the prophet is true. If it fails, the people are wicked. The prophet is never held accountable—a structure that protects the leader at the expense of followers.

# Exhibit G: The Fate of David W. Patton



David W. Patton

## THE CLAIM (D&C 114):

APRIL 1838

17

*Verily thus saith the Lord:  
It is wisdom in my servant  
David W. Patton that he...  
may perform a mission  
unto me next spring.*

## THE OUTCOME:

OCTOBER 1838

25

***Killed in Battle.***  
*(Battle of Crooked River)*

**ANALYSIS:** A simple, direct, and testable prophecy from God about a man's short-term future that unequivocally failed to materialize.

# A Pattern of Prophetic Failure

Second Coming in 1891

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

U.S. Government Overthrow

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

Everlasting United Order

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

Zion's Temple "in this generation"

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

Zion Reclaimed by Force

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

Treasure in Salem

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

Copyright Sale in Canada

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

David W. Patton's Mission

**\*\*FAILED\*\***

Does this pattern align with a prophet who speaks for an omniscient God, or with a man speaking 'presumptuously,' as described in Deuteronomy?

# The Defense's Final Stand: Redefining "Prophet"

## THE ARGUMENT

"A prophet is only a prophet when acting as such."

## THE REBUTTAL

Joseph Smith explicitly invoked the "name of the Lord God of Israel," "the authority of Jesus Christ," and the "Holy priesthood vested in me." He was clearly "acting as such."

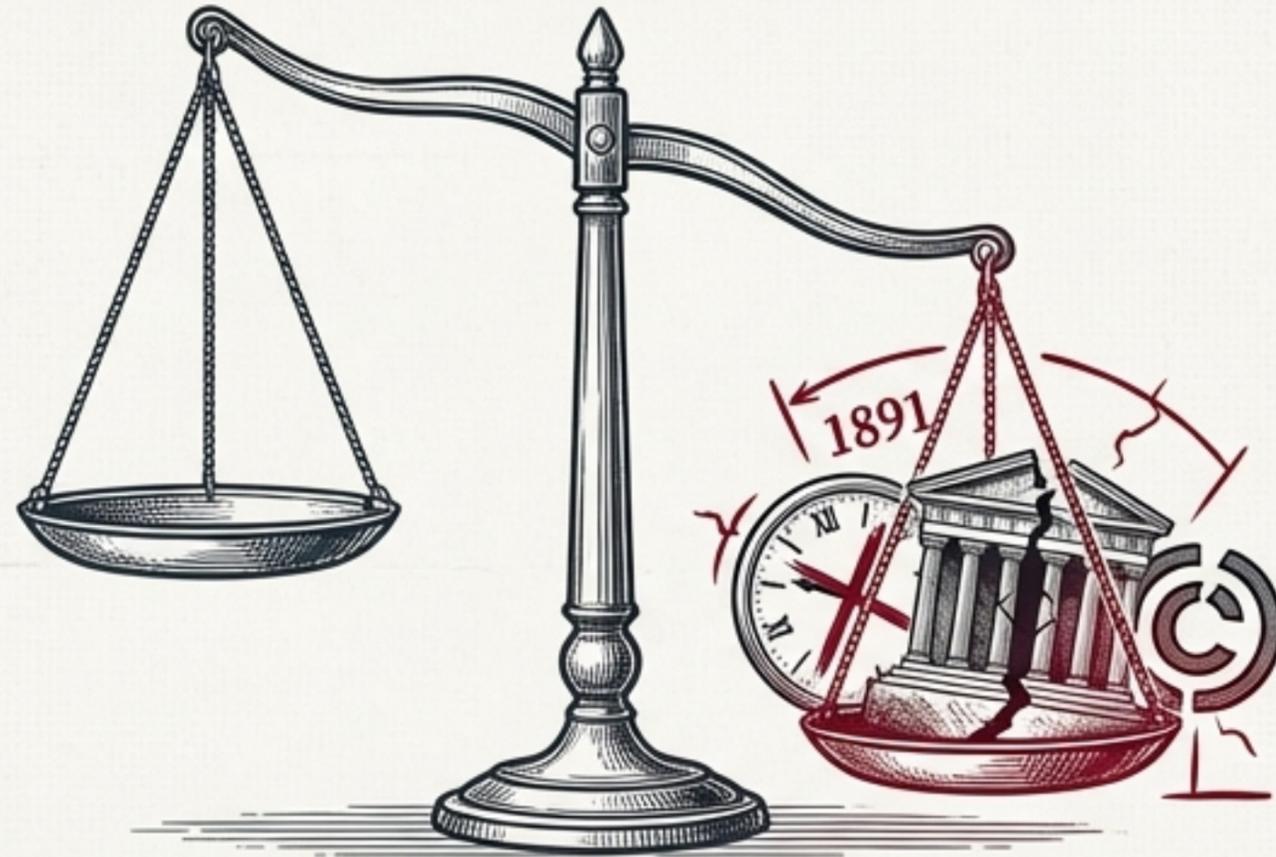
## THE ARGUMENT

"It wasn't canonized, so it doesn't count."

## THE REBUTTAL

Many of these **failed prophecies** are canonized in the Doctrine & Covenants (e.g., D&C 84, 104, 111, 114). Furthermore, this defense creates a system where a prophecy is only considered "real" **after it comes true**, making the concept of prophecy meaningless and untestable.

# The Verdict on the Evidence



The scriptural standard is clear and unforgiving. The historical record presents a consistent pattern of specific, testable prophecies that did not come to pass. The defenses offered require reinterpreting plain language, spiritualizing material promises, and shifting blame from the prophet to the followers. When the evidence is weighed against the standard of proof established by Deuteronomy, the conclusion becomes unavoidable.

# Thou Shalt Not Be Afraid of Him

(Deuteronomy 18:22)

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For source citations and a deeper analysis of these topics, visit [LDSDiscussions.com](https://LDSDiscussions.com).

Based on the research compiled by LDS Discussions and presented on the Mormon Stories Podcast.