

Why did Heavenly Father let the Great Apostasy happen?

Apostasy means to turn away from the Lord and His gospel. Throughout history there have been many times when more people chose wickedness than righteousness. When this happens, people often live without prophets or priesthood authority for a time. The Great Apostasy happened after people rejected and tried to change the pure truths and organization of the Church established by the Savior.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained: “Our Heavenly Father loves all of His children, and He wants them all to have the blessings of the gospel in their lives. Spiritual light is not lost because God turns His back on His children. Rather, spiritual darkness results when His children turn their collective backs on Him. It is a natural consequence of bad choices made by individuals, communities, countries, and entire civilizations. . . .

“In every dispensation, God’s loving desire to bless His children is manifest in the miraculous restoration of the gospel truth to the earth through living prophets. The Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith in the early 1800s is only the most recent example” (Apr. 2009 general conference). **NE**



What do the **scriptures** mean that say, “**The first shall be last and the last shall be first**”?

When the Savior used this phrase, “the first” meant those who self-righteously assert their superiority yet reject the Savior and His gospel. “The last” meant His humble followers who make great sacrifices for the gospel (see Mark 10:28–31; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 10:30–31 [in Mark 10:31, footnote *a*]). In a general sense, “the first” are the privileged, prestigious, and selfish who get ahead in this life while defying God’s commandments. But they will receive condemnation in the life to come. “The last,” though rejected by the world, will receive a great reward in heaven.

This phrase has also been used to describe the pattern through which the Savior reveals Himself and His gospel. When He came to earth, He came among the Jews, or His original covenant people, and later the gospel was preached to non-Jews (Gentiles). With the Restoration, He revealed the gospel first among the Gentiles, and it will eventually go to the Jews (see 1 Nephi 13:42; Jacob 5:63; Ether 13:4–12). **NE**