

Joseph Smith — First Vision & Beyond

3/06

“If God spares my life, ere many years I will cause a boy who drives the plough to know more of the scriptures than you do.” (William Tyndale; Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, November 2005, pg. 90)

First Vision is a Fundamental Fact

01 – “The first vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith is bedrock theology to the Church. The adversary knows this and has attacked Joseph Smith’s credibility from the day he announced the visitation of the Father and the Son. You should always bear testimony to the truth of the First Vision. They conversed with him as he said they did. Any leader who, without reservation, cannot declare this testimony that God and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith can never be a true leader, a true shepherd. If we do not accept this truth—if we have not received a witness about this great revelation—we cannot inspire faith in those whom we lead. **Some of our own members have attempted to interpret the experiences of Joseph Smith and his revelations. They say that it really is not important whether or not Joseph Smith actually saw God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. What matters, they claim, is that he thought he did. That is preposterous!”** (Ezra Taft Benson, *TETB*, pg. 101)

02 – “Our entire case as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the validity of this glorious First Vision. It was the parting of the curtain to open this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Nothing on which we base our doctrine, nothing we teach, nothing we live by is of greater importance than this initial declaration. I submit that if Joseph Smith talked with God the Father and His Beloved Son, then all else of which he spoke is true. This is the hinge on which turns the gate that leads to the path of salvation and eternal life.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 1998, pg. 71)

03 – “The greatest event that has ever occurred in the world, since the resurrection of the Son of God from the tomb and his ascension on high, was the coming of the Father and of the Son to that boy Joseph Smith.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, pg. 495)

Accounts and Assertions Applying to the First Vision

(JS-H 1:1-2)

8 Account of the First Vision - (Milton R. Backman Jr., *Ensign*, January 1985, pg. 8-17)

7 Accounts of Moroni’s Visit - (James Allen, *Improvement Era*, April 1970, pg. 4-13)

04 – “At the very heart of this great work of teaching and establishing the gospel of Christ is the First Vision of the boy Joseph near Palmyra, New York, in 1820. Too much has happened to dismiss this magnificent vision as a nonevent.

Since no one was with Joseph when this great vision took place in the wooded grove near Palmyra, a testimony concerning its reality can come only be believing the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's own account or by the witness of the Holy Ghost, or both. I have such a conviction. It is a sure conviction that lies deep in my soul. As a special witness of the same Christ who appeared with the Father and instructed the boy Joseph Smith, I bear witness of the truthfulness of the magnificent First Vision near Palmyra.” (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1984, pg. 69)

05 – If a person will read JS-H every month of their life, they will never fall away from the Church. (David O McKay, *Mission Tour* 1958)

Remarks concerning the Prophet Joseph Smith’s testimony of the First Vision **that if all members knew in their hearts that the Prophet’s statement that he had seen the Father and the Son is true, they then would know that all else which came through the restoration of the gospel is true also:**

06 – “And we would walk and live with greater faithfulness. Tithing would not be a problem with us. Temple service would not be a problem with us. Keeping the Sabbath day holy would not be a problem with us... Missionary service... would be no problem with us. All else that follows would be true. We would know it in our hearts if we had a solid, firm, immovable conviction of the truth and validity of that great vision wherein God the Eternal Father and the risen Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the boy Joseph Smith and the Father said, ‘This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!’...”

...And whenever you have any doubt of any practice of this Church, you can reflect on that. If that opening of the curtain of light and knowledge which ushered in this the dispensation of the fulness of times is true then all else which the Prophet taught is true also.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Church News*, October 28, 1995, pg. 7)

07 – “Now, brethren, we have just recounted together the most significant singular event in the world since the resurrection of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The First Vision is the very foundation of this Church, and it is my conviction that each member of this Church performs his duty in direct ratio to his personal testimony and faith in the First Vision. How well do you believe this story? No man having heard the Joseph Smith testimony can, in good conscience, remain on neutral ground.” (Robert L. Simpson, *Ensign*, January 1974, pg. 87)

Review of the Reality - JS-H 1:1-20 (April 6, 1820)

(Book of Enos; Book of James)

JS-H 1:3

08 – “In this place we established ourselves on a farm belonging to one Esquire Moredock. The first year our crops failed; yet, by selling fruit which grew on the place, we succeeded in obtaining bread for the family, and, by making considerable exertion, we were enabled to sustain ourselves. The crops the second year were as the year before—a perfect failure. Mr. Smith now determined to plant once more, and if he should meet with no better success than he had the two preceding years, he would then go to the state of New York, where wheat was raised in abundance. The next year an untimely frost destroyed the crops, and being the third year in succession in which the crops had failed, it almost caused a famine. This was enough; my husband was now altogether decided upon going to New York. He came in, one day, in quite a thoughtful mood, and sat down; after meditating some time, he observed that, could he so arrange his affairs, he would be glad to start soon for New York with a Mr. Howard, who was going to Palmyra. He further remarked, that he could not leave consistently, as the situation of the family would not admit of his absence; besides, he was owing some money that must first be paid. I told him it was my opinion he might get both his creditors and debtors together, and arrange matters between them in such a way as to give satisfaction to all parties concerned; and, in relation to the family, I thought I could make every necessary preparation to follow as soon as he would be ready for us. He accordingly called upon all with whom he had any dealings, and settled up his accounts with them. There were, however, some who, in the time of settlement, neglected to bring forward their books, consequently they were not balanced, or there were no entries made in them to show the settlement; but in cases of this kind, he called witnesses, that there might be evidence of the fact.

Having thus arranged his business, Mr. Smith set out for Palmyra, in company with Mr. Howard. After his departure, I and those of the family who were of much size, toiled faithfully, until we considered ourselves fully prepared to leave at a moment's warning. We shortly received a communication from Mr. Smith, requesting us to make ourselves ready to take up a journey for Palmyra. In a short time after this, a team came for us. As we were about starting on this journey, several of those gentlemen who had withheld their books, in the time of settlement, now brought them forth, and claimed the accounts which had been settled, and which they had, in the presence of witnesses, agreed to erase. We were all ready for the journey, and the teams were waiting on expense. Under these circumstances, I concluded it would be more to our advantage to pay their unjust claims than to hazard a lawsuit. Therefore, by making considerable exertion, I raised the required sum, which was one hundred and fifty dollars, and liquidated the demand.

...Having traveled a short distance, I discovered that Mr. Howard, our teamster, was an unprincipled and unfeeling wretch, by the way in which he handled both our goods and money, as well as by his treatment of my

children, especially Joseph. He would compel him to travel miles at a time on foot, notwithstanding he was still lame. We bore patiently with his abuse, until we got about twenty miles west of Utica, when one morning, as we were getting ready to continue our journey, my oldest son came to me and said, ‘Mother, Mr. Howard has thrown the goods out of the wagon, and is about starting off with the team.’ Upon hearing this, I told him to call the man in. I met him in the bar-room, in the presence of a large company of travelers, both male and female, and I demanded his reason for the course which he was taking. He told me the money which I had given him was all expended, and he could go no further.

I then turned to those present and said, ‘Gentlemen and ladies, please give your attention for a moment. Now, as sure as there is a God in heaven, that team, as well as the goods, belong to my husband, and this man intends to take them from me, or at least the team, leaving me with eight children, without the means of proceeding on my journey.’ Then turning to Mr. Howard, I said, ‘Sir, I now forbid you touching the team, or driving it one step further. You can go about your own business; I have no use for you. I shall take charge of the team myself, and hereafter attend to my own affairs.’ I accordingly did so, and proceeding on our journey, we in a short time arrived at Palmyra, with a small portion of our affects, and barely two cents in cash.

When I again met my husband at Palmyra, we were much reduced—not from indolence, but on account of many reverses of fortune, with which our lives had been rather singularly marked. Notwithstanding our misfortunes, and the embarrassments with which we were surrounded, I was quite happy in once more having the society of my husband, and in throwing myself and children upon the care and affection of a tender companion and father.” (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, pg. 59-63)

JS-H 1:4

Joseph’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, said that during Joseph’s childhood:

09 – “nothing occurred . . . except those trivial circumstances which are common to that state of human existence” (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, pg. 67)

10 – Joseph Smith's Boyhood

“JOSEPH, our third son, having recovered from the typhus fever, after something like two weeks' sickness, one day screamed out while sitting in a chair, with a pain in his shoulder, and, in a very short time he appeared to be in such agony that we feared the consequence would prove to be something very serious. We immediately sent for a doctor. When he arrived and had examined the patient, he said that it was his opinion that this pain was occasioned by a sprain. But the child declared this could not be the case as he had received no injury in any way whatever, but that a severe pain had seized him all at once, of the cause of which he was entirely ignorant. Notwithstanding the child's protestations, still the physician insisted that it must be a sprain, and consequently he anointed his shoulder with some bone linament, but this was of no advantage to him, for the pain continued the same after the anointing as before. When two weeks of extreme suffering had elapsed, the attendant physician concluded to make closer examination, whereupon he found that a large fever sore had gathered between his breast and shoulder. He immediately lanced it, upon which it discharged fully a quart of matter. As soon as the sore had discharged itself the pain left it, and shot like lightning (using his own terms) down his side into the marrow of the bone of his leg and soon became very severe. My poor boy, at this, was almost in despair, and he cried out ‘Oh, father! the pain is so severe, how can I bear it!

His leg soon began to swell and he continued to suffer the greatest agony for the space of two weeks longer. During this period I carried him much of the time in my arms in order to mitigate his suffering as much as possible; in consequence of which I was taken very ill myself. The anxiety of mind that I experienced, together with physical over-exertion, was too much for my constitution and my nature sank under it. Hyrum, who was rather remarkable for his tenderness and sympathy, now desired that he might take my place. As he was a good, trusty boy, we let him do so, and, in order to make the task as easy for him as possible, we laid Joseph upon a low bed and Hyrum sat beside him, almost day and night for some considerable length of time, holding the affected part of his leg in his hands and pressing it between them, so that his afflicted brother might be enabled to endure the pain which was so excruciating that he was scarcely able to bear it. At the end of three weeks, we thought it advisable to send again for the surgeon. When he came he made an incision of eight inches, on the front side of the leg, between the knee and ankle. This relieved the pain in a great measure, and the patient was quite comfortable until the wound began to heal, when the pain became as violent as ever.

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The surgeon was called again, and he this time enlarged the wound, cutting the leg even to the bone. It commenced healing the second time, and as soon as it began to heal it also began to swell again, which swelling continued to rise till we deemed it wisdom to call a council of surgeons; and when they met in consultation they decided that amputation was the only remedy. Soon after coming to this conclusion, they rode up to the door and were invited into a room apart from the one in which Joseph lay. They being seated, I addressed them thus: ‘Gentlemen, what can you do to save my boy’s leg?’ They answered, ‘We can do nothing; we have cut it open to the bone and find it so affected that we consider his leg incurable and that amputation is absolutely necessary in order to save his life.’ This was like a thunderbolt to me. I appealed to the principal surgeon, saying, ‘Dr. Stone, can you not make another trial? Can you not, by cutting around the bone, take out the diseased part, and perhaps that which is sound will heal over, and by this means you will save his leg? You will not, you must not, take off his leg, until you try once more. I will not consent to let you enter his room until you make me this promise.’ After consulting a short time with each other, they agreed to do as I had requested, then went to see my suffering son. One of the doctors, on approaching his bed, said, ‘My poor boy, we have come again.’ ‘Yes,’ said Joseph, ‘I see you have; but you have not come to take off my leg, have you, sir?’ ‘No,’ replied the surgeon, ‘it is your mother’s request that we make one more effort, and that is what we have now come for.’

The principal surgeon, after a moment’s conversation, ordered cords to be brought to bind Joseph fast to a bed-stead; but to this Joseph objected. The doctor, however, insisted that he must be confined, upon which Joseph said very decidedly, ‘No, doctor, I will not be bound, for I can bear the operation much better if I have my liberty.’ ‘Then,’ said Dr. Stone, ‘will you drink some brandy?’ ‘No,’ said Joseph, ‘not one drop.’ ‘Will you take some wine?’ rejoined the doctor. ‘You must take something, or you can never endure the severe operation to which you must be subjected.’ ‘No,’ exclaimed Joseph, ‘I will not touch one particle of liquor, neither will I be tied down; but I will tell you what I will do—I will have my father sit on the bed and hold me in his arms, and then I will do whatever is necessary in order to have the bone taken out.’ Looking at me, he said, ‘Mother, I want you to leave the room, for I know you cannot bear to see me suffer so; father can stand it, but you have carried me so much, and watched over me so long, you are almost worn out.’ Then looking up into my face, his eyes swimming in tears, he continued. ‘Now, mother, promise me that you will not stay, will you? The Lord will help me, and I shall get through with it.’

To this request I consented, and getting a number of folded sheets, and laying them under his leg, I retired, going several hundred yards from the house in order to be out of hearing. The surgeons commenced operating by boring into the bone of his leg, first on one side of the bone where it was affected, then on the other side, after which they broke it off with a pair of forceps or pincers. They thus took away large pieces of the bone. When they broke off the first piece, Joseph screamed out so loudly, that I could not forbear running to him. On my entering the room, he cried out, ‘Oh, mother, go back, go back; I do not want you to come in—I will try to tough it out, if you will go away.’ When the third piece was taken away, I burst into the room again—and oh, my God! what a spectacle for a mother’s eye! The wound torn open, the blood still gushing from it, and the bed literally covered with blood. Joseph was pale as a corpse, and large drops of sweat were rolling down his face, whilst upon every feature was depicted the utmost agony! I was immediately forced from the room, and detained until the operation was completed; but when the act was accomplished, Joseph put upon a clean bed, the room cleared of every appearance of blood, and the instruments which were used in the operation removed, I was permitted again to enter.” (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, pg. 54-58)

Further Reference to Joseph Leg Operation (LeRoy S. Wirthlin, BYU Studies, ‘Nathan Smith (1762-1828) Surgical Consultant to Joseph Smith’, Volume 17, Number 3, Spring 1977; LeRoy S. Wirthlin, BYU Studies, ‘Joseph Smith’s Boyhood Operation: An 1813 Surgical Success’, Volume 21, Number 1, Winter 1981)

11 – “It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that [Joseph Smith] should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fullness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eye upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father’s father, and upon their progenitors clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man.” (Brigham Young, *JD*, 7:289-290).

Alvin - Strong and Handsome (Joseph Smith, *HC*, 5:126-127)

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Hyrum - Patriarch and Co-President of the Church. Second Elder & Martyr (Joseph Fielding Smith, *DS*, 1 218-219)

Samuel - General Authority of the Church & 3rd or Forgotten Martyr (*Church News*, January 7, 1989) Joseph Smith Sr. blessed Samuel and told him that out of all of the children he had, Samuel was the only one who the Savior didn't have to chastise.

William - Reprimanded - October 1835 (Rebellious Spirit), Disfellowshipped - January 1843 (Unchristlike Conduct), Excommunicated October 1845 – Patriarch of Church after Hyrum. [Never listed as Patriarch because he missed being sustained in General Conference.] Edison Don Carlos Smith, grandson eventually did the work for his grandfather William.

“I have seen to it that he has been reinstated into the true church and the true work of God and have received a witness from him from the spirit world that he is satisfied and pleased with his reinstatement. This represents the temple work I have done for him now.” (Clavin P. Rudd, Master's Thesis: William Smith: Both of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 165)

The Family of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack

Joseph married Lucy 24 January 1796 at Turnbridge, Vermont. – He died 14 September 1840 at Nauvoo, Illinois at age 69.
Lucy died 8 May 1855, at Nauvoo Illinois.

Name	Birth Date	Birth Place	Death Date	Place of Death	Age of Death	Wives or Husbands	Affiliated With Church	Children	Moved to Utah	Additional Information
Premature Son	About 1797	Turnbridge Vermont	About 1797	Turnbridge Vermont	Few Hours	-	-	-	-	-
Alvin	11 Feb 1798	Turnbridge Vermont	19 Nov 1823	Palmyra N.Y.	25	None	No	None	-	Buried in Palmyra Cemetery North of Town
Hyrum	9 Feb 1800	Turnbridge Vermont	27 June 1876	Carthage Jail Ill.	44	Jerusha Darden, Died Oct 1837 Mary Fielding Md. 24 Dec 1837	Yes Yes	4 Daughters 2 Sons 1 Daughter 1 Son	-	Mary Fielding brought children to Utah. She died in SLC 21 Sept. 1852
Sophronia	16 May 1803	Turnbridge Vermont	1876	Colchester Illinois	73	1. Calvin W. Stoddard 2. Wm McCleary	Yes	2 Daughters	No	After death of Wm. She made her home in Colchester with daughter
Joseph	23 Dec 1805	Sharon Vermont	27 June 1844	Carthage Jail Ill.	38	Emma Hale	Yes	8 Sons 1 Daughter 2 Adopted	No	His Descendants Affiliated with the Reorganized Church
Samuel H.	13 Mar. 1808	Turnbridge Vermont	30 July 1844	Nauvoo Illinois	36	1. Mary Bailey died Jan. 25 1841 2. Levira Clark	Yes Yes	3 Daughters 1 Son Sam H. B. Smith 3 Daughters	-	Levira Clark brought her own 3 daughters and Mary Bailey's son, H. B. Smith to Utah
Ephraim	13 Mar 1810	Royalton Vermont	24 Mar 1810	Royalton Vermont	11 Days	-	-	-	-	Died Eleven days after birth
William	13 Mar. 1811	Royalton Vermont	13 Nov 1893	Osterdock Iowa	82	1. Caroline Grant 2. Roxy Ann Crant 3. Eliza Sanborn	Yes	2 Daughters 1 Daughter 2 Sons 1 Daughter 3 Sons	No	Only one of the Prophet's brothers not valiant to the restored gospel
Catherine	28 July 1812	Lebanon N.H.	1 Feb 1900	Fountain Green, Ill.	88	W.J. Salisbury	Yes	4 Daughters	No	Affiliated with the Reorganized Church
Don Carlos	25 Mar 1816	Norwich, VT	7 Aug 1841	Nauvoo, IL	25	Agness Coolbirth	Yes	3 Daughters	No	Daughter, Josephine Donna Smith, (Ina Coolbirth) became world renowned for her poetry
Lucy	18 July 1821	Palmyra New York	9 Dec 1882	Colchester Illinois	61	Arthur Milliken	Yes	5 Daughters 4 Sons	No	Affiliated with the Reorganized Church

JS-H 1:4

Society of Friends - Quakers (Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts*, pg. 93)

JS-H 1:6-13

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Nephi saw in vision an important reason why so much contention existed over the Bible. He saw that 'plain and precious things were taken away' from the Bible. Because of this, 'an exceedingly great many do stumble,' and 'Satan hath great power over them' (1 Nephi 13:26-29). This was a major reason for the confusion Joseph Smith felt. Not only did the Lord help Joseph find answers to his questions, but through Joseph he restored additional scripture that helped resolve the confusion and contention over doctrine that existed because of an imperfect Bible.

Present - Promote - Prove

The Prophet sets the proper protocol by simply **presenting** the facts (vs. 2)

Others **promote** (sensationalize) their opinions (vs. 6) Satan works in the extremes! (Gene R. Cook, *Ensign*, May 1982, pg. 26)

Others **prove** (intellectualize) their tenants (vs. 9) Don't end up selling the doctrines! (Neal A. Maxwell, *The Abundance of the Heart*, pg. 200-201)

Forbidding of Tenets and Opinions - (vs. 6, 9, 10) xr (D&C 19:31)

JS-H 1:7

The Smith family was proselyted to Presbyterian faith. Joseph's family members eventually excommunicated for nonattendance. (Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts*, pg. 120)

JS-H 1:11-13

Suggest the possibility—

Reverend George Lane of the Methodist Church preached a sermon on the subject: "What Church Shall I Join?" and quoted the golden text of James 1:5. [Oliver Cowdery refers to a Mr. Lane, a presiding elder of the Methodist Church visiting Palmyra and vicinity... (*M&A*_1:42)] (Larry C. Porter, *BYU Studies* 9:321-340[Spring 1969])

12 – "This single verse of scripture has had a greater impact and a more far reaching effect upon mankind than any other single sentence ever recorded by any prophet in any age. It might well be said that the crowning act of the ministry of James was not his martyrdom for the testimony of Jesus, but his recitation, as guided by the Holy Ghost, of these simple words which led to the opening of the heavens in modern times." (Bruce R. McConkie, *DNTC*, 3 pg. 246-247)

The promise of James to ask of God for wisdom was fulfilled. (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1984, pg. 68)

The Epistle of James - A Foreshadow of Joseph

Epistle of James

Chapter 1

1. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into many afflictions;

3. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed

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Chapter 1

4. His family consisting of eleven souls, namely, my father, Joseph Smith; my mother, Lucy Smith (whose name, previous to her marriage, was Mack, daughter of Solomon Mack); my brothers, Alvin (who died November 19th, 1823, in the 26th year of his age), Hyrum, myself, Samuel Harrison, William, Don Carlos; and my sisters, Sophronia, Catherine, and Lucy.

8. During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

10. In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

11a. While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists,

11b. I was one day reading the **Epistle of James**, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

12. Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in

Epistle of James

7. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

12. Blessed is the man that resisteth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

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settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

12. Blessed is the man that resisteth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

15. After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

16a. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—

16b. just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

17. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son, Hear Him!

18. My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join.

19a. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight;

Epistle of James

22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass.

Chapter 2

1. My brethren, ye cannot have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, and yet have respect to persons.

2. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3. And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

4. Are ye not then partial in yourselves partial judges, and become evil in your thoughts?

5. Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6. But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

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19b. that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

21. Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them.

22. I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.

23. It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself.

25. So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have

Epistle of James

Joseph Smith - History

Chapter 4

4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

7. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

16. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

26. I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned—that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided.

28a. During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three—having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me —

28b .I was left to all kinds of temptations; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God.

28c. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to any one who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament.

Epistle of James

Chapter 5

7. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

16a. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

16b. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

Joseph Smith - History

29. In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.

30. While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

33. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

* * *

Moroni then becomes the personal tutor of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Recorded at least 23 different visits)

“The epistle of St. James is an epistle full of straw, because it contains nothing [of the gospel].” (Martin Luther; John Dillenberger, *New Testament Preface*, pg. 19)

JS-H 1:12

NOTE - Even Joseph Smith could not get all the answers from the text of the Bible, hence his conclusion to ‘ask of God’. (Joseph Smith - History 1:12-13)

NOTE - **Myths Concerning the Bible:**

- 1- The Bible is a Single Book
- 2- The Bible Preceded Doctrine
- 3- True Religion is Bible Religion
- 4- Everything in the Bible is the Word of God
- 5- The Bible Canon is Closed
- 6- The Bible is Common Ground in Missionary Work

JS--H 1:13-15

The pattern provided by the prophet Joseph is the perfect example on how to resolve our own difficulties.

- Verse 8: He recognized the problem and reflected, or pondered about it.
- Verse 10: He asked many questions.
- Verse 11: He read the scriptures.
- Verse 12: More reflection, pondering, and questioning.
- Verse 12-13: He determined he must act upon the prompting from the scriptures.
- Verse 14: He prayed vocally.
- Verse 15: The fact that he went to a place where he ‘had previously designed to go’ leads one to believe that it was often in his mind and he had made a plan.

13 – “The principles he followed in going to the grove should be the basis for all the decisions we all face.” (Gerald E. Melchin, *Ensign*, May 1994, pg. 80-81)

Joseph has 3 major concerns:

1. Concern for his own salvation and sought for forgiveness. (1832, 1835; D&C 20:5)
2. Concern for welfare of mankind. (1832)
3. Wanted to know which church was right. (1838)

14 – “To understand the things of God requires a continuous effort, a pure and receptive heart, and an open mind. Revelation comes in response to our desire and seeking.” (David B. Haight, *Ensign*, May 1992, pg.)

JS-H 1:15

15 – “Truth and untruth, travel together side by side. Light and darkness both offer themselves to the seeker after truth, one to bless, the other to destroy mankind. Whenever a man sets out to seek truth, he will for a time be overtaken by evil. No seeker after truth is, therefore, ever free from temptation, from evil power. No sooner had the Prophet reached the grove than evil sought to destroy him. But he had come to find truth, and he fought against the evil power. He would not be overcome. He fought for truth; and as he fought, light appeared....This is an eternal law.” (John A. Widtsoe, Joseph Smith Memorial Sermon given at the Logan Institute; *The Significance of the First Vision*, December 8, 1946)

JS--H 1:17

16 – “A general consideration of scriptural evidence leads to the conclusion that God the Eternal Father has manifested Himself to earthly prophets or revelators on very few occasions, and then principally to attest the divine authority of His Son, Jesus Christ” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, pg. 39) JST John 1:18

JS--H 1:16-20

17 – “One minute’s instruction from personages clothed with the glory of God coming down from the eternal worlds is worth more than all the volumes that ever were written by uninspired men.” (Orson Pratt, *JD*, 12:354)

What We Learn From The First Vision! (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1984, pg. 68)

1. The existence of God our Father as a personal being, and proof that man was made in the image of God.
2. That Jesus is a personage, separate and distinct from the Father.
3. That Jesus Christ is declared by the Father to be his Son.
4. That Jesus was the conveyer of revelation as taught in the Bible.
5. The promise of James to ask of God for wisdom was fulfilled.
6. The reality of an actual being from an unseen world who tried to destroy Joseph Smith.
7. That there was a falling away from the Church established by Jesus Christ—Joseph was told not to join any of the sects, for they taught the doctrines of men.
8. Joseph Smith became a witness for God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

What Resulted From The First Vision? (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1984, pg. 68)

1. The Book of Mormon, another witness for Christ, was received.
2. The priesthood, or authority to perform saving ordinances, was restored, including the sealing powers of the priesthood.
3. The Church of Jesus Christ was again organized on the earth.
4. Revelations came to the Prophet Joseph Smith for the building of the kingdom of God upon the earth, declaring the universal salvation of mankind.
5. Keys, principles, and powers were restored for the carrying out of the three great missions of the Church—the preaching of the gospel, the means of perfecting the Saints, and temples and ordinances therein for the redemption of the living and the dead.

JS--H 1:19

18 – “This is not just another Church. This is not just one of a family of Christian churches. This is the Church and kingdom of God, the only true Church upon the face of the earth.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *TETB*, pg. 164-165) D&C 1:30

19 – “When we say that the Lord is not well pleased with those churches, we do not mean that he is not pleased with the members thereof.” (James E. Talmage, *CR*, October 1928, pg. 120)

20 – “—‘those professors are all corrupt,’ it should not be taken as referring to the whole body of Christians; but rather as referring to the teachers of their creeds—the ‘professors;’ that term not being used in the sense of ‘confessors’ of the creeds, who merely accept doctrine from the teachings of the ‘professors’—the following and not the leaders.

This distinction is justified from the immediate context of the passage: ‘they (the ‘professors’) draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they (the ‘professors’) *teach for doctrine the commandments of men.*’ This context clearly proves that the charge of ‘corruption’ is limited at least to the ‘teachers,’ not to the whole body of Christians. **Moreover, I am convinced myself that the declaration is still further limited to the ‘professors’ who founded, and by that act taught to the world the creeds that are an ‘abomination’ in the sight of God—a fact not at all difficult of belief, or of proof, upon an analysis of the creeds themselves. And those who originally could form such conceptions of God and man, and the purpose of human existence, as the creeds teach, were certainly men of warped understanding, men of perverted, or ‘corrupted’ minds.** But as to the whole body of Christians, we know that there were at the time of the opening of this New Dispensation of the gospel, and now, many who were not only not corrupt, except for the ordinary sins and weaknesses or ‘corruption’ of our human

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nature—but virtuous men and women, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, seeking after God, and hindered from finding him only by the abominable creeds formulated by the ‘professors’ of the passage here considered.” (B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1: 61)

JS--H 1:20

Joseph wrote that at the time of the First Vision, among other things, he was told that ‘the fullness of the Gospel should at some future time be made known unto me.’ (*HC*, 4:536)

JS--H 1:20

What was the physical effect on Joseph from this spiritual experience? Compare Joseph’s experience with the experience of others who saw God (1 Nephi 1:6-7; Daniel 10:7-8; Moses 1:9-10). What do these experiences teach us about God and about man? (see also Mosiah 4:5, 11-12; D&C 67:11-12 and Moses 1:1-2, 5, 9-11, 14). Speaking of the experience recorded in Moses 1:9-10, Spencer W. Kimball said,

21 – “To endure the glory of the Father or of the glorified Christ, a mortal being must be translated or otherwise fortified...There is a protective force which God brings into play when he exposes his human servants to the glories of his person and his works. ... It is significant to note that when the protection from such transcendent glory was relaxed, that Moses was left weak and near helpless.” (*CR*, April 1964, pp. 94-95)

22 – “An unusual outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord is typically followed by physical exhaustion.” (Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, pg. 280-81)

23 – “While the wonders of the heavens were focused to their view, [in the vision recorded in D&C 76, received by the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon] Joseph the Seer sat firmly and calmly in the midst if this magnificent glory, but his scribe sat limp and pale. Observing Rigdon’s pallor and flaccidity, Joseph smiled and said, ‘Sidney is not used to it as I am.’” (*Juvenile Instructor*, 27:202-204)

Review of the Reality - JS-H 1:20-26 (1820-1823)

(D&C 20:5-6)

JS--H 1:21

24 – Elder Hugh B. Brown related the following conversation he had as he questioned a noted lawyer concerning modern revelation:

“You say that my belief that God spoke to man in this age is fantastic and absurd?”

‘To me it is.’

‘Do you believe that God ever did speak to anyone?’

‘Certainly, all through the Bible we have evidence of that. . . .’

‘Then . . . it was standard procedure in Bible times for God to talk to man.’

‘I think I will admit that, but it stopped shortly after the first century of the Christian era.’

‘Why do you think it stopped?’

‘I can’t say. . . .’

‘May I suggest some possible reasons: Perhaps God does not speak to man any more because he cannot. He has lost the power.’

‘Of course that would be blasphemous.’

‘Well, then, if you don’t accept that, perhaps he doesn’t speak to men because He doesn’t love us anymore; He is no longer interested in the affairs of men.’

‘No. God loves all men, and He is no respecter of persons.’

‘Well, then, if He could speak, and if He loves us, then the only other possible answer, as I see it, is that we

don't need Him. We have made such rapid strides in science; we are so well educated, that we don't need God anymore.'

"And then he said, and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war, 'Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now'" (*Profile of a Prophet*, BYU Speeches of the Year, pg. 3-5) 2 Nephi 27:23

JS--H 1:20-25, 27

Those who stand for the truth and are doing the work of the Lord can expect that they will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12; 3 Nephi 12:10; D&C 127:2-4).

In addition, it should be noted that 'persecution is one of the chief weapons in the hands of false priests; they use it to preserve their false religions.' (Bruce R McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 2:393)

Groups that persecuted:

Professors of Religion - Great deal of Prejudice and Great Persecution

Men of High Standing - Bitter Persecution

Great Ones of the Most Popular Sects - Most Bitter Persecution and Reviling

Friends - Persecution

Review of the Reality - JS-H 1:27-54 (1820-1823)

(D&C 20:6-7)

JS--H 1:28-29

The young prophet Joseph, being a mortal and faced with the challenges of being human, questioned his personal worthiness before the Lord. Like Joseph, other prophets have expressed the same concern about their worthiness (2 Nephi 4:17-19; Moses 6:31).

25 – "But just as God 'cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance' (D&C 1:31), as we become more like Him, neither can we. The best people have a heightened awareness of what little of the worst is still in them!" (Neal A. Maxwell, *Notwithstanding My Weakness*, pg. 16-17)

JS--H 1:29

September 21-22 seems to be an appropriate time for Moroni to introduce the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith. The night Moroni visited Joseph was the first day of Autumn, or first day of the harvest season. Many times in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord used the symbolism of the harvest. The Lord promised that in the last days he would harvest, or gather his people for the 'last time,' and that he would use the Book of Mormon as a tool of gathering (Isaiah 11:11; Jacob 6:2; Moses 7:62). President Ezra Taft Benson said, 'Combined with the Spirit of the Lord, the Book of Mormon is the greatest single tool which God has given us to convert the world. If we are to have the harvest of souls that [we desire], then we must use the instrument which God has designed for that task--the Book of Mormon.' (*Ensign*, November 1984, pg. 7)

NOTES - vs. 59 - Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24)

JS--H 1:33

Mormon 6:6; D&C 27:5

Cumorah [Hebrew] *cmrh* = (the 'h' is silent) "shrinking and maturing of fruits by underground storage."

Moroni - Holds the Priesthood Key of the Stick of Ephraim (Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, November 2003, pg. 45)

JS--H 1:35

The earliest recorded use of a Urim and Thummim is by the brother of Jared in the Book of Mormon (Ether 3:21-28). Moroni possessed this same Urim and Thummim, which he hid up with the plates (Ether 4:4-5).

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Later, he gave them to Joseph Smith, and they were part of what the Three Witnesses saw (D&C 17:1; *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:139-40).

They were called ‘Interpreters’ in the Book of Mormon and used by some Nephite prophets (Mosiah 8:13-19; 28:11-20; Alma 37:21-25; Ether 4:4-5; *Bible Dictionary*, ‘Urim and Thummim’).

The Hebrew words *urim* and *thummim* mean *lights* and *perfection* respectively, and the person who uses them is called a ‘seer.’ They are generally associated with the translation of unknown languages (see Mosiah 8:9-13 and Ether 3:22-24). However, many of the early sections of the Doctrine and Covenants were also received with the help of the Urim and Thummim (D&C 3; 6; 7; 11; 14; 17). In receiving revelation later in his life, the Prophet Joseph did not appear to need the Urim and Thummim. Elder John A. Widtsoe explained that as Joseph Smith ‘grew in spiritual power, he learned to bring his spirit into such harmony with divinity that it became, as it were, a Urim and Thummim to him, and God’s will was revealed without the intervention of external aids.’ (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, pg. 90)

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JS--H 1:36-43 From the scriptures cited by the Prophet in Joseph Smith—History, we can see that Moroni did not select random passages to outline the future of the Lord’s kingdom. They were chosen specifically to introduce the Prophet to his work. In them the following aspects of the mission of the Church in the last days are discussed:

<u>Passages</u>	<u>Categories</u>	<u>Passages</u>	<u>Categories</u>
Deut. 32:23–24	[1, 7]	Isa. 29:14	[3, 4]
Deut. 32:43	[10]	Isa. 43:6	[6]
Ps. 100:1–2	[10]	Jer. 16:16	[6]
Ps. 107:1–7	[6]	Jer. 30:18–21	[10]
Ps. 144:11–12	[8, 10]	Jer. 31:1	[10]
Ps. 144:13	[10]	Jer. 31:6	[6]
Ps. 146:10	[10]	Jer. 31:8	[6]
Isa. 1:7	[1]	Jer. 31:9	[6]
Isa. 1:23–24	[1]	Jer. 31:27–28	[10]
Isa. 1:25–26	[1, 7, 10]	Jer. 31:32–33	[10]
Isa. 2:1–4	[10]	Jer. 50:4–5	[6]
Isa. 4:5–6	[10]	Joel 2:28–32	[3, 10]
Isa. 11:1–16	[2, 6, 7, 10]	Mal. 3:1–4	[2, 7, 9, 10]
Isa. 29:11	[4]	Mal. 4:1–6	[5, 7, 8]
Isa. 29:13	[1, 2, 3]	Acts 3:22–23	[7]
		1 Cor. 1:27–29	[2]

[The numbers in brackets refer to the subject-matter categories listed below.]

1. Apostasy and Scattering
2. The calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith
3. The opening of the heavens during the Restoration
4. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon
5. The restoration of the Priesthood and of the sealing keys
6. The Gathering of the elect
7. Destruction and purification prior to and during the Second Coming
8. Deliverance for the faithful
9. The Second Coming
10. The Premillennial and Millennial state of the faithful

(Kent P. Jackson, *Ensign*, “Moroni’s Message to Joseph Smith,” August 1990, pg. 13-16)

JS--H 1:44-49

JS--H 1:50-53

26 – “His first impulse was to lift the record out. Eagerly he attempted to grasp the inestimable treasure; but as he touched the plates he received a violent jar which deprived him of his natural strength. He desisted for a moment and then made a second attempt but was more sensibly shocked than before. A third trial was also ineffectual, and he exclaimed, ‘Why can I not obtain this book?’ ‘Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord,’ answered a voice nearby.

Joseph looked in the direction from whence the voice had come and saw the angel who had previously given him the information concerning the ancient book. In an instant before his mind came all the instructions given him the night before. Had he not, walked to the hill, been dreaming of wealth, of release from want, both for himself and family, of ease and comfort, security, with importance of the world? Suddenly in his memory echoed the final warning of the angel to have ‘no other object in view in seeking the plates but to glorify God, and [you] must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building up his kingdom.’ Therefore of the consequence of these untoward motives, he had no power to take possession of the plates. Joseph was to learn that one engaged in the work of the Lord must not only be *willing* to keep the commandments but must be *able* to keep them. His repentance was swift. He stood humbled and submissive. He looked again to the Lord in prayer, and the Lord manifested his condescension and mercy.

The heavens were opened and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While he gazed in awe and admiration, the angel said, ‘Look!’ As the messenger spoke, Joseph beheld the ‘Prince of Darkness,’ surrounded by his innumerable train of associates.

As the vision of Perdition moved before Joseph’s consciousness, the angel Moroni explained, ‘All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the powers of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold whatever entices and leads to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one.’ So vividly was the awfulness and misery of those who are led away by the prince of darkness impressed upon the mind of Joseph and affixed to his memory that he remembered it always.” (*Comprehensive History of the Church* 1:77-78)

27 – “After arriving at the repository, a little exertion in removing the soil from the edges of the top of the box, and a light pry, brought to his natural vision its contents. No sooner did he behold this sacred treasure than his hopes were renewed, and he supposed his success certain; and without first attempting to take it from its long place of deposit, he thought, perhaps, there might be something more equally as valuable, and to take only the plates, might give others an opportunity of obtaining the remainder, which could be secure, would still add to his store of wealth. These, in short, were his reflections, without once thinking of the solemn instruction of the heavenly messenger, that all must be done with an express view of glorying God.

On attempting to take possession of the record a shock was produced upon his system, by an invisible power which deprived him, in a measure, of his natural strength. He desisted for an instant, and then made another attempt, but was more sensibly shocked than before. What was the occasion of this he knew not there was the pure unsullied record, as had been described—he had heard of the power of enchantment, and a thousand like stories, which held the hidden treasures of the earth, and supposed that physical exertion and personal strength was only necessary to enable him to yet obtain the object of his wish. He therefore made the third attempt with an increased exertion, when his strength failed him more than at either of the former times, and without premeditating he exclaimed, “Why can I not obtain this book?” “Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord,” answered a voice, within a seeming short distance. He looked, and to his astonishment, there stood the angel who had previously given him the directions concerning this matter. In an instant, all the former instructions, the great intelligence concerning Israel and the last days, were brought to his mind: he thought of the time when his heart was fervently engaged in prayer to the Lord, when his spirit was contrite, and when his holy messenger from the skies unfolded the wonderful things connected with this record. He had come, to be sure, and found the word of the angel fulfilled concerning the reality of the record, but he had failed to remember the great end for which they had been kept, and in consequence could not have power to take them into his possession and

bear them away.

At that instant he looked to the Lord in prayer, and as he prayed darkness began to disperse from his mind and his soul was lit up as it was the evening before, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit; and again did the Lord manifest his condescension and mercy: the heavens were opened and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While he thus stood gazing and admiring, the angel said, "Look!" and as he thus spake he beheld the prince of darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before him, and the heavenly messenger said, "All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold, whatever entices and leads to good and to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one: It is he that fills the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest. You now see why you could not obtain this record; that the commandment was strict, and that if ever these sacred things are obtained they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord. They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world: they were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge which they contain they are of no worth among the children of men, only for their knowledge. On them is contained the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this land, and when it shall be brought forth by the power of God it shall be carried to the Gentiles, of whom many will receive it, and after will the seed of Israel be brought into the fold of their Redeemer by obeying it also. Those who keep the commandments of the Lord on this land, desired this at his hand, and through the prayer of faith obtained the promises, that if their descendants should transgress and fall away, that a record might be kept and in the last days come to their children. These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them, must be fulfilled. No man can obtain them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred; and besides, should they be entrusted in unholy hands the knowledge could not come to the world, because they cannot be interpreted by the learning of this generation; consequently, they would be considered of no worth, only as precious metal. Therefore, remember, that they are to be translated by the gift and power of God. By them will the Lord work a great and a marvelous work: the wisdom of the wise shall become as nought, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed those who profess to know the truth but walk in deceit, shall tremble with anger; but with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted. You have now beheld the power of God manifested and the power of satan: you see that there is nothing that is desirable in the works of darkness; that they cannot bring happiness; that those who are overcome therewith are miserable, while on the other hand the righteous are blessed with a place in the kingdom of God where joy unspeakable surrounds them. There they rest beyond the power of the enemy of truth, where no evil can disturb them. The glory of God crowns them, and they continually feast upon his goodness and enjoy his smiles. **Behold, notwithstanding you have seen this great display of power, by which you may ever be able to detect the evil one, yet I give unto you another sign, and when it comes to pass then know that the Lord is God and that he will fulfil his purposes, and that the knowledge which this record contains will go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people under the whole heaven. This is the sign: When these things begin to be known, that is, when it is known that the Lord has shown you these things, the workers of iniquity will seek your overthrow: they will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will seek to take your life;** but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will again give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after that they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. ***Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the Rock will seek to overthrow this church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther,*** increasing in knowledge till they shall be sanctified and receive an inheritance where the glory of God will rest upon them; and when this takes place, and all things are prepared, the ten tribes of Israel will be revealed in the north country, whither they have been for a long season; and when this is fulfilled will be brought to pass that saying of the prophet—'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord'—But,

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notwithstanding the workers of iniquity shall seek your destruction the arm of the Lord will be extended, and you will be borne off conqueror, if you keep all his commandments. Your name shall be known among the nations, for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage: with the one it shall be had in honor, and with the other in reproach; yet, with these it shall be a terror because of the great and marvelous work which shall follow the coming forth of this fulness of the gospel. Now, go thy way, remembering what the Lord has done for thee, and be diligent in keeping his commandments, and he will deliver thee from temptations and all the arts and devices of the wicked one.—Forget not to pray, that thy mind may become strong, that when he shall manifest unto thee, thou mayest have power to escape the evil, and obtain these precious things." (Messenger and Advocate, (October 1835-September 1836), Volume 2, October 1835, Number 13, pg. 198-200)

28 – Despite ridiculous stories from enemies, people knew that Joseph had taken the plates from the northwest side of the Hill Cumorah, for people had seen the stone box. In 1871, Edward Stevenson visited the Hill Cumorah and an old gentleman pointed out the spot of ground where the stone box was placed and stated that soon after the rumor spread of Joe Smith and the Gold Bible, the whole country was greatly excited and many searched for hidden treasure. He also told him that he had seen some good-sized flat stones that had rolled down the hill and lay near the bottom. They were doubtless stones used for the side of the stone box, but have long since been taken away. (Edward Stevenson, *Reminiscences of Joseph the Prophet and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon*, (1893) pg. 13)

29 – Joseph’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith said that in 1823 “the time had not yet come for the plates to be brought forth to the world; that he could not take them...until he had learned to keep the commandments of God--not only till he was willing but able to do it.” (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, pg. 81)

Following his visit with Joseph Smith on 22 September 1823, Moroni appeared to Joseph on at least fifteen other occasions. (See *HC*, 1:16-23, 54-57; and *CHC*, 1:124, 127)

**ANGELIC VISITATION
TO THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH**

God the Father	Isaac
Jesus Christ	Jacob
Moroni	Moses
John the Baptist	Elijah
Peter	Elias
James	Paul
John	Nephi
Adam	Alma
Abel	Mormon
Seth	Rachael
Enoch	Eve
Noah	Both set of 12 Apostles
Abraham	All Dispensation Leaders

(References: D&C 128:20-21; *Journal of Discourses*, 17:324; 18:325-326; 21:94; Ivan J. Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration*, pg. 68; Truman Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, pg. 44)

30 – “During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as

if he had spent his whole life among them.” (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, pg. 83)

Review of the Reality - JS-H 1:55-65 (September 22, 1823)

(D&C 20:8-9)

JS--H 1:56

31 – Just before Alvin died, he said to Joseph, “I want you to be a good boy, and do everything that lies in your power to obtain the Record. Be faithful in receiving instruction, and in keeping every commandment that is given you.” (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, pg. 87)

JS--H 1:57-58

Knowing what the Lord later revealed about marriage (D&C 49:15), it is not surprising that Joseph did not receive the Book of Mormon plates to translate, or receive other important keys and authorities necessary for the restoration of the Church until after he was married. Marriage provides an important perspective and maturity to a person’s life.

Joseph met Emma two years before they were married, during which time they built a friendship and trust that was strong enough that Emma was willing to marry Joseph even though her parents did not like or believe him. Emma served as the first scribe in the Book of Mormon translation, and in many other ways that provided invaluable support for the young Prophet.

JS--H 1:59

FEAST of TRUMPETS - Leviticus 23:24

One of the seven Israelite Feast. It was a festival for calling the House of Israel to regather or reawake. It consisted of a four-part memorial:

1. Final Harvest
2. The day set to remember God’s ancient promises to regather Israel
3. A time of new revelation
4. A time to prepare for the Millennium

How interesting that we place Moroni, the being commanded by God to return on the Israelite day of the Feast of Trumpets, atop the temples of the Lord with a trumpet to symbolize the sounding of God’s promise to regather in these last days his people and the coming forth of new revelation known as the Book of Mormon, preparatory to the second coming of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

JS--H 1:60

D&C 5:6-7; D&C 18:34-35

32 – “The plates were secreted about three miles from home, in the following manner: Finding an old birch log much decayed, excepting the bark, which was in a measure sound, he took his pocket knife and cut the bark with some care, then turned it back and made a hole of sufficient size to receive the plates, and, laying them in the cavity thus formed, he replaced the bark; after which he laid across the log, in several places, some old stuff that happened to lay near, in order to conceal as much as possible the place in which they were deposited.

Joseph, on coming to them, took them from their secret place, and, wrapping them in his linen frock, placed them under his arm and started for home.

After proceeding a short distance, he thought it would be more safe to leave the road and go through the woods. Traveling some distance after he left the road, he came to a large windfall, and as he was jumping over a log, a man sprang up from behind it and gave him a heavy blow with a gun. Joseph turned around and knocked him down, then ran at the top of his speed. About half a mile farther he was attacked again in the same manner as before; he knocked this man down in like manner as the former and ran on again; and before he reached home he was assaulted the third time. In striking the last one, he dislocated his thumb, which, however, he did not notice until he came within sight of the house, when he threw himself down in the corner of the fence in order to recover his breath. As soon as he was able, he arose and came to the house. He was still altogether speechless from fright and the fatigue of running.” (Lucy Mack Smith,

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History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, 107-108)

33 – Why Plates Were Returned to Moroni.

“The question has been asked many times of our elders: Where are the plates? Does the Church have in its possession the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated by Joseph Smith?”

When the answer is given that the plates were received again by the Angel Moroni, who through the centuries since they were hid up unto the Lord has been their special guardian, the reply is generally made: What a wonderful aid it would be to your people in convincing the world of the truth of your story if you could show the plates to prove that Joseph Smith really had them.

Perhaps it is natural for a man who hears for the first time the story of Joseph Smith and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon to propound such a question and to think that the plates, if they had been placed in some museum where the public could examine them, would have added much to prove the authenticity of the Prophet's story. With deeper reflection we discover that this would not have been the case, for it is not the way the Lord proves his truth, now or at any other time. However, in surprise, and in some cases with an incredulous smile, the propounder of this question turns away feeling that such an answer as he has received is an admission that Joseph Smith never had the plates and practiced a fraud upon the public.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *DS*, 3: 227)

34 – “When Joseph obtained the treasure, the priests, the deacons, and religionists of every grade, went hand in hand with the fortune-teller, and with every wicked person, to get it out of his hands, and, to accomplish this, a part of them came out and persecuted him.” (Brigham Young, *JD*, 2:181)

JS--H 1:61

35 – “I believe I will take the liberty to tell you of another circumstance that will be as marvelous as anything can be. This is an incident in the life of Oliver Cowdery, but he did not take the liberty of telling such things in meeting as I take. I tell these things to you, and I have a motive for doing so. I want to carry them to the ears of my brethren and sisters, and to the children also, that they may grow to an understanding of some things that seem to be entirely hidden from the human family. Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates. Joseph did not translate all of the plates; there was a portion of them sealed, which you can learn from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more plates than probably many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls. The first time they went there the sword of Laban hung upon the wall; but when they went again it had been taken down and laid upon the table across the gold plates; it was unsheathed, and on it was written these words: *‘This sword will never be sheathed again until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and his Christ.’* I tell you this as coming not only from Oliver Cowdery, but others who were familiar with it, and who understood it just as well as we understand coming to this meeting, enjoying the day, and by and by we separate and go away, forgetting most of what is said, but remembering some things. So is it with other circumstances in life. I relate this to you, and I want you to understand it. I take this liberty of referring to those things so that they will not be forgotten and lost.” (Brigham Young, June 17, 1877, *JD*, 19:39-40)

JS--H 1:61-65

How did this experience of Martin Harris fulfill the prophecy in Isaiah 29:11-12 and 2 Nephi 27:15-21?

Review of the Reality - JS-H 1:66-75