He Cometh to Adam-ondi-Ahman

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We now come to the least known and least understood thing connected with the Second Coming. It might well be termed the best-kept secret set forth in the revealed word. It is something about which the world knows nothing; it is a doctrine that has scarcely dawned on most of the Latter-day Saints themselves; and yet it is set forth in holy writ and in the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith with substantially the same clarity as any of the doctrines of the kingdom. It behooves us to make a needed brief commentary about it. Before the Lord Jesus descends openly and publicly in the clouds of glory, attended by all the hosts of heaven; before the great and dreadful day of the Lord sends terror and destruction from one end of the earth to the other; before he stands on Mount Zion, or sets his feet on Olivet, or utters his voice from an American Zion or a Jewish Jerusalem; before all flesh shall see him together; before any of his appearances, which taken together comprise the second coming of the Son of God -- before all these, there is to be a secret appearance to selected members of his Church. He will come in private to his prophet and to the apostles then living. Those who have held keys and powers and authorities in all ages from Adam to the present will also be present. And further, all the faithful members of the Church then living and all the faithful saints of all the ages past will be present. It will be the greatest congregation of faithful saints ever assembled on planet earth. It will be a sacrament meeting. It will be a day of judgment for the faithful of all the ages. And it will take place in Davies County, Missouri, at a place called Adam-ondi-Ahman.

Adam-ondi-Ahman, of eternal fame, first comes to our attention because of a great conference held there by Father Adam in his day. “Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing.” Nearly a thousand years had then passed since the first man and the first woman had stepped from Eden’s garden into the lone and dreary world, there to begin the procreative processes that peopled a planet. We do not know how many million mortals made this earth their home in that day, or how many of them were true and faithful to that Lord whom Adam served. Disease and plagues were not then as common and horrendous as they are now. The physical bodies of earth’s inhabitants had not yet degenerated to the disease-ridden, germ-governed shells of their former glory that is now the norm. We can suppose the population of the earth far exceeded that of later ages when the ills of the flesh and a rising infant mortality set a sin-inflicted limit on the numbers of men. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that many righteous spirits were born in that blessed day and that the numbers of the righteous were exceedingly great. We may not be amiss in supposing that many millions responded to the call to come to a general conference in Adam-ondi-Ahman.

This we do know, however: “The Lord appeared unto them” -- Jesus Christ their King stood in their midst -- “and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel.” How great and glorious is the eternal stature of the first man! “And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.” Such is an abbreviated account of what happened at Adam-ondi-Ahman in that pristine day. Our revelation that recites these words closes with the statement: These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time.” (D&C 107:53-57.)

When the full account comes to us, we suppose we shall read of the offering of sacrifices in similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten; of the testimonies borne by both men and women; of great doctrinal sermons delivered by the preachers of righteousness who then ministered among them; and of the outpouring of spiritual gifts upon the faithful then assembled. What visions they must have seen; what revelations they must have received; what feelings of rapture must have filled their bosoms as they feasted upon the things of eternity! Did Adam speak of the great latter-day gathering at
Adam-ondi-Ahman, and did the faithful see with their spirit eyes what was then to be? These and a thousand other things “are to be testified of in due time.” But this we do know: All that happened at Adam-ondi-Ahman in those early days was but a type and a shadow -- a similitude, if you will -- of what shall happen at the same blessed place in the last days when Adam and Christ and the residue of men who are righteous assemble again in solemn worship.

If we are to understand what shall transpire at Adam-ondi-Ahman in the near future, we must first envision the relationship between the Lord Jehovah, who is Christ our Savior, and the man Adam. Christ is the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten in the flesh, and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He is the Redeemer of the world and the Savior of men. He is the Son of God and is one with the Father in power, might, and dominion. Adam is the foremost spirit next to the Lord Jehovah. He is the archangel, the captain of the Lord’s hosts who led the armies of heaven when Lucifer rebelled; he is Michael, the mightiest of all the spirit host save only the Lord Jesus; and he came to earth as Adam, the first man. His relationship with the God of Israel is set forth in the revelation which says that “the Lord God, the Holy One of Zion, . . . hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman,” and hath appointed Michael your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high, and given unto him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life.” (D&C 78:15-16.) Thus Adam stands next to the Holy Messiah, receives counsel and direction and power from him, and (under Christ) administers salvation to all men.

The Prophet Joseph Smith instructed the early brethren at great length on these matters. “The Priesthood was first given to Adam,” he said; “he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed.” Priesthood is the power and authority of God. By it the worlds were made; by it the Lord’s agents do everything that is needed for the salvation of men. The keys are the right of presidency; they empower their holders to direct the manner in which others use their priesthood. Presiding officers hold keys and perform whatever labors they are authorized by the Lord to perform. Adam held the priesthood and the keys. “He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel: he stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood; he was called of God to this office, and was the father of all living in this day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held keys first on earth, and then in heaven.” Thus Adam is first and Noah is second, among all the inhabitants of the earth, save Jesus only, where both priesthood and keys are concerned.

“The Priesthood is an everlasting principle,” the Prophet continued, “and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam’s authority.” Adam, under the direction of the Holy One, holds the keys of salvation for all men. He presides over all dispensations; all the dispensation heads and all the prophets receive direction from him; all report their labors to him. He is the chief person in the hierarchy of God, and he directs all of the affairs of the Lord on earth.

“Daniel in his seventh chapter speaks of the Ancient of Days; he means the oldest man, our Father Adam, Michael, he will call his children together and hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man.” By his children is meant the residue of his posterity that are righteous; all of his posterity will not be involved, only those -- as it was in the days of the original gathering at Adam-ondi-Ahman -- who are worthy. “He (Adam) is the father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council.” Every prophet, apostle, president, bishop, elder, or church officer of whatever degree -- all who have held keys shall stand before him who holds all of the keys. They will then be called upon to give an account of their stewardships and to report how and in what manner they have used their priesthood and their keys for the salvation of men within the sphere of their appointments.

“This,” the grand council of Adam-ondi-Ahman, “may take place before some of us leave this stage of action. The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe, but retains his standing as head of the human family.” This explanation is descriptive of the priesthood order of things. Every man is honored in his position; every man is accountable for the manner in which he performs under his divine commission. Adam is at the head, and he supervises all others.

“The Father called all spirits before Him at the creation of man, and organized them.” This was the grand council in heaven of which we so often speak. “He (Adam) is the head, and was told to multiply.” He, under Christ, was at the head in preexistence; and he, under
Christ, is at the head so far as all things pertaining to this earth are concerned. “The keys were first given to him, and by him to others. He will have to give an account of his stewardship, and they to him.” And as all the spirits of men attended the grand council in preexistence, so all the righteous shall attend a like one at Adam-ondi-Ahman before the winding-up scenes.

“Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next. Paul speaks of the Church coming to an innumerable company of angels — to God the Judge of all — the spirits of just men made perfect; to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. (Hebrews 12:22-24.)” In this setting, as he speaks of an innumerable company of angels and of the just and great of all ages who have gained membership in the Church of the Firstborn, which is the Church among exalted beings, the prophet then says: “I saw Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. He called together his children and blessed them with a patriarchal blessing. The Lord appeared in their midst, and he (Adam) blessed them all, and foretold what should befall them to the latest generation. This is why Adam blessed his posterity; he wanted to bring them into the presence of God.” (Teachings, pp. 157-59.) Thus, we are left to conclude that the ancient gathering of the righteous at Adam-ondi-Ahman involved a great host of people, even as will be the case with the like gathering that is soon to be in the last days.

Daniel’s account of the great latter-day council at Adam-ondi-Ahman includes these words: “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” (Dan. 7:9-10.) Thrones are cast down: the kingdoms of this world cease; it is the day when the Lord makes a full end of all nations. He alone shall be exalted in that day. The Ancient of Days, the oldest and most ancient of men, Adam our father, sits in judgment over the righteous of his race. Be it remembered that the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who were with the Lord in his ministry in Jerusalem, shall judge the whole house of Israel, meaning that portion of Israel who have kept the commandments, “and none else.” (D&C 29:12.) There will be a great hierarchy of judges in that great day, of whom Adam, under Christ, will be the chief of all. Those judges will judge the righteous ones under their jurisdiction, but Christ himself, he alone, will judge the wicked. All this we have heretofore set forth; now we are seeing Adam sitting in his judicial capacity. And the scene is glorious indeed.

Who are the “thousand thousands” who “ministered unto him”? Are not these the millions who have held keys and powers and authorities in all dispensations? Are they not the ones who are called to report their stewardships and to give an accounting of how and in what manner they have exercised the keys of the kingdom in their days? Will not every steward be called upon to tell what he has done with the talents with which he was endowed? Truly, it shall be so; and those who minister unto the Ancient of Days are indeed the ministers of Christ reporting their labors to their immediate superiors, even back to Adam, who holds the keys of salvation over all the earth for all ages.

And who are the “ten thousand times ten thousand” who stand before him? Are not these the one hundred million and more who have been faithful and true in the days of their mortal probation? Are they not the same ten thousand times ten thousand who are “kings and priests,” and who will live and reign with Christ a thousand years? Are they not the ones who shall sing in that great day the song of the redeemed, saying, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing . . . Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever”? (Rev. 5:10-13.) Truly, it is so; this is a part of that great day for which all the righteous have yearned, and the Lord Jesus, in its course, is using and honoring his ministers. Each one is operating within the sphere of his assignment; each is serving in his appointed way. The judgment is set and the books are opened, and the Lord God, who is judge of all, is judging all by the hands of his servants whom he hath appointed. This is that of which John wrote: And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4.)

But Daniel has yet more to say about the great events soon to transpire at Adam-ondi-Ahman. And we need not suppose that all these things shall happen in one single meeting or at one single hour in time. It is proper to hold numerous meetings at a general conference, some for the instruction of leaders, others for edification of all the saints. In some, business is transacted; others are for worship and spiritual refreshment. And so Daniel says: “I saw in the night visions, and; behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.” Christ comes to Adam, who is sitting in glory. He comes to conform to his own priestly order. He comes to hear
the report of Adam for his stewardship. He comes to take back the keys of the earthly kingdom. He comes to be invested with glory and dominion so that he can reign personally upon the earth. As President Joseph Fielding Smith expresses it: “Our Lord will then assume the reigns of government; directions will be given to the Priesthood; and He, whose right it is to rule will be installed officially by the voice of the Priesthood there assembled.” (The Way to Perfection, p. 291.) Thus Daniel says: “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

Daniel also tells us of the conflict between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God. In spite of the opposition of the world, he says, “the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” And also: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” In this present world Lucifer reigns. This is the great day of his power. The kingdoms of men prevail in many ways over the Church and kingdom of God. Evil forces “devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.” But Lucifer’s day is limited; he shall soon be bound. “The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy” the Lord’s work and his kingdom. “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” (Dan. 7:13-27.)

The worshipful nature of the final gatherings at Adam-ondi-Ahman -- and surely such will be patterned after what happened there anciently -- the worshipful wonder of it all is seen in the administration of the sacramental emblems that will then take place. These are the emblems that testify of the spilt blood and broken flesh of our Redeeming Lord, even as the shed blood and broken flesh of sacrificial animals bore a like witness in days of old. In the upper room, as he and his disciples kept the Feast of the Passover, Jesus instituted the ordinance of the sacrament. After doing so he said: “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Matt. 26:29.)

With reference to the use of sacramental wine in our day, the Lord said to Joseph Smith: “You shall partake of none except it is made new among you; yea, in this my Father’s kingdom which shall be built up on the earth.” In so stating, he is picking up the language he used in the upper room. Then he says: “The hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth.” Jesus is going to partake of the sacrament again with his mortal disciples on earth. But it will not be with mortals only. He names others who will be present and who will participate in the sacred ordinance. These include Moroni, Elias, John the Baptist, Elijah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (who was sold into Egypt), Peter, James, and John, “and also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days.” Each of these is named simply by way of illustration. The grand summation of the whole matter comes in these words: “And also with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world.” (D&C 27:4-14.) The sacrament is to be administered in a future day, on this earth, when the Lord Jesus is present, and when all the righteous of all ages are present. This, of course, will be a part of the grand council at Adam-ondi-Ahman.

Adam-ondi-Ahman -- meaning the place or land of God where Adam dwelt -- is at a place called Spring Hill, Davies County, Missouri. This site is named by the Lord “Adam-ondi-Ahman, because, said he, it is the place where Adam shall come to visit his people, or the Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet.” (D&C 116.) There is a great valley there in which the righteous will assemble; and where there are valleys, the surrounding elevations are called mountains. Thus our revelations speak of “the mountains of Adam-ondi-Ahman” and of “the plains of Olaha Shinehah, or the land where Adam dwelt.” (D&C 117:8.) Sacred indeed is the whole region for what has taken place and what will take place in its environs.

Adam-ondi-Ahman, the land of God, the dwelling place of Adam -- surely it is a blessed and holy place! There Adam our Prince will give an accounting to Christ our King. The Prince serves the King! The King always is supreme, though he honors the Prince by giving him power and dominion over his realms for an appointed season. But when the King returns, the Prince steps aside, and the Supreme Lord of all rules and reigns on earth. And thus, as the Lord lives, has it been and will it be.