

THE PEARL OF
GREAT PRICE
STUDENT MANUAL

RELIGION 327



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INTRODUCTION

The Pearl of Great Price is a book of scripture, and the Lord will bless you as you carefully read and ponder the sacred words found in this book. This student manual provides quotations and commentary to support and enhance your study of the Pearl of Great Price.

Elder Milton R. Hunter, who was a member of the Seventy, said that the Pearl of Great Price is “a pearl indeed.” He then explained the uniqueness of its sacred writings:

“They are compacted in approximately sixty pages, but every page is dynamic and powerful. It is a wonderful book.

“The Pearl of Great Price . . . contains revelations on certain subjects superior to any other scriptures or writings on those subjects found in the world; for example, Abraham’s vision of pre-mortal life in which he learned of the eternal nature of things; of the grand council in heaven; and of the plan of salvation as presented there constitutes one of the greatest of God’s revelations to his holy prophets. And the knowledge obtained by Moses in his vision of Lucifer and the part he played at the grand council, added to Abraham’s vision, gives us the most complete understanding found in any literature regarding man’s pre-mortal life and God’s purposes for the good of man.

“The Pearl of Great Price also helps to clarify some of the difficult passages in the other scriptures” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1955, 67).

Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified that the Pearl of Great Price “contains some of the greatest revelations of God to man” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1952, 107).

If you seek the influence of the Holy Ghost as you study this choice book of scripture, you will gain greater understanding and appreciation for the Lord’s work with His children—from the premortal life, the great dispensations of the Old Testament, the teachings of the Savior, and into this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. As your knowledge and testimony increase, so will your love for the Lord and your commitment to His great latter-day work.



THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Title Page. Why Is It Called the “Pearl of Great Price”?

“A merchant man, seeking goodly pearls . . . , when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:45–46).

In 1851 there were over 32,000 members of the Church in England. Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who was presiding over the mission and the Church there, published a compilation of several revelations and texts of scripture by the Prophet Joseph Smith and called this collection the Pearl of Great Price. He said it would be “a source of much instruction and edification to many thousands of the Saints, who will by an acquaintance with its precious contents, be more abundantly qualified to set forth and defend the principles of our Holy Faith before all men” (*Millennial Star*, 15 July 1851, 217).

On 10 October 1880, by action of the First Presidency and the general conference, the Pearl of Great Price became a standard work of the Church. “Several revisions have been made in the contents as the needs of the Church have required. In 1878 portions of the Book of Moses not contained in the first edition were added. In 1902 certain parts of the Pearl of Great Price that duplicated material also published in the Doctrine and Covenants were omitted. . . . [In 1976] two items of revelation were added. In 1979 these two items were removed from the Pearl of Great Price and placed in the Doctrine and Covenants, where they now appear as sections 137 and 138” (Pearl of Great Price, introductory note). Its present contents include selections from the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham (with three facsimiles), Joseph Smith—Matthew, Joseph Smith—History, and the Articles of Faith.

THE BOOK OF MOSES

Contents:

- *God reveals Himself to Moses*
- *Satan confronts Moses*
- *The creation of this earth and all forms of life hereon*
- *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*
- *The Fall begins mortality on this earth*
- *Adam and Eve learn the plan of salvation*
- *People choose between good and evil*
- *Enoch's ministry*
- *Enoch and his people are translated and taken up into heaven*
- *Methuselah and Noah*

Title Page. An Extract from the Translation of the Bible

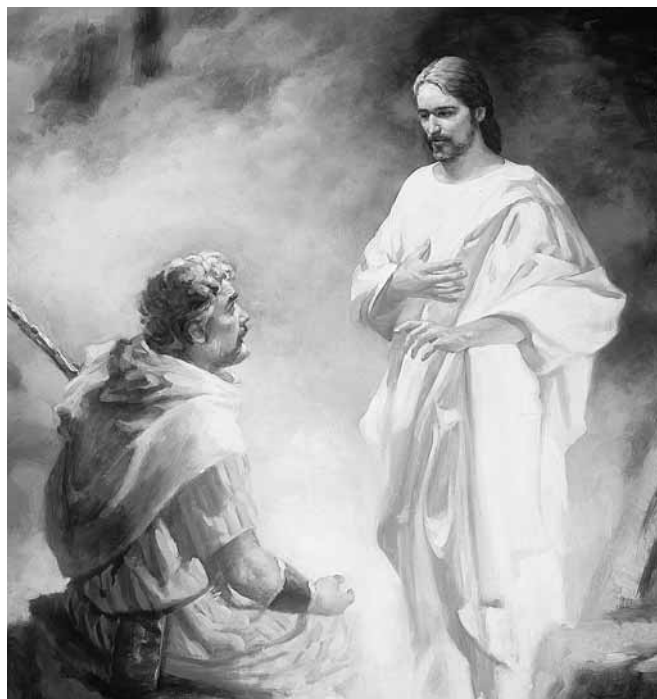
Soon after the Church was organized on 6 April 1830, the Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith to begin an inspired translation, or revision, of the King James Version of the Bible. Today this inspired revision, which the Prophet worked on until the time of his death, is known as the Joseph Smith Translation. The Prophet Joseph Smith restored to the Bible “many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord [which were] taken away” (1 Nephi 13:26; see also 1 Nephi 13:39–40). Between June 1830 and February 1831, the Prophet completed Genesis 1:1 through 6:13, which is now contained in the Pearl of Great Price as Moses 1–8.

The book of Moses may be divided into two major sections: Moses 1, which relates experiences from Moses’ life that are not found in the book of Genesis, and Moses 2–8, which contains the inspired and restored account of events described in the Bible, including the Creation of the earth; the Fall of Adam and Eve; the story of Cain and Abel; the ministry, teachings, and visions of Enoch; and the story of Noah up to the time the Lord decreed the destruction of all flesh by the Flood. At this point, one must return to Genesis 6:14 for a continuation of the scriptural record.

In an introduction to Moses 1, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: “The Lord, who well knew our infantile and delicate situation, vouchsafed for us a supply of strength, and granted us ‘line upon line of knowledge—here a little and there a little,’ of which the following was a precious morsel” (*History of the Church*, 1:98).

MOSES 1:1–11

GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO MOSES



Moses 1:1. “Moses Was Caught Up into an Exceedingly High Mountain”

The vision recorded in Moses 1 took place after Jehovah spoke to Moses at the burning bush but before Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea (see Moses 1:17, 25–26).

Moses 1:2, 9–11. Why Could Moses Endure the Presence of God?

Moses was able to endure God’s presence because “the glory of God was upon Moses” (Moses 1:2); he was transfigured (see v. 11; see also D&C 67:10–12). Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

“*Transfiguration* is a special change in appearance and nature which is wrought upon a person or thing by the power of God. This divine transformation is from a lower to a higher state; it results in a more exalted, impressive, and glorious condition. . . .

“By the power of the Holy Ghost many prophets have been transfigured so as to stand in the presence of God and view the visions of eternity” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 803).

Moses 1:3–8. Who Spoke to Moses?

The personage who spoke to Moses was the premortal Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. Being one with Heavenly Father, Jesus at

times speaks as if He were God the Father (see Moses 1:6). This is known as divine investiture, whereby Christ is invested with authority to speak for and in behalf of the Father (see also D&C 29:1, 42, 46).

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “All revelation since the fall has come through Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. . . . He is the God of Israel, the Holy One of Israel; the one who led that nation out of Egyptian bondage, and who gave and fulfilled the Law of Moses. The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall, and he has never appeared except to introduce and bear record of the Son” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:27).

For examples of the Father bearing record of the Son, see Matthew 3:16–17; 17:5; John 12:28; 3 Nephi 11:6–7; Joseph Smith—History 1:17.

Moses 1:4–6. Moses Was a Son of God



All people on earth are spirit children of God, our Heavenly Father. In a 1909 discourse titled “The Origin of Man,” the First Presidency wrote: “Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of evolving into a God” (*Improvement Era*, Nov. 1909, 81; see also Acts 17:27–28; Hebrews 12:9; Marion G. Romney, *Learning for the Eternities*, George J. Romney, comp. [1977], 31–32).

Moses 1:6. “There Is No God beside Me”

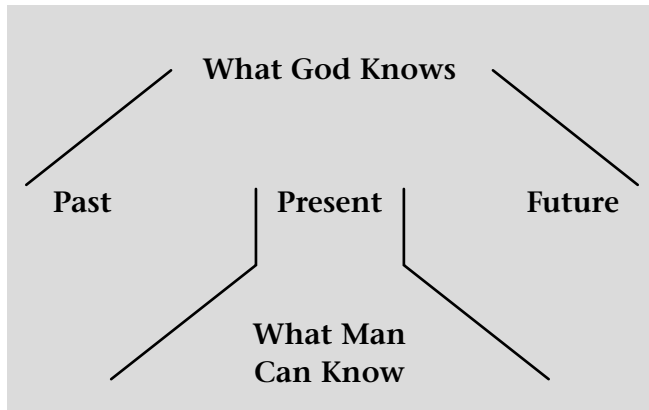
The phrase “there is no God beside me” should not be interpreted to mean that mankind does not have the eternal potential to become like God. In a 1912 discourse on Moses 1:6, the First Presidency gave the historical context to help us understand this phrase:

“Moses was reared in an atmosphere of idolatry. There were numerous deities [gods] among the Egyptians. In commencing the work which the Lord said he had for Moses to do, it was necessary to center his mind and faith upon God the Eternal Father as the only Being to worship. . . .

“ . . . The sole object of worship, God the Eternal Father, stands supreme and alone, and it is in the name of the Only Begotten that we thus approach Him, as Christ taught always” (“Only One God to Worship,” *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1912, 484–85).

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: “The Father *is* the one true God. *This* thing is certain: no one will ever ascend above Him; no one will ever replace Him. Nor will anything ever change the relationship that we, His literal offspring, have with Him. He is Elohim, the Father. He is God. Of Him there *is* only one. We revere our Father and our God; we *worship* Him” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 85; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 69).

Moses 1:6. “All Things Are Present with Me”



Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: “God does not live in the dimension of time as do we. We are not only hampered by our finiteness (experiential and intellectual), but also by being in the dimension of time. Moreover, God, since ‘all things are present’ with him, is not simply predicting based solely on the past. In ways that are not clear to us, he *sees* rather than *foresees* the future, because all things are at once present before him” (*Things As They Really Are* [1978], 29; see also Alma 40:8; D&C 130:4–7).

Concerning God’s knowledge of all things, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Without the knowledge of all things God would not be able to save any portion of his creatures; for it is by reason of the knowledge which he has of all things, from the beginning to the end, that enables him to give that understanding to his creatures by which they are made partakers of eternal life; and if it were not for the idea existing in the minds of men that God had all knowledge it would be impossible for them to exercise faith in him” (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 51–52; see also D&C 88:41; 93:8–36).

God’s foreknowledge of all things does not hinder or limit our freedom to choose good or evil. Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “Many people have been led to regard this foreknowledge of God as a predestination whereby souls are designated for glory or condemnation even before their birth in the flesh, and irrespective of individual merit or demerit. This heretical doctrine seeks to rob Deity of mercy, justice, and love; it would make God appear capricious and selfish, directing and creating all things solely for His own glory, caring not for the suffering of His victims. How dreadful, how inconsistent is such an idea of God! It leads

to the absurd conclusion that the mere knowledge of coming events must act as a determining influence in bringing about those occurrences. God’s knowledge of spiritual and of human nature enables Him to conclude with certainty as to the actions of any of His children under given conditions; yet that knowledge is not of compelling force upon the creature” (*The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed., [1924], 191).

Moses 1:10. “Man Is Nothing”

Moses had lived for forty years as a royal prince of Egypt and was revered as a renowned military leader. After having experienced the power and glory of God, however, he humbly acknowledged that in comparison, “man is nothing.” Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote that Moses’ statement “surely was not a reflection on man, ‘God’s greatest miracle,’ but a placing of man in the vast perspective of God’s creations and a realizing, even so, that we are God’s exclusive work and his greatest glory” (*Notwithstanding My Weakness* [1981], 75). Latter-day scripture affirms the truth that with and through God man can fulfill his divine potential to truly become even as God (see D&C 76:55–59, 92–95; 88:107; 121:29; 132:20).

MOSES 1:12–23 SATAN COMMANDED MOSES TO WORSHIP HIM

Moses 1:19. Why Would Satan Claim to Be “the Only Begotten”?

Satan’s arrogant claim exposes his basic motivation: to deceive mankind into worshipping him so that they, like him, will be miserable forever (see 2 Nephi 2:17–18; Moses 4:1–4). It also reveals Satan’s basic objectives: to seek Heavenly Father’s power and glory and to supplant and usurp the role of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Satan seeks to displace the Father Himself.

Moses 1:20. “Moses Began to Fear Exceedingly”

When he felt afraid in Satan’s presence, Moses saw the bitterness of hell. Being in constant rebellion toward God truly is a living hell, and that is the way Satan wants us to live. Yet, there is no need to fear if we are faithful, for we know that the wisdom of God is greater than the cunning of the devil (see D&C 10:43). We also know that Satan will eventually be bound (see D&C 45:55; 88:110), will tremble in fear (see D&C 35:24), and will be cast out from this earth and from among its people (see D&C 76:33, 36). We can, even now, bind Satan through righteous living, so that he has no power over us (see 1 Nephi 22:26).

Moses 1:12–22. Satan’s Temptations

Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, gave the following suggestion on how to resist Satan’s temptations:

“The importance of not accommodating temptation in the least degree is underlined by the Savior’s example. Did not he recognize the danger when he was on the mountain with his fallen brother, Lucifer, being sorely tempted by that master tempter? [see Matthew 4:1–11.] He could have opened the door and flirted with danger by saying, ‘All right, Satan, I’ll listen to your proposition. I need not succumb, I need not yield, I need not accept—but I’ll listen.’

“Christ did not so rationalize. He positively and promptly closed the discussion, and commanded: ‘Get thee hence, Satan,’ meaning, likely, ‘Get out of my sight—get out of my presence—I will not listen—I will have nothing to do with you.’ Then, we read, ‘the devil leaveth him.’

“This is our proper pattern, if we would prevent sin rather than be faced with the much more difficult task of curing it. As I study the story of the Redeemer and his temptations, I am certain he spent his energies fortifying himself against temptation rather than battling with it to conquer it” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 216–17).

MOSES 1:24–42

MOSES LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF GOD

Moses 1:24. The Holy Ghost Was on the Earth in Old Testament Times

From the time of Adam, the Holy Ghost has been on the earth inspiring and testifying to God’s children. President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “The fact is *all the prophets had the Holy Ghost*. They were led and directed by him. And without this power they would not have been prophets. Peter said that prophecy itself ‘came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost’ [2 Peter 1:21]. The Book of Moses, which is the original and perfect record of a part of Genesis, speaks of the Holy Ghost; so do the Nephite prophets, including those who lived in the era before Christ” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:46–47).

Moses 1:35–38. “There Are Many Worlds”

President Brigham Young said: “How many earths are there? I observed this morning that you may take the particles of matter composing this earth, and if they could be enumerated they would only be a beginning to the number of the creations of God; and they are continually coming into existence, and undergoing changes and passing through the same experience that we are passing through” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:71).

Moses 1:35–39. Jesus Christ Redeemed All of God’s Creations

Elder Marion G. Romney, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

“Jesus Christ, in the sense of being its Creator and Redeemer, is the Lord of the whole universe. Except for his mortal ministry accomplished on this earth, his service and relationship to other worlds and their inhabitants are the same as his service and relationship to this earth and its inhabitants. . . .

“. . . In short, Jesus Christ, through whom God created the universe, was chosen to put into operation throughout the universe Elohim’s great plan ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’—the gospel of Jesus Christ—the only way whereby man can obtain eternal life” (“Jesus Christ: Lord of the Universe,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1968, 46, 48; see also D&C 76:19–24).

Moses 1:39. Immortality and Eternal Life

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “*Immortality* is to live forever in the resurrected state with body and spirit inseparably connected” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 376). All of God’s children who obtain mortal bodies will eventually be resurrected and obtain immortal physical bodies (see 1 Corinthians 15:22).

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “Eternal life is to have the kind of life that God has. All those who become servants will have immortality, but they who become sons and daughters of God will have the additional gift of eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:8). President Spencer W. Kimball taught that “eternal life is to gain exaltation in the highest heaven” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1978, 109; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 72).

Moses 1:39. The Unselfishness of God

After quoting Moses 1:39, President Marion G. Romney, who was a counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Hence, we see the complete unselfishness of our Father in Heaven. His whole work and glory is to bring eternal life and happiness to his children. Should not our whole purpose in this life, therefore, be made up of righteous service one to another? If not, how can we ever hope to be as he is?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 132; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 93).

Moses 1:40–41. Moses Was Assigned to Write about This Earth

In addition to his calling to free the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, Moses was given the assignment to write about the events that occurred from the Creation of the earth until the final days of his own mission. The first five books of the Bible contain the writings of Moses. However, some of the truths Moses recorded in those five books were removed from the Bible by wicked men who altered the biblical text (see 1 Nephi 13:24–28; Moses 1:23). By revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith restored many truths that were lost (see 2 Nephi 3:6–15; Moses 1:41).

MOSES 2:1–25

THE PHYSICAL CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Moses 2. An Account of the Physical Creation

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “The account of the creation of the earth as given in Genesis, and the Book of Moses, and as given in the temple, is the creation of the physical earth, and of physical animals and plants” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:75).

Moses 2:1. Who Created the Earth?

Jesus Christ created the heaven and the earth under the Father’s direction (see Moses 1:31–33; 2:1). Others were privileged to assist Him in the Creation, including Michael, or Adam. President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “It is true that Adam helped to form this earth. He labored with our Savior Jesus Christ. I have a strong view or conviction that there were others also who assisted them. Perhaps Noah and Enoch; and why not Joseph Smith, and those who were appointed to be rulers before the earth was formed?” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:74–75).

Moses 2:1. The Earth Was Not Created by Accident nor Chance

Elder John A. Widtsoe, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “The earth came into being by the will and power of God. . . . Chance is ruled out. Latter-day Saints believe that the earth and the heavens and the manifold operations within the universe are products of intelligent action, of the mind of God” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, [1960], 150).

Moses 2:3. God Works by the Power of Faith

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

“When a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force. It is by words, instead of exerting his physical powers, with which every being works when he works by faith. God said, ‘Let there be light: and there was light.’ . . . And the Saviour says: ‘If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, say to this mountain, “Remove,” and it will remove; or say to that sycamine tree, “Be ye plucked up, and planted in the midst of the sea,” and it shall obey you.’ Faith, then, works by words; and with these its mightiest works have been, and will be, performed. . . .

“ . . . The whole visible creation, as it now exists, is the effect of faith. It was faith by which it was framed, and it is by the power of faith that it continues in its organized form, and by which the planets move round their orbits and sparkle forth their glory” (*Lectures on Faith*, 72–73; see also Matthew 17:20; Jacob 4:6, 9).

Moses 2:3–4. “There Was Light”



Elder John Taylor, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained that God “caused light to shine upon [the earth] before the sun appeared in the firmament [see Moses 2:3–4, 14–19]; for God is light, and in him there is no darkness. He is the light of the sun and the power thereof by which it was made; he is also the light of the moon and the power by which it was made; he is the light of the stars and the power by which they are made” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:327; see also Revelation 21:23–25; D&C 88:7–13).

Moses 2:5. How Long Was a Day of Creation?

President Brigham Young, discussing the six days of creation, said that six days “is a mere term, but it matters not whether it took six days, six months, six years, or six thousand years. The creation occupied certain periods of time. We are not authorized to say what the duration of these days was, whether Moses penned these words as we have them, or whether the translators of the Bible have given the words their intended meaning. However, God created the world. God brought forth material out of which he formed this little terra firma upon which we roam. How long had this material been in existence? Forever and forever, in some shape, in some condition” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1971], 100; see also Alma 40:8).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that a day, in the Creation accounts, “is a specified time period; it is an age, an eon, a division of eternity; it is the time between two identifiable events. And each day, of whatever length, has the duration needed for its purposes. . . .

“There is no revealed recitation specifying that each of the ‘six days’ involved in the Creation was of the same duration” (“Christ and the Creation,” *Ensign*, June 1982, 11).

Moses 2:6–8. The Firmament Divided the Waters

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “‘The waters’ were ‘divided’ between the surface of the earth and the atmospheric heavens that surround it. A ‘firmament’ or an ‘expanse’ called ‘Heaven’ was created to divide ‘the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse.’ Thus, as the creative events unfold, provision seems to be made for clouds and rain and storms to give life to that which will yet grow and dwell upon the earth. (See Moses 2:6–8; Abr. 4:6–8.)” (*Ensign*, June 1982, 11).

Moses 2:11–12, 21, 24–25. “After Their Kind”

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught: “No lesson is more manifest in nature than that all living things do as the Lord commanded in the Creation. They reproduce ‘after their own kind.’ (See Moses 2:12, 24.) They follow the pattern of their parentage. . . . A bird will not become an animal nor a fish. A mammal will not beget reptiles, nor ‘do men gather . . . figs of thistles’ (Matthew 7:16)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 67).

MOSES 2:26–31 THE PHYSICAL CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN

Moses 2:26–27. God Has a Body of Flesh and Bones

Modern revelation declares that Heavenly Father “has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s” (D&C 130:22). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts Genesis 1:26 and Moses 2:26 literally. As children of our Heavenly Father, our physical bodies and our spirit bodies are in His image.

Moses 2:26–27. “Male and Female Created I Them”

The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have affirmed: “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Moses 2:28. What Does *Replenish* Mean?

An analysis of the Hebrew text of Genesis 1:28 can help us better understand God’s instructions to the man and woman when He said, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” The word translated “fruitful” in this verse is *parah* (paw-raw) in Hebrew and means “to increase, bear, or bring fruit.” The word translated “multiply” is *rabah* (raw-baw) and means “to become many.” The Hebrew word *male* (maw-lay) is here

translated “replenish” and means “to fill, or be full.” The Lord is telling men and women to bring forth children (multiply, be fruitful).

In 1942 the First Presidency taught: “The Lord has told us that it is the duty of every husband and wife to obey the command given to Adam to multiply and replenish the earth, so that the legions of choice spirits waiting for their tabernacles of flesh may come here and move forward under God’s great design to become perfect souls, for without these fleshly tabernacles they cannot progress to their God-planned destiny. Thus, every husband and wife should become a father and mother in Israel to children born under the holy, eternal covenant” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 12).

Moses 2:28. Man Was Given Dominion

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote that to have “dominion” means to have responsibility (see *The Way to Perfection*, 6th ed. [1946], 221). To have dominion over all living things is a sacred responsibility and should not be misused (see D&C 49:19–21; 59:17–20; 104:13–18; 121:39–46).

Elder Sterling W. Sill, then an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “One of the most inspiring messages in all sacred scripture is the story of the sixth day of creation when God made man in his own image. He also endowed him with a set of his own attributes. Then, as the very climax of creation, God gave man dominion over everything upon the earth, including himself. The dictionary says that ‘dominion’ means control or the power to govern. The most important part of the dominion given to man was self-dominion” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, 77–78).

MOSES 3:1–7 ALL THINGS WERE FIRST CREATED SPIRITUALLY

Moses 3:1. What Do We Know about the Premortal Condition of Mankind?

Some of the significant events that occurred in the premortal existence were:

1. All mankind were born as spirit sons and daughters of God the Father (see D&C 93:29, 38; Moses 6:51).
2. Heavenly Father’s children participated in a council and chose to follow His plan or to rebel with Lucifer (see D&C 29:36; Moses 4:1–3).
3. Those who chose to follow Heavenly Father’s plan chose to follow Christ and continued to grow and progress; some of them participated in the Creation of the earth (see D&C 138:55–56; Abraham 3:22–24; 4:1).

4. A paradisiacal earth was created and immortal, paradisiacal bodies were prepared for Adam and Eve, the first of all of God's spirit sons and daughters to come to this earth.

Moses 3:1. Who Are "All the Host"?

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 365).

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught:

"The Lord informed Abraham that he had chosen rulers from among the intelligences that were organized, to be given in various capacities down the ages; and Abraham was one of these who was so chosen [see Abraham 3:22–23].

"It is reasonable to believe that in the beginning, before the earth was prepared, the Lord would have all things organized from the beginning to the end of time. It is written in the scriptures: 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them.' This is equivalent to the Lord's saying that everything was in preparation to be placed on the earth in its due course when mankind should be placed upon it" (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp., Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 5:182).

Moses 3:2–3. What Does It Mean That God "Rested"?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught:

"The Sabbath was blessed and sanctified as a holy day, a day of rest (Genesis 2:3; Moses 3:3; Exodus 20:9–11). But this sanctification and commandment of rest was for a purpose—not that man should refrain from work in order to pursue his own pleasure, but that man should serve God and worship him. . . .

"President Spencer W. Kimball put our teaching on Sabbath observance in a nutshell when he suggested that we 'measure each Sabbath activity by the yardstick of worshipfulness' (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, Edward L. Kimball, ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 219)" (*Pure In Heart* [1988], 27–29; see also Isaiah 58:13–14; JST, Mark 2:26–27; and D&C 59:9).

Moses 3:4. What Does "the Generations of the Heaven and of the Earth" Refer To?

The Hebrew word for "generations" is *towldah* (to-led-aw), which in this verse simply means "accounting" or "story."

Moses 3:5. An Interpolation Showing That Everything Was First Created Spiritually

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

"There is no account of the creation of man or other forms of life when they were created as spirits. There is just the

simple statement that they were so created before the physical creation. The statements in Moses 3:5 and Genesis 2:5 are interpolations [parenthetical explanations] thrown into the account of the physical creation, explaining that all things were first created in the spirit existence in heaven before they were placed upon this earth.

"We were all created untold ages before we were placed on this earth. We discover from Abraham 3:22–28, that it was before the earth was formed that the plan of salvation was presented to the spirits, or 'intelligences.' This being true, then man, animals and plants were not created in the spirit at the time of the creation of the earth, but long before" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:75–76).

In 1925 the First Presidency taught: "Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality" ("Mormon' View of Evolution," *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1925, 1090; see also D&C 77:2).

Moses 3:6–7. How Did God Create Bodies for Adam and Eve?

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "Man became a living soul—mankind, male and female. The Creators breathed into their nostrils the breath of life and man and woman became living souls. We don't know exactly how their coming into this world happened, and when we're able to understand it the Lord will tell us" ("The Blessing and Responsibilities of Womanhood," *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 72).

Moses 3:7. Man Was Formed "from the Dust of the Ground"?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "Those natural elements that make up the physical earth are sometimes referred to in the scriptures as *dust*. Thus Adam was created from the dust of the ground meaning that the physical body which he received was created from the elements of the earth. (Gen. 2:7; Moses 3:7; Abra. 5:7; D. & C. 77:12.) Similarly all men are created from the dust of the earth; that is, the elements organized into a mortal body are assembled together through the birth process (Moses 6:69)" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 209).

In the physical creation, man became a "living soul" (see Moses 2:26–27; see also D&C 88:15). This means his spirit body gained a physical body of flesh and bones. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that the bodies of Adam and Eve were at first "quickened [made alive] by spirit and not by blood. . . . After the fall, which came by a transgression of the law under which Adam was living, the forbidden fruit had the power to create blood and change his nature and mortality took the place of immortality, and all things, partaking of the change, became mortal" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:77). Thus, in the Fall, Adam and Eve became the first beings upon the earth who were mortal flesh, or subject to death.

Moses 3:7. “The First Man Also”

In 1909 the First Presidency stated: “It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth, and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men. The word of the Lord declares that Adam was ‘the first man of all men’ (Moses 1:34), and we are therefore in duty bound to regard him as the primal parent of our race” (“The Origin of Man,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1909, 80).

MOSES 3:8–17

GOD PLACED ADAM IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Moses 3:8. Where Was the Garden of Eden?

President Brigham Young taught: “In the beginning, after this earth was prepared for man, the Lord commenced his work upon what is now called the American continent, where the Garden of Eden was made” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 102).

President Heber C. Kimball, who was a counselor in the First Presidency, said: “The spot chosen for the garden of Eden was Jackson County, in the State of Missouri, where [the city of] Independence now stands; it was occupied in the morn of creation by Adam” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:235).

Moses 3:9. The Trees Became Living Souls

Moses 3:9 indicates that “every tree . . . became also a living soul.” Man, animals, and birds “were also living souls” (see Moses 3:7, 19). Doctrine and Covenants 88:15 teaches that a soul is a spirit and a body combined. On the subject of living things having souls, President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “The idea prevails in general, I believe, in the religious world where the gospel truth is misunderstood, that man is the only being on the earth that has what is called a soul or a spirit. We know this is not the case, for the Lord has said that not only has man a spirit, and is thereby a living soul, but likewise the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea have spirits, and hence are living souls” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:63).

Moses 3:9. What Do the Two Trees Represent?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “The scriptures set forth that there were in the Garden of Eden two trees. One was the tree of life, which figuratively refers to eternal life; the other was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which figuratively refers to how and why and in what manner mortality and all that appertains to it came into being” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 86).

Moses 3:16–17. “Nevertheless, Thou Mayest Choose for Thyself”

When God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, He commanded him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He also told Adam that he could choose for himself, “for it [agency] is given unto thee” (Moses 3:17). But if Adam ate it, he would “surely die.” President David O. McKay explained that to man “is given a special endowment not bestowed upon any other living thing. When the Creator ‘breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul,’ God gave him the *power of choice*. ([Genesis] 2:7.) Only to the human being did the Creator say: ‘ . . . thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee. . . .’ (Moses 3:17.) As God intended man to become as [H]e, it was necessary that He should first make him free.

“Thus man was endowed with the greatest blessing that can be given to mortal beings—the *gift of free agency*. Without this divine power to choose, humanity cannot progress” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, 5; see also 2 Nephi 2:11–16).

Moses 3:16–17. Adam’s Choices in the Garden

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “Now this is the way I interpret [Moses 3:16–17]: The Lord said to Adam, here is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you want to stay here, then you cannot eat of that fruit. If you want to stay here, then I forbid you to eat it. But you may act for yourself, and you may eat of it if you want to. And if you eat it, you will die” (“Fall—Atonement—Resurrection—Sacrament,” in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2nd ed. [1982], 124).

MOSES 3:18–25

ADAM AND EVE WERE HUSBAND AND WIFE



Moses 3:18. It Is Not Good for a Man or a Woman to Be Alone

In their proclamation on the family, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared: “Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of

God" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102; see also Hebrews 13:4; D&C 49:15). A fulness of joy in this life and the highest degree of exaltation in the celestial kingdom are obtained by entering into the new and eternal covenant of marriage (see 1 Corinthians 11:11; D&C 131:1–4; see also Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 27–31; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 21–24). God joined Adam and Eve together in marriage before the Fall. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: "Marriage as established in the beginning was an eternal covenant. The first man and the first woman were not married until death should part them, for at that time death had not come into the world. The ceremony on that occasion was performed by the Eternal Father himself whose work endures forever. It is the will of the Lord that all marriages should be of like character, and in becoming 'one flesh' the man and the woman are to continue in the married status, according to the Lord's plan, throughout all eternity as well as in this mortal life" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:71).

Moses 3:18. A Help Meet for the Man

The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in their proclamation on the family, taught: "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

President Howard W. Hunter said the following about the relationship between a husband and wife: "A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto. . . . The Lord intended that the wife be a helpmeet for man (*meet* means equal)—that is, a companion equal and necessary in full partnership" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 68; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 50–51).

Moses 3:19–20. Adam Named the Animals

God gave Adam dominion over all living things (see Moses 2:26–28). As an example of his righteous dominion, Adam named all of the animals, male and female. Unlike the animals he named, Adam did not have a companion.

Moses 3:21–23. Adam's Rib

President Spencer W. Kimball taught that Eve was not literally created from Adam's rib. He said: "The story of the rib, of course, is figurative" ("The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood," *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 71).

Moses 3:24. A Man Should "Cleave unto His Wife"

The word *cleave* means to be closely united. Adam and Eve were commanded to be "one flesh," meaning to be

one mentally, socially, sexually, and spiritually. This oneness was a command with which they could not fully comply until after the Fall. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained:

"Human intimacy is reserved for a married couple because it is the ultimate symbol of total union, a totality and a union ordained and defined by God. From the Garden of Eden onward, marriage was intended to mean the complete merger of a man and a woman—their hearts, hopes, lives, love, family, future, everything. Adam said of Eve that she was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and that they were to be 'one flesh' in their life together [see Genesis 2:23–24]. This is a union of such completeness that we use the word *seal* to convey its eternal promise. The Prophet Joseph Smith once said we perhaps could render such a sacred bond as being 'welded' [see D&C 128:18] one to another.

"But such a total union, such an unyielding commitment between a man and a woman, can only come with the proximity and permanence afforded in a marriage covenant, with solemn promises and the pledge of all they possess—their very hearts and minds, all their days and all their dreams" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 100; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76).

Moses 3:24. "Therefore Shall a Man Leave His Father and His Mother"

Referring to the charge for a man to leave his parents and cleave to his wife, President Spencer W. Kimball said: "Do you note that? She, the woman, occupies the first place. She is preeminent, even above the parents who are so dear to all of us. Even the children must take their proper but significant place" (*Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 72).

Moses 3:25. A State of Innocence

Adam and Eve were innocent in the Garden of Eden, not knowing good and evil and not feeling any shame or embarrassment over their nakedness. These are emotions that came after the Fall. Adam and Eve were much like little children who are naturally naive and trusting and lacking self-consciousness and knowledge of good and evil because they are innocent.

MOSES 4:1–6

HOW LUCIFER BECAME THE DEVIL

Moses 4:1. "That Satan, Whom Thou Hast Commanded"

This phrase refers to a previous confrontation Moses had with Satan (see Moses 1:12–22). Moses had commanded Satan, in the name of Jesus Christ, to depart.

Moses 4:1. The Council in Heaven

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “In the former [premortal] life we were spirits. In order that we should advance and eventually gain the goal of perfection, it was made known that we would receive tabernacles of flesh and bones and have to pass through mortality where we would be tried and proved to see if we, by trial, would prepare ourselves for exaltation.” He further stated that when our Heavenly Father presented His plan to His children in a council in heaven, “the thought of passing through mortality and partaking of all the vicissitudes [hardships] of earth life in which they would gain experiences through suffering, pain, sorrow, temptation and affliction, as well as the pleasures of life in this mundane existence, and then, if faithful, passing on through the resurrection to eternal life in the kingdom of God, to be like him, filled them with the spirit of rejoicing, and they ‘shouted for joy’ [Job 38:1–7]” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:57–58).

Moses 4:1–2. The Plan of Our Father in Heaven



Elder Neal A. Maxwell said that it is “extremely important to get straight what happened in that premortal council. It was *not* an unstructured meeting, nor was it a discussion between plans, nor an idea-producing session, as to how to formulate the plan for salvation and carry it out. Our Father’s plan *was known*, and the actual question put was whom the Father should send to carry out the plan” (*Deposition of a Disciple* [1976], 11; see also John 7:16–18).

Moses 4:1–4. Satan and His Opposition to Heavenly Father’s Plan

In the premortal existence, Satan was called “Lucifer,” which means “the Shining One” or “Lightbringer.” He was a “son of the morning” (see Isaiah 14:12; D&C 76:25–27) and had potential to do much good. But Lucifer sought to obtain the throne, honor, power, and glory of Heavenly Father (see D&C 29:36; 76:28; Moses 4:1). To do so, he proposed to “redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost” (Moses 4:1). However, his proposal was

based on compulsion and would therefore eliminate the agency of Heavenly Father’s children and the need for a Savior to suffer and redeem them.

Moses 4:3. The Agency of Man

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “Satan’s method of assuring ‘that one soul shall not be lost’ (Moses 4:1) would be to ‘destroy the agency of man’ (Moses 4:3). Under his plan, Satan would have been our master, and he would have ‘[led us] captive at his will’ (Moses 4:4). Without the power of choice, we would have been mere robots or puppets in his hands” (“Free Agency and Freedom,” in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. [1989], 4).

Moses 4:4. Satan’s Desires

President Joseph F. Smith taught: “Let it not be forgotten that the evil one has great power in the earth, and that by every possible means he seeks to darken the minds of men and then offers them falsehood and deception in the guise of truth. Satan is a skillful imitator, and as genuine gospel truth is given the world in ever-increasing abundance, so he spreads the counterfeit coin of false doctrine. Beware of his spurious currency, it will purchase for you nothing but disappointment, misery and spiritual death” (“Witchcraft,” *Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Sept. 1902, 562).

President Brigham Young said: “Every person who desires and strives to be a Saint is closely watched by fallen spirits that came here when Lucifer [*sic*] fell, and by the spirits of wicked persons who have been here in tabernacles and departed from them. . . . Those spirits are never idle; they are watching every person who wishes to do right, and are continually prompting them to do wrong” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:239).

Moses 4:6. Satan Does Not Know the Mind of God

Elder James E. Talmage explained that Satan actually “furthered the purposes of the Creator by tempting Eve; yet his design was to thwart the Lord’s plan. We are definitely told that ‘he knew not the mind of God, wherefore he sought to destroy the world.’ [Moses 4:6.] Yet his diabolical effort, far from being the initiatory step toward destruction, contributed to the plan of man’s eternal progression” (*The Articles of Faith*, 69).

MOSES 4:7–19

THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE

Moses 4:10. “Ye Shall Not Surely Die”

God told Adam that he would die if he ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan’s statement that Adam would not die was an evil exploitation and illustrates the pernicious nature of Satan, “the father of all



lies” (Moses 4:4), for he attempted to show God as a liar. But God is a God of truth and cannot lie (see Ether 3:12). Soon after Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, they were forced to leave the garden and the presence of the Lord, thus suffering a spiritual death. Additionally, when they fell, their bodies changed from a nonmortal state to a mortal state and thus became subject to physical death. (See D&C 29:40–43.)

Moses 4:11. “Ye Shall Be As Gods, Knowing Good and Evil”

When Adam and Eve partook of the fruit they became mortal and, in the sense of knowing good and evil, began to become like God. But Satan implied that God’s forbidding them to partake of the fruit was because God did not want them to become as the Gods, trying to make it appear that God’s motives were selfish. The truth is that God’s work and glory is to help all of His children to one day become as He is (see Moses 1:39).

Moses 4:12. Why Did Adam and Eve Partake of the Fruit?

Neither Adam nor Eve partook of the fruit because they loved Satan more than God or because they wanted to rebel against God. Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught:

“It was Eve who first transgressed the limits of Eden in order to initiate the conditions of mortality. Her act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression but eternally a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same. And thus Eve and ‘Adam fell that men might be’ [2 Nephi 2:25].

“Some Christians condemn Eve for her act, concluding that she and her daughters are somehow flawed by it. Not the Latter-day Saints! Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve’s act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode, called the Fall. . . . Brigham Young declared, ‘We should never blame Mother Eve, not the least’ (in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:145). Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: ‘I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. . . . This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin . . . for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!’ [*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:114–15]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 98; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73).

Moses 4:12. The Difference between Transgression and Sin

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said that the “contrast between a *sin* and a *transgression* reminds us of the careful wording in the second article of faith: ‘We believe that men will be punished for their own *sins*, and not for Adam’s *transgression*’ (italics added). It also echoes a familiar distinction in the law. Some acts, like murder, are crimes because they are inherently wrong. Other acts, like operating without a license, are crimes only because they are legally prohibited. Under these distinctions, the act that produced the Fall was not a sin—inherently wrong—but a transgression—wrong because it was formally prohibited. These words are not always used to denote something different, but this distinction seems meaningful in the circumstances of the Fall” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 98; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73).

Another meaning of the word *transgress* is “to go beyond established limits or conditions.” Adam and Eve went beyond the limits that would have kept them in the Garden of Eden forever, and in so doing helped provide the opportunity of mortality for all of us.

Moses 4:14. Adam and Eve Tried to Hide from God

Moses 3:25 tells us that before the Fall Adam and Eve were not ashamed, despite their nakedness. Once they gained knowledge of good and evil, they became conscious of their disobedience and unworthiness before God. It may be said that they became aware and ashamed of their spiritual “nakedness.” As fallen beings, they had to face God with a sense of their own guilt. As Alma explained to his son Corianton, “Ye cannot hide your crimes from God; and except ye repent they will stand as a testimony against you at the last day” (Alma 39:8; see also 2 Nephi 9:14).

Moses 4:15–19. God Asked Adam and Eve If They Had Eaten the Fruit

God “knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:20). Why then did God ask Adam and Eve the questions in Moses 4:15–19? Because, as Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught, “personal *accountability* for all of one’s acts underlies the whole gospel plan and is the natural outgrowth of the law of free agency” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 15).

MOSES 4:20–32

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL

Moses 4:20. The Serpent Was Cursed

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “Since the day in which Satan spoke by the mouth of the serpent to entice Eve to

partake of the forbidden fruit (Moses 4:5–21), Satan has been called ‘that old *serpent*.’ (Rev. 12:9; 20:2; D. & C. 76:28; 88:110.) Choice of the name is excellent, indicating as it does a cunning, sly, subtle, and deceitful craftiness” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 704).



“Being cursed is the very opposite of being blessed; God’s blessing graciously invokes good, whereas his curse justly invokes evil upon one deserving it. Thus Satan was informed through symbolic terms that he would not have the privilege of earth life that even cattle and beasts have” (Ellis T. Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament* [1993], 16).

Moses 4:21. Enmity

President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “*Enmity* means ‘hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 4).

Moses 4:21. The “Seed of the Woman” Refers to the Savior, Jesus Christ

Elder James E. Talmage wrote: “Adam, the patriarch of the race, rejoiced in the assurance of the Savior’s appointed ministry, through the acceptance of which, he, the transgressor, might gain redemption. Brief mention of the plan of salvation, the author of which is Jesus Christ, appears in the promise given of God following the fall—that though the devil, represented by the serpent in Eden, should have power to bruise the heel of Adam’s posterity, through the seed of the woman should come the power to bruise the adversary’s head. It is significant that this assurance of eventual victory over sin and its inevitable effect, death, both of which were introduced to earth through Satan, the arch-enemy of mankind, was to be realized through the offspring of woman; the promise was not made specifically to the man, nor to the pair. The only instance of offspring from woman dissociated from mortal fatherhood is the birth of Jesus the Christ, who was the earthly Son of a mortal mother, begotten by an

immortal Father. He is the Only Begotten of the Eternal Father in the flesh, and was born of woman.” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 43).

Moses 4:22. “I Will Greatly Multiply thy Sorrow”

The Hebrew word for “multiply” is *rabah* (raw-bah), meaning to repeat over and over. It does not suggest *greater* sorrow, but rather *repeated* sorrow. The Hebrew word for “sorrow” in the Genesis account (Genesis 3:16) is from *atsab* (aw-tsab), which means “labor” or “pain.” While these words suggest that toil and suffering would be a part of Eve’s life, Eve did not view the conditions that came upon her through the Fall to be a curse (see Moses 5:11). Moses 4:22 “is a great revelation to women. Eve and her daughters can become cocreators with God by preparing bodies for his spirit children to occupy on earth and later in eternity. Mothering would entail inconvenience, suffering, travail, and sorrow; these the Lord foretold as natural consequences and not as a curse” (Rasmussen, *Latter-day Saint Commentary*, 17).

Moses 4:22. “He Shall Rule over Thee”



Concerning this phrase, President Spencer W. Kimball said: “I have a question about the word *rule*. It gives the wrong impression. I would prefer to use the word *preside* because that’s what he does. A righteous husband presides over his wife and family” (*Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 72). In Ephesians 5:22–31 and

Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–46 the Lord gave clear instructions on how husbands should preside.

Moses 4:23–25. “Cursed Shall Be the Ground for Thy Sake”

President Marion G. Romney taught: “Note that the curse was not placed upon Adam, but upon the ground for Adam’s sake. Rather than a curse upon Adam, it was a blessing to him” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 168; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 125).

President Brigham Young said that the effects of the Fall were universal: “Then came the curse upon the fruit, upon the vegetables, and upon our mother earth; and it came upon the creeping things, upon the grain in the field, the fish in the sea, and upon all things pertaining to this earth” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:312). From the time of the Fall, thorns and thistles have grown spontaneously from the ground. Only through persistent labor could Adam plant, nourish, and harvest crops from the ground and thereby assure his survival. Before the Fall, he had been charged to “dress” and “keep” the Garden of Eden (Moses 3:15). After the Fall, he was told that he would have to work by the sweat of his brow to obtain his sustenance.

Moses 4:23. “In Sorrow Shalt Thou Eat of It All the Days of Thy Life”



“If Eve must labor to bring forth, so too must Adam labor (Genesis 3:17–19; Moses 4:23) to quicken the earth so it shall bring forth. Both of them bring forth life with sweat and tears, and Adam is not the favored party. If his labor is not as severe as hers, it is more protracted. For Eve’s life will be spared long after her childbearing—‘nevertheless thy life shall be spared’—while Adam’s toil must go on to the end of his days: ‘In sorrow shalt thou eat of it *all* the days of thy life’! Even retirement is no escape from that sorrow” (Hugh Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies*, John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton, eds. [1986], 90).

Moses 4:25. Death Entered the World

Pointing out the falseness of what Satan had said to Eve (see Moses 4:10), the Lord told Adam, “Thou shalt surely die” (v. 25). Adam and Eve experienced a *spiritual* death when they were driven from the Garden of Eden and from the presence of the Lord. They also became mortal and thus subject to *physical* death.

Moses 4:27. God Made Coats of Skins for Adam and Eve

The phrase “coat of skins” could also have been rendered “garments” or “tunics” (see Genesis 3:21, footnote *a*, in the LDS edition of the King James Bible).

Moses 4:31. Cherubim

Cherubim are “figures representing heavenly creatures, the exact form being unknown. They are found in the Holy of Holies, on the Mercy Seat of the Ark (Ex. 25:18, 22; 1 Kgs. 6:23–28; Heb. 9:5), and in the visions of Ezekiel (Ezek. 10; 11:22)” (Bible Dictionary, “cherubim,” 632).

MOSES 5:1–15
ADAM AND EVE WERE
TAUGHT THE GOSPEL

Moses 5:1–2. Adam and Eve Labored Together

The significance of Moses 5:1–2 is profound in light of the many attacks and challenges being made today regarding

marriage and family relationships. In their proclamation to the world regarding the family, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated:



“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ‘Children are an heritage of the Lord’ (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. . . .

“ . . . Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to *help one another as equal partners*” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102; italics added).

Moses 5:5. “The Firstlings of Their Flocks”

“The word ‘firstlings’ puts certain qualifications and restrictions and even determines the quality of faith that is used in offering the sacrifice. ‘Firstling’ does not necessarily denote the oldest of the flock, but the firstborn of its particular mother. A ‘firstling’ is a male, the ‘first to open the matrix’ of its mother (Ex. 13:2; 34:19). Each mother in her lifetime could produce only one firstling, but a flock of sheep could have several firstlings born each year. In order to know which lambs were acceptable for sacrifice, the owner would have to know his flock. Some notice would have to be made of mothers and of young. Otherwise, how could anyone know which mothers had produced offspring for the first time? There is no way that a man, Adam or anyone else, could know which males were firstlings unless a record and some identification of mothers and offspring were kept. This requirement removes the element of chance and of haphazard obedience, or sometime obedience. Not only is one’s faith shown in the willingness to offer a sacrifice but also in the care required and the preparation needed beforehand in making the selection of the proper animal.

“This particular passage of scripture illustrates the concept that the commandments of God require the intelligent and deliberate attention of those who are seeking salvation. It gives a reason for Paul’s observation that ‘without faith it is

impossible to please' God (Heb. 11:6). For without faith one would not have kept a record and marked (at least mentally) which animals were proper for sacrifice" (Robert J. Matthews, "The Doctrine of the Atonement," in *Studies in Scripture, Volume Two: The Pearl of Great Price*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson [1985], 118–19).

Moses 5:5–6. Adam and Eve Were Obedient

President David O. McKay said: "Let us never lose sight of the principles of obedience. Obedience is heaven's first law" (*Gospel Ideals* [1953], 484). President Ezra Taft Benson taught, "The great test of life is obedience to God" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 6).

Elder Henry D. Taylor, who was an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "I like the beautiful lesson taught and the impressive example set by our first parent, Father Adam. He was commanded by the Lord to offer the firstlings of his flocks as a sacrifice. He did not know the reason for the request, but without hesitation he was obedient to the commandment: 'And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord?' Adam responded with this magnificent, trusting reply: 'I know not, save the Lord commanded me.' (Moses 5:5–6.) To Adam it was not a matter of blind obedience, but rather it displayed his complete and unwavering confidence and faith in the word and instruction from the Lord" ("Faith," *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 44).

Moses 5:5–8. Animal Sacrifice

The elements of animal sacrifice pointed to the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: "From Adam to Moses, and from Moses to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, either as part of the gospel or of the Mosaic law, as the cases might be, all of the saints offered sacrifices in similitude of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. . . . For a pastoral people whose lives depended on their flocks and herds, there could have been no better similitude than this" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 114–15).

Moses 5:8. Adam and Eve Were Taught the Importance of the Name of Christ

"One of the most important concepts of [Moses 5:8] is the clear declaration that Adam was to do all that he did 'in the name of the Son,' to repent, and 'call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.' This is the same doctrine taught in many other passages, of which the following are a few: [Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 31:20–21; Mosiah 3:17; 4:8; D&C 18:23–24; Moses 6:52].

"Thus we see that this most fundamental of all doctrines—that there is only one plan of salvation, with only one Savior—was taught to Adam right from the start. These passages also specify that there were no alternate plans nor alternate saviors" (Matthews, in *Studies in Scripture, Volume Two*, 119–20).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Some say the kingdom of God was not set up on the earth until the day of Pentecost, and that John [the Baptist] did not preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But I say, in the name of the Lord, that the kingdom of God was set up on the earth from the days of Adam to the present time, whenever there has been a righteous man on earth unto whom God revealed His word and gave power and authority to administer in His name" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 271).

Moses 5:10–11. Adam and Eve Believed in Jesus Christ



Adam knew that "in the flesh," or as a resurrected being, he would see God. Eve testified of the joy of their redemption. She knew that through Christ's Atonement they would receive eternal life if they remained obedient.

For more on *joy*, see 2 Nephi 2:25. For more on *resurrection*, see 2 Nephi 9:6–14. The benefits Adam and Eve received because of their Fall and the Atonement of Jesus Christ are summarized in 2 Nephi 2:22–28.

Moses 5:13. "And Satan Came among Them"

President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "Whenever the God of Heaven establishes by revelation his design, Satan always comes among men to pervert the doctrine, saying, 'Believe it not.' He often establishes a counterfeit system, designed to deceive the children of men" ("A Vision and a Hope for the Youth of Zion," 1977 *Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1978], 75).

Moses 5:13. "Carnal, Sensual, and Devilish"

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "After the fall of Adam, man became carnal, sensual, and devilish by nature; he became *fallen man*. (Moses 5:13; 6:49; Mosiah 16:1–4; Alma 42:10; D. & C. 20:20.) All accountable persons on earth inherit this fallen state, this probationary state, this state in which worldly things seem desirable to the carnal nature. Being in this state, 'the natural man is an enemy to God,' until he conforms to the great plan of redemption and is born again to righteousness. (Mosiah 3:19.) Thus all mankind would remain lost and fallen forever were it not for the atonement of our Lord. (Alma 42:4–14.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 267–68).

The following quotations from Elder McConkie help us understand the terms *carnal*, *sensual*, and *devilish*:

- “In this fallen state [all men] are subject to the lusts, passions, and appetites of the flesh. They are spiritually dead, having been cast out of the presence of the Lord; and thus ‘they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God.’ They are in a ‘carnal state’ (Alma 41:10–11); they are of the world. *Carnality* connotes worldliness, sensuality, and inclination to gratify the flesh” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 113).
- “That which is sensual is carnal and base; it relates to the body rather than the Spirit. Thus *sensuality* embraces free indulgence in sensual, fleshly pleasures—lewdness, licentiousness, lasciviousness. Since the fall, men in their natural state have been carnal, sensual, and devilish” (702).
- “Any persons over whom the devil has power, who subject themselves to him, who submit to his enticements (following the carnal and sensual allurements of the world), are devilish” (195).

MOSES 5:16–54

CAIN LOVED SATAN MORE THAN GOD

Moses 5:16–17. Cain and Abel

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

“Cain had the great honor of being Adam’s son, and he, too, was privileged with the same blessings as his father. What a mighty man he could have been! How his name might have stood out with excellent luster as that of one of the valiant sons of God! How he might have been honored to the latest generation! But he would have none of it!

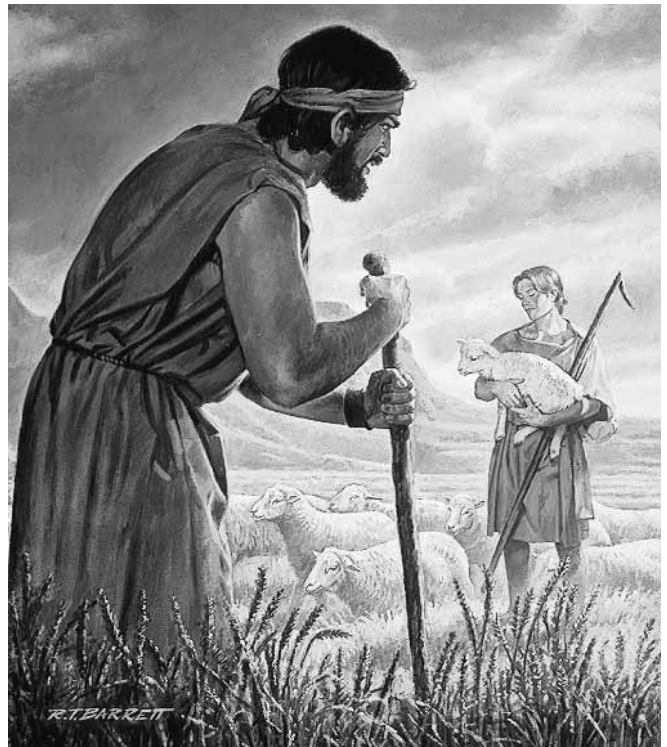
“Cain’s great sin was not committed in ignorance. We have every reason to believe that he had the privilege of standing in the presence of messengers from heaven. In fact the scriptures infer that he was blessed by communication with the Father and was instructed by messengers from his presence. No doubt he held the Priesthood; otherwise his sin could not make of him Perdition. He sinned against the light. And this he did, so we are told, because he loved Satan more than he loved God.

“From the Bible one might infer that Cain was the first born child of Adam, but the Bible gives only a meager history. In the Book of Moses we obtain a more extended view and a better insight into conditions in that early day. Adam and Eve were the parents of numerous children, sons and daughters, even before Cain and Abel were born, as we gain the information from that story” (*The Way to Perfection*, 97–98).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that Abel “magnified the Priesthood which was conferred upon him, and died a righteous man, and therefore has become an angel of God by receiving his body from the dead, holding still

the keys of his dispensation” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 169).

Moses 5:18–21. Cain Made an Offering



The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “By faith in this atonement or plan of redemption, Abel offered to God a sacrifice that was accepted, which was the firstlings of the flock. Cain offered of the fruit of the ground, and was not accepted, because he could not do it in faith, he could have no faith, or could not exercise faith contrary to the plan of heaven. It must be shedding the blood of the Only Begotten to atone for man; for this was the plan of redemption; and without the shedding of blood was no remission; and as the sacrifice was instituted for a type, by which man was to discern the great Sacrifice which God had prepared; to offer a sacrifice contrary to that, no faith could be exercised, because redemption was not purchased in that way, nor the power of atonement instituted after that order; consequently Cain could have no faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 58).

Moses 5:21–22. “Why Is Thy Countenance Fallen?”

One meaning of *countenance* is the expression on a person’s face, which may reveal the mood, emotion, or feelings of the heart.

Moses 5:23–26. Cain Exercised His Agency and Chose to Rebel against God.

President Joseph F. Smith taught: “God has given to all men an agency and has granted to us the privilege to serve him or serve him not, to do that which is right or that which is wrong, and this privilege is given to all men

irrespective of creed, color or condition. The wealthy have this agency, the poor have this agency, and no man is deprived by any power of God from exercising it in the fullest and in the freest manner. This agency has been given to all. This is a blessing that God has bestowed upon the world of mankind, upon all his children alike. But he will hold us strictly to an account for the use that we make of this agency, and as it was said of Cain, so it will be said of us; 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door' (Gen. 4:7). There are, however, certain blessings which God bestows upon the children of men only upon the condition of the rightful exercise of this agency" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 49).

Moses 5:23–30. Will Cain Rule over Satan?

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "all beings who have bodies have power over those who have not" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181). Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "As Adam represented the Lord on earth, so Cain acted for and on behalf of Lucifer. Indeed, this first murderer of all murderers is himself Perdition—he was so designated in preexistence—and he will rule over Satan himself when the devil and his angels are cast out everlastingly" (*A New Witness For the Articles of Faith*, 658).

Moses 5:24–25. Cain Would Be Called "Perdition"

Perdition means "a perishing destruction" or "lost." Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "Two persons, Cain and Satan, have received the awesome name-title *Perdition*. The name signifies that they have no hope whatever of any degree of salvation, that they have wholly given themselves up to iniquity, and that any feeling of righteousness whatever has been destroyed in their breasts" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 566; see also D&C 76:30–38, 43–49).

Moses 5:29–31. Cain and Satan Covenanted with Each Other

Cain was the first man on earth to enter into a covenant with Satan and to use covenants to prevent others from disclosing sinful acts. However, he was not the last. In the scriptures this kind of covenant relationship is called a secret combination. For more on the history of secret combinations, see Helaman 6:21–30; Ether 8:13–25.

Moses 5:32. Cain Slew Abel

In 1885 the First Presidency made the following statement, speaking about the righteous who are afflicted by the wicked: "For a wise purpose in [God's] providence He permits the wicked, in the exercise of their agency, from time to time to afflict His followers. Since the days of our father Adam this has always been the case, and it will continue to be, so long as Satan has any power over the hearts of the children of men" (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [1965–75], 3:5; see also Alma 14:8–11).

Moses 5:33. "I Am Free"

Cain's rejoicing is both ironic and tragic, manifesting how complete his rebellion against God had become. Did he think he was free from future work? (see Moses 4:23–31). Did he consider himself free from the righteous example of Abel? (see 1 John 3:12). Or did he feel he was free because he was rich? The scriptures make it clear that instead of true freedom, Cain was in total bondage and damnation (see 2 Nephi 2:27).

Moses 5:34. "Am I My Brother's Keeper?"

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said:

"Are we our brothers' keepers? In other words, are we responsible to look after the well-being of our neighbors as we seek to earn our daily bread? The Savior's Golden Rule says we are. Satan says we are not.

"Tempted of Satan, some have followed the example of Cain. They covet property and then sin to obtain it. The sin may be murder, robbery, or theft. It may be fraud or deception. It may even be some clever but legal manipulation of facts or influence to take unfair advantage of another. Always the excuse is the same: 'Am I my brother's keeper?'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 25; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 20).

Moses 5:36–39. Cain Was Cursed

Part of the curse Cain received for killing Abel was that the ground would no longer "yield unto [Cain] her strength," and that he would be a "fugitive and a vagabond" (Moses 5:37). A fugitive is a person who is running from the law, and a vagabond is someone who has no home. Cain was also driven out "from the face of the Lord" (Moses 5:39). The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "The power, glory and blessings of the Priesthood could not continue with those who received ordination only as their righteousness continued; for Cain also being authorized to offer sacrifice, but not offering it in righteousness, was cursed. It signifies, then, that the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 169).

Moses 5:39–40. A Mark Was Placed upon Cain

It must be noted that the *mark* that was set upon Cain was not the same thing as the *curse* that he received. The mark was to distinguish him as the one who had been cursed by the Lord. It was placed upon Cain so that no one finding him would kill him. A parallel that illustrates the difference between a mark and a curse might be the account of the Lord placing a mark and a curse upon the Lamanites and their posterity (see 2 Nephi 5:20–24; Alma 23:16–18). It should be noted that the curse was based on individual disobedience and that by obedience to God the curse was removed, although the mark may not have been removed immediately. Eventually, however, the mark was also removed from some (see 3 Nephi 2:12–16).

MOSES 5:55–59

THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED FROM THE BEGINNING



Moses 5:55. Who Were the “Sons of Men”?

The sons of men were the wicked, in contrast to the sons of God, who were the covenant followers of God (see also Moses 8:13–15).

Moses 5:58. How Were Adam and Eve Taught the Gospel?

After the Fall, God revealed the plan of salvation to Adam and Eve so they would know how to return to His presence and have eternal life. Moses 5:4–9 explains that God gave the gospel to Adam and Eve by His own voice, through angels, and by the Holy Ghost. (See also Alma 12:27–33.)

Moses 5:59. “All Things Were Confirmed unto Adam, by an Holy Ordinance”



In Webster's 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* (which reflects usage in the Prophet Joseph Smith's day) the word *confirmed* is defined as “made more firm; strengthened; or established.” Elder Boyd K. Packer said: “Ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into [God's] presence. To worthily

receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 27; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 24).

Moses 5:59. The Gospel Will Be in the World until the End

President Wilford Woodruff said: “Now, any man acquainted with the Scriptures can clearly understand that there is but one true Gospel. There never was but one Gospel. Whenever that Gospel has been upon the earth it has been the same in every dispensation. The ordinances of the Gospel have never been changed from the days of

Adam to the present time, and never will be to the end of time. While there were many sects and parties in existence in the early times, Jesus gave his disciples to understand that there was but one Gospel. He told them what it was. He declared unto them its ordinances” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:239–40).

MOSES 6:1–25

THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM

Moses 6:2. Who Was Seth?

Abel had been chosen to carry the responsibilities of the priesthood to succeeding generations. But after he was murdered, Seth, who was born 130 years after the Fall of Adam and Eve, was selected as the chosen son to carry this sacred priesthood responsibility (see D&C 107:40–42). He was ordained when he was 69 years old and lived a total of 912 years. The scriptures refer to him as a “perfect man, and his likeness was the express likeness of his father” (see D&C 107:43).

Moses 6:5–6. The Origin of Language and Writing

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated:

“In the beginning God gave Adam a language that was pure, perfect, and undefiled. This *Adamic language*, now unknown, was far superior to any tongue which is presently extant. For instance, the name of God the Father, in this original language, is *Man of Holiness*, signifying that he is a Holy Man and not a vague spiritual essence. (Moses 6:57.)

“This first language spoken by mortals was either the celestial tongue of the Gods or such adaptation of it as was necessary to meet the limitations of mortality; and Adam and his posterity had power to speak, read, and write it” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 19).



Elder McConkie said the following about the book of remembrance mentioned in Moses 6:5: “From the beginning, the Lord provided a language and gave men the power to read and write. . . . The thing which they first wrote, and which of all their writings was of the most worth unto them, was a Book of Remembrance, a book in which they recorded what the Lord had revealed about

himself, about his coming, and about the plan of salvation, which plan would have force and validity because of his atonement. This was the beginning of the Holy Scriptures” (*The Promised Messiah*, 86; see also Moses 6:46).

Moses 6:7. How Long Has the Priesthood Been on Earth?

The priesthood “is without beginning of days or end of years” (D&C 84:17). From the time of Adam and Eve, the priesthood, the gospel, and the ordinances were available as we have them today (see Moses 5:58–59; see also D&C 107:40–42). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

“The Priesthood was first given to Adam; 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. . . .

“The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, 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” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157).

Moses 6:8–25. The Patriarchal Organization of the Priesthood

There were twenty generations of the priesthood from Adam to Abraham, being passed from father to son. Eight generations are listed in Moses 6:8–25 (from Adam to Methuselah); in Moses 8:5–12, three more generations (Lamech, Noah, and Shem) are given, and Genesis 11:10–26 records the nine generations from Shem to Abram (Abraham). (See also D&C 107:40–52.)

Moses 6:17. “A Land of Promise”

This verse mentions the earliest righteous people (“the people of God”) who moved from a land filled with wickedness to a land of promise (see also Moses 6:40–41). This is a pattern that is repeated many times in scripture (for example, see 1 Nephi 1–18; Omni 1:12–19; Ether 1–4).

MOSES 6:26–47 ENOCK’S CALL AND WORK

Moses 6:26. Enoch

The Bible contains only a few verses about Enoch (see Genesis 5:19–24). The book of Moses greatly increases our understanding of Enoch’s life, ministry, and teachings: Moses 6:26–36 tells of Enoch’s call, verses 37–47 record his words against the works of men, verses 48–68 contain his message of salvation, and Moses 7 is a record of his remarkable visions of God and of future events on this earth. Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam. He was born 620 years after the Fall, was

ordained to the priesthood at 25 years of age, and at 430 years old he and his people were taken into heaven without tasting death (see D&C 107:49). An additional quotation from the prophecies of Enoch is found in Jude 1:14–15, and more information on his life is found in Luke 3:37 and Hebrews 11:5.

Moses 6:29. What Is the Meaning of “a Hell I Have Prepared”?

Because of the wickedness of the people in the days of Enoch, the Lord called upon Enoch to preach repentance. The Lord told Enoch, “A hell I have prepared for them, if they repent not.” This “hell” refers to the part of the spirit world known as the spirit prison where the wicked suffer torment because of their unrepented sins (see Alma 40:11–14).

Moses 6:31–32. Feelings of Inadequacy

Enoch was not the only prophet who felt inadequate when the Lord called him. Read about Moses’ and Jeremiah’s reactions in Exodus 4:10–12 and Jeremiah 1:4–9. Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “Most of us who are called to leadership in the Church feel that we are inadequate because of inexperience, lack of ability, or meager learning and education” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 52; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 36; see also 1 Corinthians 1:26–27; Ether 12:23–27; D&C 1:19–20; 33:8–10).

Moses 6:35–36. Enoch Was a Seer

Elder John A. Widtsoe stated: “A seer is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. This he does by the power of the Lord operating through him directly, or indirectly with the aid of divine instruments such as the Urim and Thummim” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 258; see also Mosiah 8:13–18).

MOSES 6:48–56 ENOCK PREACHED THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Moses 6:48–50. “By His Fall Came Death”

Because of Adam’s Fall, all mankind suffer physical death (the separation of the immortal spirit from the mortal body) and spiritual death (separation from the presence of God). Furthermore, because people yield to the temptations of Satan, they become “carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God” until they repent (Moses 6:49). The good news of the plan of salvation is that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ all mankind will overcome physical death and can overcome spiritual death (see Romans 3:23; Mosiah 16:3–4; Alma 11:42–43; Helaman 14:14–18; Moses 6:52).

Moses 6:53–54. What Does “Original Guilt” Mean?

Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained: “We are not haunted with an overhanging sense of ‘original sin’ about which we can do nothing. (Moses 6:54; Moroni 8:15–16.) By revelation, we know that the Lord told Adam: ‘Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden.’ (Moses 6:53.) Thus, we are accountable for our ‘own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression’ (Article of Faith 2.)” (*Meek and Lowly* [1987], 42–43).

Moses 6:55. What Does “Thy Children Are Conceived in Sin” Mean?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie indicated that the phrase “conceived in sin” means “born into a world of sin” (see *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 101).

Moses 6:56. Moral Agency: A Gift of God

God gave us the great gift of agency in the day He created us (see Moses 7:32). Moral agency enables us to choose between good and evil and to experience the consequences of our choices (see 2 Nephi 2:14–16, 25–29; D&C 101:78).

MOSES 6:57–68

ENOCH SAW THAT ADAM AND EVE WERE BAPTIZED

Moses 6:59. Water, Blood, and Spirit

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“Two births are essential to salvation. Man cannot be saved without birth into mortality, nor can he return to his heavenly home without a birth into the realm of the Spirit. . . . The elements present in a mortal birth and in a spiritual birth are the same. They are water, blood, and spirit. Thus every mortal birth is a heaven-given reminder to prepare for the second birth. . . .

“In every mortal birth the child is immersed in water in the mother’s womb. At the appointed time the spirit enters the body, and blood always flows in the veins of the new person. Otherwise, without each of these, there is no life, no birth, no mortality.

“In every birth into the kingdom of heaven, the newborn babe in Christ is immersed in water, he receives the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and the blood of Christ cleanses him from all sin. Otherwise, without each of these, there is no Spirit-birth, no newness of life, no hope of eternal life. . . .

“. . . These elements were again present in [Christ’s] death. He sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane as he took upon himself the sins of all men on conditions of repentance. This same agony and suffering recurred on the cross. It was then that he permitted his spirit to leave his body, and it was then that blood and water gushed from his riven side” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 288–89).

Moses 6:60. “By the Water”



“Baptism is not optional if one wishes the fullness of salvation. Jesus said a person must be born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:3–5). When he sent the twelve apostles forth to teach the gospel he told them that whosoever believed and was baptized would be saved; and whosoever did not believe would be damned (Mark 16:16). . . .

“Baptism in water has several purposes. It is for the remission of sins, for membership in the Church, and for entrance into the celestial kingdom; it is also the doorway to personal sanctification when followed by the reception of the Holy Ghost” (Bible Dictionary, “baptism,” 619; see also D&C 76:51–52).

Moses 6:60. Justification

To be justified is to be made just, or free from guilt and sin. The Holy Ghost is the member of the Godhead whose power acts as a cleansing agent that removes guilt and sin from our lives (see 2 Nephi 31:17). President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “Through the shedding of the blood of Christ, we are cleansed and sanctified; and we are justified, through the Spirit of God” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:324–25).

Moses 6:60. Sanctification

To be sanctified is to be holy and worthy of eternal life and immortal glory (see Moroni 10:32–33). Through His perfect Atonement, Jesus Christ shed His blood and made it possible for all who have faith and repent to be sanctified (see Mosiah 3:11, 18; Alma 34:10–16). Thus, we are ransomed and made holy by the blood of Christ. President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

“The atonement by which men are redeemed, was made by one without blemish and without spot. He had to be one who had life in himself, and therefore all power over death. No mortal man could make the atonement. Moreover, the atonement had to be made by the shedding of blood, for blood is the vitalizing force of the mortal body. . . .

“The Scriptures are replete with passages teaching us that there could be no remission of sins without the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, 127).

Moses 6:62. “This Is the Plan of Salvation”

Elder Russell M. Nelson explained that the plan of salvation “is also called the plan of happiness, . . . the plan of redemption, the plan of restoration, the plan of mercy, the plan of deliverance, and the everlasting gospel. Prophets have used these terms interchangeably.

“Regardless of designation, the enabling essence of the plan is the atonement of Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 45; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 33).

Moses 6:63. All Things Are Made to Bear Record of Christ

In the creation of the heavens and the earth, the Lord used physical symbols to teach us doctrines and principles of Jesus Christ and His gospel (see also 2 Nephi 11:4). Understanding gospel symbols requires the uniting of an earthly or concrete dimension with a transcendent, spiritual dimension. The prophet Alma taught that “all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44). These things not only testify of the existence of a Supreme Being, but also that He is Jesus Christ, the Creator of all.

The Lord taught His disciples to look upon the contents of the scriptures and see things concerning Himself (see Luke 24:44–45). To search for and discover symbols of Christ in the scriptures is to open a wellspring of new thoughts and emotions relative to the Atonement. For example, the earthly ordinance of baptism by immersion is symbolic of the death, burial, and Resurrection of Christ (see Romans 6:3–5; D&C 76:51–52).

Moses 6:64–68. Adam, an Eternal Son of God

Enoch showed how Adam set the example for all of us by exercising his faith in Christ through baptism by water and the Spirit. Therefore, by his obedience, Adam became “one in [Christ], a son of God” (Moses 6:68). In like manner, all may become sons and daughters of God (see Mosiah 5:7; 27:24–27; D&C 25:1; 39:4).

Moses 6:67. Adam Held the Priesthood

See the insights and commentary for Moses 6:7.

MOSES 7:1–20 **ENOCH LED THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

Moses 7:3–4. Enoch Saw God Face-to-Face

Enoch had an experience similar to that of Moses and Abraham (see Moses 1:31; Abraham 3:11). President Brigham Young added detail to this point: “Man is made in the image of his Maker, . . . he is His exact image, having eye for eye, forehead for forehead, eyebrows for eyebrows, nose for nose, cheekbones for cheekbones, mouth for mouth, chin for chin, ears for ears, precisely like our Father in heaven” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:146).

Moses 7:13. “Great Was the Faith of Enoch”

Enoch was told at the beginning of his ministry that he would do great things (see Moses 6:34). Enoch’s faith in Jesus Christ enabled him to do those things. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “Faith is power; by faith the worlds were made; nothing is impossible to those who have faith. If the

earth itself came rolling into existence by faith, surely a mere mountain can be removed by that same power” (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [1979–81], 3:73; see also Jacob 4:6; Ether 12:13–22).

Moses 7:19. “City of Holiness”

Enoch’s city had two names, *Zion* and *City of Holiness*. The second name becomes more meaningful when we remember that Heavenly Father’s name in the language of Adam is *Man of Holiness* (see Moses 6:57).

MOSES 7:21–41 **ENOCH SAW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN HIS OWN DAY**

Moses 7:21. Translation

Those people who were taken up into heaven without tasting death were *translated*. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “Translated beings are still mortal and will have to pass through the experience of death, or the separation of the spirit and the body, although this will be instantaneous, for the people of the City of Enoch, Elijah, and others who received this great blessing in ancient times, before the coming of our Lord, could not have received the resurrection, or the change from mortality to immortality, because our Lord had not [yet] paid the debt which frees us from mortality and grants to us the resurrection” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:165).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “Many have supposed that the doctrine of translation was a doctrine whereby men were taken immediately into the presence of God, and into an eternal fullness, but this is a mistaken idea. Their place of habitation is that of the terrestrial order, and a place prepared for such characters He held in reserve to be ministering angels unto many planets, and who as yet have not entered into so great a fullness as those who are resurrected from the dead” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 170).

Moses 7:26–28. Chains and Darkness

Satan promotes works of darkness and seeks to bind, captivate, and destroy mankind (see 2 Nephi 26:22; 28:17–23; Alma 12:11; Moses 4:4). God does not work in darkness, and He seeks to save mankind (see 2 Nephi 26:23–24, 33). Furthermore, in stark contrast to Satan and his angels, who laughed at the wickedness of mankind, Moses 7:28 tells us that God wept over the wickedness of His children.

Moses 7:27. Angels Descended out of Heaven

God often sends angels to minister to His children on earth (for example, see 3 Nephi 17:23–25; Moroni 7:35–37; D&C 13:1; 29:42; Moses 5:5–7).

Moses 7:27. Many Were Caught Up into Heaven

The righteous people described in Moses 7:27 were translated and “caught up” to join those in the city of Zion. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “After those in the City of Holiness were translated and taken up into heaven without tasting death, so that Zion as a people and a congregation had fled from the battle-scarred surface of the earth, the Lord sought others among men who would serve him. From the days of Enoch to the flood, new converts and true believers, except those needed to carry out the Lord’s purposes among mortals, were translated” (*The Millennial Messiah*, 284).

Moses 7:32–41. Why Did God Weep?

Elder Marion D. Hanks, a former member of the Seventy, explained:

“God, from whom all blessings come, asked of his children only that they should love each other and choose him, their Father.

“But as in our day, many neither sought the Lord nor had love for each other, and when God foresaw the suffering that would inevitably follow this self-willed, rebellious course of sin, *he wept*. That, he told Enoch, was what he had to cry about” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 40–41; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 29).

Moses 7:37. “Satan Shall Be Their Father”

Satan’s goal is to deceive and to blind all mankind; to lead every one of God’s children captive at his will, if they will not hearken to the voice of the Lord (see Moses 4:4). Satan thereby becomes “father” to those who choose to follow him, and they experience his misery (see 2 Nephi 2:18; D&C 10:22, 26–27).

Moses 7:38–39. Spirit Prison

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “Men in Noah’s day rebelled, rejected the Lord and his gospel, and were buried in a watery grave. Their spirits then found themselves in that prison prepared for those who walk in darkness when light is before them” (*The Promised Messiah*, 330).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “From the time of their death in the flood until the time of the crucifixion of the Savior, they were shut up in the prison house in torment, suffering the penalty of their transgressions, because they refused to hear a prophet of the Lord—and so it will be with every man who rejects the gospel, whether he lived anciently or whether he lives now; it makes no difference” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:229).

Moses 7:39. “That Which I Have Chosen”

The pronoun *That* refers to Jesus Christ. He was chosen in the premortal existence to be the Savior of the world (see D&C 38:4; Moses 4:2). After completing His mission on earth, and while His body lay in the tomb, Christ visited the spirit world as a spirit being (see 1 Peter 3:18–20). Once there, He organized the spirits of the righteous to go

among the spirits of the wicked in prison and declare the gospel to them (see D&C 138).



MOSES 7:42–57

ENOCH SAW THE DAYS OF NOAH AND JESUS CHRIST

Moses 7:44. At First Enoch Refused to Be Comforted

Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained:

“If Enoch had not looked and been spiritually informed, he would have seen the human condition in isolation from the grand reality. If God were not there, Enoch’s ‘Why?’ would have become an unanswered scream of despair!

“At first, Enoch refused ‘to be comforted’ (Moses 7:44). Finally, he saw God’s plan, the later coming of the Messiah in the meridian of time, and the eventual triumph of God’s purposes” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 36; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 30–31).

Moses 7:47. “The Lamb Is Slain”

“The Righteous,” Jesus Christ, also called “the Lamb of God,” was sacrificed on a cross in the meridian of time, just as lambs without blemish had been sacrificed on altars of stone since the time of Adam.

Moses 7:48. The Earth Spoke

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “The Lord here [in Doctrine and Covenants 88] informs us that the earth on which we dwell is a living thing, and that the time must come when it will be sanctified from all unrighteousness. In the Pearl of Great Price, when Enoch is conversing with the Lord, he hears the earth crying for deliverance from the iniquity upon her face. . . . It is not the fault of the earth that wickedness prevails upon her face, for she has been true to the law which she received and that law is the celestial law. Therefore the Lord says that the earth shall be sanctified from all unrighteousness” (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2 vols. [1953], 1:366–67).

Moses 7:50–52. The Covenant of Enoch

The covenant that God made with Enoch was renewed with Noah. In the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 6:18 (JST, Genesis 8:23–24) the Lord said to Noah:

“But with thee will I establish my covenant, even as I have sworn unto thy father, Enoch, that of thy posterity shall come all nations.

“And thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with them.”

Moses 7:53. Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is “the Rock of Heaven.” The “gate” is faith in Him, repentance, and baptism by water and the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 31:17–18). Jesus Christ is the only way by which we return to the Father (see John 14:6). He is the Messiah, “the Anointed One” who was chosen from the beginning to save God’s children (see Moses 4:2; Abraham 3:27), the King of Zion, the Ruler over the pure in heart (see D&C 97:18–21), and the sure foundation upon which we can build our lives and obtain eternal life (see Matthew 7:24–25; Helaman 5:12).

Moses 7:55–56. The Earth Groaned at Christ’s Death

Enoch saw that the earth would mourn and groan and its rocks would be rent when Christ was crucified and resurrected. Nephi, son of Lehi, and Samuel the Lamanite also prophesied of this (see 1 Nephi 19:10–12; Helaman 14:21–22). The Book of Mormon contains an account of great earthquakes in the western hemisphere (see 3 Nephi 8:18), while the Bible tells of earthquakes in the eastern hemisphere (see Matthew 27:51). Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “These earth spasms [were] a revolt by the created earth against the crucifixion of its Creator” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1963, 65).

Moses 7:56–57. The Resurrection

Enoch saw that the Saints who died before Christ would arise and be crowned at the right hand of God. Samuel the Lamanite also prophesied of a resurrection that would take place in America following the Resurrection of Christ (see Helaman 14:25). Accounts of this first resurrection are found in Matthew 27:52–53 and 3 Nephi 23:9–13.

Concerning the Resurrection, President Howard W. Hunter, then Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“The doctrine of the Resurrection is the single most fundamental and crucial doctrine in the Christian religion. It cannot be overemphasized, nor can it be disregarded.

“Without the Resurrection, the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a litany of wise sayings and seemingly unexplainable miracles—but sayings and miracles with no ultimate triumph. No, the ultimate triumph is in the ultimate miracle: for the first time in the history of mankind, one who was dead raised himself into living

immortality. He *was* the Son of God, the Son of our immortal Father in Heaven, and his triumph over physical and spiritual death is the good news every Christian tongue should speak” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 18; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 16).



MOSES 7:58–69 ENOCH SAW THE DAY WHEN THE EARTH WOULD REST

Moses 7:58. “When Shall the Earth Rest?”

Enoch heard the earth asking when it could rest and be cleansed from the wickedness of its children (see Moses 7:48). Enoch then saw that the earth would not rest in the days of Noah nor in the days of Jesus Christ’s mortal ministry. The time when the earth would finally rest would be at Christ’s Second Coming (see D&C 133:46–52; Articles of Faith 1:10).

Moses 7:59. “I Know Thee”

The Lord called Enoch to be a preacher of righteousness (see Moses 6:26–36). To help Enoch accomplish his mission, the Lord told him, “My Spirit is upon you . . . and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me” (Moses 6:34). Enoch did indeed walk with God (see Moses 6:39) and gained the confidence to say, “I know thee.”

Moses 7:59. “A Right to Thy Throne”

Enoch saw the Saints arise with resurrected bodies, receive crowns, and stand at the right hand of Christ (see Moses 7:56). He then foresaw his own glorious future (see Moses 7:59). God has promised all of His worthy children this same reward (see Romans 8:16–17; Revelation 3:21). Enoch also saw that this glorious future was “not of myself, but through thine own grace” (Moses 7:59). Exaltation in the

celestial kingdom of God is obtained as a gift from God, by grace, after all we can do (see 2 Nephi 25:23; D&C 6:13). Regarding grace, the Bible Dictionary states:

“The main idea of the word is divine means of help or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ.

“... It is likewise through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, receive strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts.

“... However, grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient” (“grace,” 697; see also 2 Nephi 25:23; Moroni 10:32–33).

Moses 7:62. “Righteousness Will I Send Down out of Heaven; and Truth Will I Send Forth out of the Earth”

President Ezra Taft Benson explained that the Lord promised “that righteousness would come from heaven and truth out of the earth. We have seen the marvelous fulfillment of that prophecy in our generation. The Book of Mormon has come forth out of the earth, filled with truth, serving as the very ‘keystone of our religion’ (see Introduction to the Book of Mormon). God has also sent down righteousness from heaven. The Father Himself appeared with His Son to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The angel Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and numerous other angels were directed by heaven to restore the necessary powers to the kingdom. Further, the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelation after revelation from the heavens during those first critical years of the Church’s growth. These revelations have been preserved for us in the Doctrine and Covenants” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 102; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 79–80).

Moses 7:62. “Truth Will I Cause to Sweep the Earth”

President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

“The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to ‘sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect’ (Moses 7:62). This sacred volume of scripture needs to become more central in our preaching, our teaching, and our missionary work. . . .



“The time is long overdue for a massive flooding of the earth with the Book of Mormon for the many reasons which the Lord has given. . . .

“We have the Book of Mormon, we have the members, we have the missionaries, we have the resources, and the world has the need.

“*The time is now!*” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 3–4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4–5).

Moses 7:62. “Zion, a New Jerusalem”

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “And now, I ask, how righteousness and truth are going to sweep the earth as with a flood? I will answer. Men and angels are to be co-workers in bringing to pass this great work, and Zion is to be prepared, even a new Jerusalem, for the elect that are to be gathered from the four quarters of the earth, and to be established an holy city” (*History of the Church*, 2:260; for more on the latter-day Zion [the New Jerusalem], see 3 Nephi 20:22; 21:20–25; Ether 13:2–8; D&C 45:65–71; 57:1–3).

Moses 7:63. Two Zions Will Meet

Concerning this meeting of the two Zions, President John Taylor said: “When the time comes that these calamities we read of, shall overtake the earth, those that are prepared will have the power of translation, as they had in former times, and the city will be translated. And Zion that is on the earth will rise, and the Zion above will descend, as we are told, and we will meet and fall on each other’s necks and embrace and kiss each other. And thus the purposes of God to a certain extent will then be fulfilled” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:253).

Moses 7:64–65. The Millennium

During the Millennium the earth will not be a celestial world. It will be in a terrestrial, or paradisiacal, condition, cleansed from wickedness. As the Millennium is ushered in, there will still be people of various religious beliefs residing on the earth. President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

“When the reign of Jesus Christ comes during the millennium, only those who have lived the telestial law will be removed. It is recorded in the Bible and other standard works of the Church that the earth will be cleansed of all its corruption and wickedness. Those who have lived virtuous lives, who have been honest in their dealings with their fellow man and have endeavored to do good to the best of their understanding, shall remain. . . .

“The gospel will be taught far more intensely and with greater power during the millennium until all the inhabitants of the earth shall embrace it. Satan shall be bound so that he cannot tempt any man. Should any man refuse to repent and accept the gospel under those conditions then he would be accursed. Through the revelations given to the prophets we learn that during the reign of Jesus Christ for a thousand years, eventually all people will embrace the truth.” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:108, 110–11; for more on the Millennium, see Isaiah 11:5–9; 65:17–25; D&C 101:26–34).

Moses 7:68–69. “Zion Is Fled”

Enoch’s people lived on earth for many years before they were taken into heaven. Concerning this period of time, President Brigham Young said: “Enoch had to talk with

and teach his people during a period of three hundred and sixty years, before he could get them prepared to enter into their rest, and then he obtained power to translate himself and his people" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:320).

MOSES 8:1–30

THE WORLD WAS FILLED WITH WICKEDNESS



Moses 8:1–11. Noah

Many generations of prophets foresaw Noah as the prophet in the days of the cleansing of the earth by flood (see Moses 8:2, 9). Noah was ordained to the higher priesthood when ten years old by his grandfather Methuselah (see D&C 107:52). He became a preacher of righteousness, even as Enoch. He, his wife, and his sons—Japheth, Shem, and Ham—and their wives were the only people to survive the Flood. Noah holds the keys of his dispensation and stands next to Adam in authority (see *History of the Church*, 3:386).

Noah is the angel Gabriel (see *History of the Church*, 3:386), who appeared to Zacharias to announce that he would be the father of John the Baptist and to Mary to announce that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ. Noah also functions in the calling of an *Elias* (see D&C 27:6–7), meaning one who prepares or restores. Through his various appearances, Noah has performed both of these functions.

Moses 8:3. The Posterity of Methuselah

A list of the “sons of God,” which began in Moses 5:8–25, continues in Moses 8 with the addition of Lamech (v. 5), Noah (v. 9), and Noah’s three sons (v. 12). These brethren were all holders of the higher priesthood (see D&C 107:40–52; for more information about Methuselah, see D&C 107:50, 52–57).

Moses 8:14–15. The Daughters of the Sons of God

President Joseph Fielding Smith applied the lessons from Moses 8:14–15 to our day, saying:

“Because the daughters of Noah married the sons of men contrary to the teachings of the Lord, his anger was kindled, and this offense was one cause that brought to pass the universal flood. . . . The daughters who had been born, evidently under the covenant, and were the daughters of the sons of God, that is to say of those who held the priesthood, were transgressing the commandment of the Lord and were marrying *out of the Church*. Thus they were cutting themselves off from the blessings of the priesthood contrary to the teachings of Noah and the will of God. . . .

“Today there are foolish daughters of those who hold this same priesthood who are violating this commandment and marrying the sons of men; there are also some of the sons of those who hold the priesthood who are marrying the daughters of men. All of this is contrary to the will of God just as much as it was in the days of Noah” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:136–37).

Moses 8:16. Noah Taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ

President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: “From the days of Father Adam to the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors, whenever the priesthood has been on the earth, a major responsibility has been the preaching of the saving, eternal principles of the gospel—the plan of salvation. Father Adam taught these things to his own children. (Moses 5:12.) Consider Noah’s long years of missionary effort and the preachings of all the ancient prophets. (Moses 8:16–20.) Each in his day was commanded to carry the gospel message to the children of men and call them to repentance as the only means of escaping the pending judgments” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 153; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 105).

Moses 8:17. “My Spirit Shall Not Always Strive with Man”

President Harold B. Lee stated, “This means the withdrawing of that vital light which all could have enjoyed if they had kept the commandments” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 119; see also 1 Nephi 7:14; 2 Nephi 26:11; Mormon 5:16; Ether 2:15; 15:19; Moroni 8:28; 9:4; D&C 1:33).

Moses 8:25. “It Repented Noah, and His Heart Was Pained”

Note that this verse is an important and inspired correction to Genesis 6:6, which reads: “And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.” The Hebrew word used here, and translated *repented* in the Bible, is *nacham* (naw-kham), which literally means “to sigh,” “to breathe strongly,” “to be sorry,” “to pity.”

Moses 8:27. “Noah Was a Just Man, and Perfect in His Generation”

Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

“Noah, who built the ark, was one of God’s greatest servants, chosen before he was born as were others of the prophets. He was no eccentric, as many have supposed. Neither was he a mythical figure created only in legend. Noah was real. . . .

“Let no one downgrade the life and mission of this great prophet. Noah was so near perfect in his day that he literally walked and talked with God. . . .

“Few men in any age were as great as Noah. In many respects he was like Adam, the first man. Both had served as ministering angels in the presence of God even after their mortal experience” (*Noah and the Flood* [1982], 1–2).

Moses 8:26–30. The Flood

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “So the Lord commanded Noah to build an ark into which he was to take his family and the animals of the earth to preserve seed after the flood, and all flesh that was not in the ark perished according to the Lord’s decree. Of course this story is not believed by the wise and the great among the children of men, any more than was Noah’s story in his day” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:39).

President John Taylor taught: “God destroyed the wicked of that generation with a flood. Why did He destroy them? He destroyed them for their benefit, if you can comprehend it” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:291; see also 19:158–59 for President Taylor’s view of the Flood as an act of love).

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

Contents:

- *Abraham seeks the blessings of the fathers (the priesthood)*
- *God's promises to Abraham*
- *Abraham and Sarai enter Egypt*
- *Through the Urim and Thummim, Abraham learns truths about the sun, moon, and stars*
- *The eternal nature of spirits*
- *The Gods plan and create this earth and the life hereon*

Who Is Abraham and When Did He Live?

Adam and Eve and the Fall (approximately 4000 B.C.), Enoch (approximately 3000 B.C.), Noah and the Flood (approximately 2400 B.C.), and the tower of Babel (approximately 2200 B.C.) preceded Abraham's time. Abraham, who was born in about 2000 B.C., was the father of Isaac and the grandfather of Jacob, whose name was changed to *Israel*. (See Bible Dictionary, "chronology," 635–36.)

How Did the Church Obtain the Book of Abraham?

On 3 July 1835 a man named Michael Chandler brought four Egyptian mummies and several papyrus scrolls of ancient Egyptian writings to Kirtland, Ohio. The mummies and papyri had been discovered in Egypt several years earlier by Antonio Lebolo. Kirtland was one of many stops in the eastern United States for Chandler's mummy exhibition. Chandler was offering the mummies and rolls of papyrus for sale and, at the urging of the Prophet Joseph Smith, several members of the Church donated money to purchase them. In a statement dated 5 July 1835, Joseph Smith, declaring the importance of these ancient Egyptian writings, recorded: "I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham. . . . Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth" (*History of the Church*, 2:236).

How Did the Prophet Translate the Ancient Writings?

The Prophet Joseph Smith never communicated his method of translating these records. As with all other scriptures, a testimony of the truthfulness of these writings is primarily a matter of faith. The greatest evidence of the truthfulness of the book of Abraham is not found in an analysis of physical evidence nor historical background, but in prayerful consideration of its content and power.

Why Did the Prophet Joseph Smith Say He Translated the Writings of Abraham When the Manuscripts Do Not Date to Abraham's Time?

In 1966 eleven fragments of papyri once possessed by the Prophet Joseph Smith were discovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. They were given to the Church and have been analyzed by scholars who date them between about 100 B.C. and A.D. 100. A common objection to the authenticity of the book of Abraham is that the manuscripts are not old enough to have been written by Abraham, who lived almost two thousand years before Christ. Joseph Smith never claimed that the papyri were autographic (written by Abraham himself), nor that they dated from the time of Abraham. It is common to refer to an author's works as "his" writings, whether he penned them himself, dictated them to others, or others copied his writings later.

What Did the Prophet Joseph Smith Do with His Translation?

The book of Abraham was originally published a few excerpts at a time in *Times and Seasons*, a Church publication, beginning in March 1842 at Nauvoo, Illinois (see Introductory Note at the beginning of the Pearl of Great Price). The Prophet Joseph

Smith indicated that he would publish more of the book of Abraham later, but he was martyred before he was able to do so. Concerning the potential length of the completed translation, Oliver Cowdery once said that “volumes” would be necessary to contain it (see *Messenger and Advocate*, Dec. 1835, 236).

In addition to hieroglyphic writings, the manuscript also contained Egyptian drawings. On 23 February 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith asked Reuben Hedlock, a professional wood engraver and member of the Church, to prepare woodcuts of three of those drawings so they could be printed. Hedlock finished the engravings in one week, and Joseph Smith published the copies (facsimiles) along with the book of Abraham. Joseph Smith’s explanations of the drawings accompany the facsimiles.

What Happened to the Mummies and the Papyri?

After the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the four mummies and the papyri became the property of Joseph’s widowed mother, Lucy Mack Smith. At Lucy’s death in 1856, Emma Smith, the Prophet’s wife, sold the collection to Mr. A. Combs. Several theories have been offered regarding what happened subsequently to the mummies and the papyri. It appears that at least two of the mummies were burned in the great Chicago fire of 1871 (see B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. [1909–11], 2:380–382).



In the early spring of 1966, Dr. Aziz S. Atiya, a University of Utah professor, discovered several fragments of the book of Abraham papyri while doing research at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. These fragments were presented to the Church by the director of the museum on 27 November 1967. The

current whereabouts of the other mummies and the other portions of the papyri are unknown (see H. Donl Peterson, “Some Joseph Smith Papyri Rediscovered (1967)” in *Studies in Scripture, Volume Two*, 183–85).

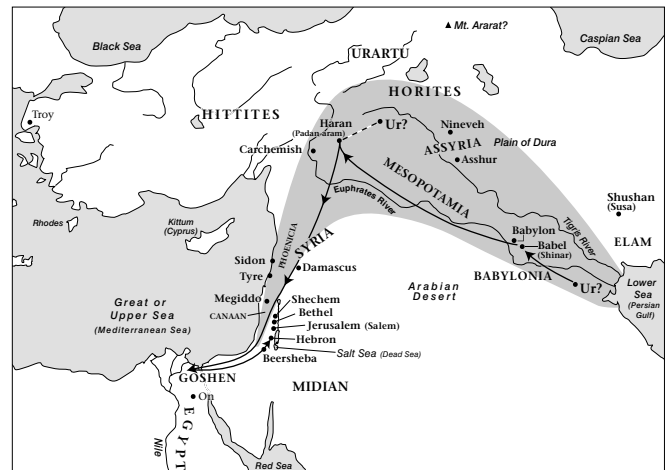
What Is the Significance of the Book of Abraham?

The book of Abraham is an evidence of the inspired calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It came forth at a time when the study of the ancient Egyptian language and culture was just beginning. The scholars of the 1800s had scarcely begun to explore the field of Egyptology, and yet, with no formal training in ancient languages and no knowledge of ancient Egypt (except his work with the Book of Mormon), Joseph Smith began his translation of the ancient manuscripts. His knowledge and ability came through the power and gift of God, together with his own determination and faith.

The book of Abraham reveals truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ that were previously unknown to Church members of Joseph Smith’s day. It also casts a bright light upon difficult passages found in other scriptural texts.

ABRAHAM 1:1–4

ABRAHAM SOUGHT THE BLESSINGS OF THE FATHERS



Abraham 1:1. The Chaldeans and the Egyptians

Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, is generally identified with the modern town of Mugheir in present-day Iraq. It is about 150 miles (240 kilometers) from the Persian Gulf and 875 miles (1,400 kilometers) from Egypt. Although the peoples of Chaldea and Egypt were separated geographically, it appears that in the days of Abraham they shared religious beliefs and practices.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained that Abraham “mentions that the priest of Elkenah was also the priest of Pharaoh. The altar [see facsimile 1, figure 4] was obviously specially built for human sacrifice.

“How did this Egyptian infusion reach into Mesopotamia? What was the priest of Pharaoh doing in Ur?

“At this time Egyptian influence was felt throughout the Fertile Crescent [a geographic region that extends in a curve from Egypt north into Mesopotamia, then east and south again toward the Persian Gulf]. Much of the advanced learning of the people of the Nile was exported abroad, including some of their religious customs” (*Abraham, Friend of God* [1979], 42–43).

Abraham 1:1. Abraham’s Early Years

Abraham may have known the prophet Noah. The biblical chronology clearly indicates that Noah was alive during the early years of Abraham’s life. In Abraham 1:19 the Lord mentioned His covenant relationship with Noah in order to teach Abraham about the covenant relationship the Lord would have with him.

Abraham 1:2. Why Did Abraham Seek the Blessings of the Fathers?

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “The true disciple has an inborn questioning to know, personally, all that God is willing to teach us. Nephi could have accepted gladly the vision of his father, Lehi. But Nephi ‘desired to know the things that [his] father had seen.’ (1 Nephi 11:1.) Abraham sought, even though he had a father who had turned from the faith, ‘for greater happiness and peace’ and ‘for mine appointment unto the Priesthood.’ (Abraham 1:2, 4.) Abraham described himself as desiring ‘great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness’ (Abraham 1:2), questing for the word of Christ. Divine discontent in the form of promptings can move us to feast because we know that by feasting we can increase our knowledge, effectiveness, and joy” (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward* [1977], 119).

Abraham 1:2. What Is “the Right Belonging to the Fathers”?

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that Adam received the priesthood “in the Creation, before the world was formed,” and that he held the keys of the First Presidency (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157).

President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“The order of priesthood spoken of in the scriptures is sometimes referred to as the patriarchal order because it came down from father to son. . . .

“Abraham, a righteous servant of God, desiring as he said, ‘to be a greater follower of righteousness,’ sought for these same blessings. Speaking of the order of the priesthood, he said: ‘It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time . . . even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, our first father, through the fathers unto me.’ (Abr. 1:2–3.)” (“What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 9).

Abraham explained that he had “the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood” (Abraham 1:31). These records confirmed Abraham’s right to the priesthood. This can be traced in Genesis 5 (from Adam to Shem; see also Moses 6:8–25; 8:1–13) and Genesis 11:10–26 (from Shem to Abram [Abraham]; see also D&C 84:14–16; 107:40–52).

President Joseph Fielding Smith, speaking of the patriarchal organization from Adam to Moses, wrote: “The order of this priesthood which was established in the beginning was patriarchal. The authority descended from father to son, and those who held it were high priests. This order of descent from Adam to Noah is given in the Doctrine and Covenants. Noah, who stands next to Adam in authority, brought this priesthood through the flood, and it continued from generation to generation. Abraham, the 10th from Noah, received special blessings from the Lord,

and the priesthood continued through him and his seed with the promise that all who received the gospel should be counted as Abraham’s seed and partake of his blessings” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:160–61).

Abraham 1:3. Who Conferred the Priesthood upon Abraham?

Doctrine and Covenants 84:14–16 indicates that “Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah” and from Noah back to Enoch and eventually to Adam. Abraham’s record shows that his fathers had “turned from their righteousness” (Abraham 1:5) and therefore could not confer the holy priesthood upon Abraham. Yet Abraham became a “rightful heir” to the priesthood through his righteousness and “sought for the blessings of the fathers” who held the priesthood (v. 2). The Prophet Joseph Smith also referred to Abraham’s relationship with the righteous patriarch Melchizedek when he wrote: “Abraham says to Melchizedek, I believe all that thou hast taught me concerning the priesthood and the coming of the Son of Man; so Melchizedek ordained Abraham and sent him away. Abraham rejoiced, saying, Now I have a priesthood” (*History of the Church*, 5:555).

ABRAHAM 1:5–19 AND FACSIMILE 1 JEHOVAH SAVED ABRAHAM

Abraham 1:4–6. The Courage of Abraham

President Joseph Fielding Smith stated: “We all know something of the courage it takes for one to stand in opposition to united custom, and general belief. None of us likes to be ridiculed. Few are able to withstand popular opinion even when they know it is wrong, and it is difficult to comprehend the magnificent courage displayed by Abraham in his profound obedience to Jehovah, in the midst of his surroundings. His moral courage, his implicit faith in God, his boldness in raising his voice in opposition to the prevailing wickedness, is almost beyond comparison” (*The Way to Perfection*, 86).

Abraham 1:6–7. Why Did the Fathers Seek to Sacrifice Abraham?

Abraham 1 reveals that Abraham’s father, Terah, had given himself to the worship of false gods and was willing to offer his own son as a sacrifice (see Abraham 1:5–6, 17; Joshua 24:2). Elder John A. Widtsoe, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “The family of Abraham had turned from righteousness and had become idolators. Abraham therefore, himself a follower of God’s truth, preached righteousness to them but without avail. For his insistence upon the worship of the only true and Living God, he was persecuted and his life sought. So

intense was the hatred of the idolators that it was only by the intervention of the Lord that he was saved from being offered up as a sacrifice to the idols of the people," (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 398).

Abraham 1:8–11. Egyptian Human Sacrifice

President Joseph Fielding Smith, commenting on the human sacrifices that took place during the time of Abraham, wrote: "Abraham was of the [tenth] generation from Noah. Several hundred years had passed since the flood, and people had multiplied and spread over the face of the earth. The civilizations of Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria and the petty nations of Canaan, had been established. In the midst of this scattering the true worship of the Father was nearly lost. Sacrifice instituted in the days of Adam and continued in the practice and teaching of Noah, in the similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of Man, had become perverted. Instead of offering clean animals, such as the lamb and bullock, the apostate nations had dwindled in unbelief to the extent that human sacrifice was offered to their idol gods" (*The Way to Perfection*, 85).

Abraham 1:11. The Three Virgins

Along with three exceptionally faithful young men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (see Daniel 3:12–30)—Elder Neal A. Maxwell discussed these three virtuous young women as "marvelous models on enduring uncertainty and on trusting God": "Matching those three young men are three young women whose names we do not have. They are mentioned in the book of Abraham, remarkable young women about whom I am anxious to know more. They were actually sacrificed upon the altar because 'they would not bow down to worship [an idol] of wood or stone' (Abraham 1:11). Some day the faithful will get to meet them" (*Not My Will, But Thine* [1988], 119–20).

Abraham 1:12–20. The Sacrifice of All Things If Necessary

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

"For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor, and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and even his own life also—counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ—requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God; but actual knowledge, realizing that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God. . . .

". . . A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the

sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.

". . . It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him. . . .

". . . From the days of righteous Abel to the present time, the knowledge that men have that they are accepted in the sight of God is obtained by offering sacrifice. . . .

". . . Those, then, who make the sacrifice, will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God; and those who have this testimony will have faith to lay hold on eternal life, and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end, and receive the crown that is laid up for them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who do not make the sacrifice cannot enjoy this faith, because men are dependent upon this sacrifice in order to obtain this faith: therefore, they cannot lay hold upon eternal life, because the revelations of God do not guarantee unto them the authority so to do, and without this guarantee faith could not exist" (*Lectures on Faith*, 68–70).

Abraham 1:20. There Was Mourning in the Court of Pharaoh



Chaldea was a great distance from Egypt, yet there was mourning in Egypt when the Lord broke down the altar and smote the priest. Regarding this event, Elder Mark E. Petersen wrote:

“When the scripture says that the Lord broke down the altars of the gods of the land, it must have had broad repercussions because it brought great mourning in Chaldea ‘and also in the court of Pharaoh.’ Pharaoh and his court were in Egypt. Only a most unusual event could have caused such extensive and distant reactions.

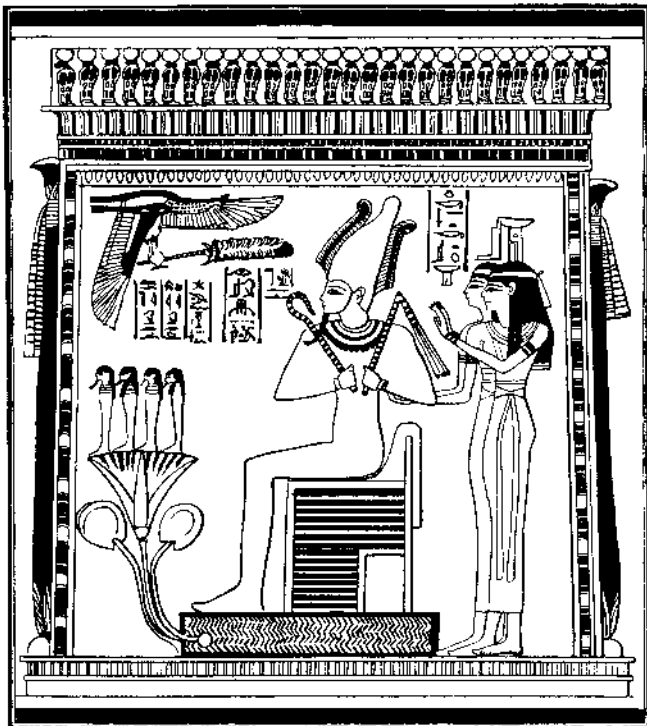
“Abraham’s brief account obviously does not tell the whole story” (*Abraham, Friend of God*, 48–49).

ABRAHAM 1:20–31

PHARAOH, KING OF EGYPT

Abraham 1:20–27. A Pharaoh in Egypt

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “After the immersion of the earth in the waters of Noah came a day of new beginning. As in Adam’s day, the faithful lived under a theocratic system, and as in the days before the flood, those who chose to live after the manner of the world set up their own governments and their own ways of worship. The seed of Shem, Ham, and Japheth began to populate the earth, and it so continued for more than four hundred years, when Abraham, who received theocratic power from Melchizedek, went down into Egypt. There he found a descendant of Ham, reigning as Pharaoh, whose government was patterned after the patriarchal governments of old, but which was devoid of priesthood and revelation, and hence, as far as worship is concerned—a worship prescribed, mandated, and commanded by pharaoh—had turned to idolatry.” (*Abraham 1:20–27.*)” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 660).



Abraham 1:25. “The First Government of Egypt . . . Was after the Manner of the Government of Ham, Which Was Patriarchal”

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

“Egypt was not the only nation, in these early times, which attempted to imitate the patriarchal order of government. We have seen in Abraham’s record that this was the order of government in the reign of Adam, and down to the time of Noah.

“Naturally that form of government would be perpetuated in large degree by all tribes as they began to spread over the face of the earth. As men multiplied they organized first in the family group, then into tribes and eventually into nations. The greater powers would naturally occupy the most favored spots. Stronger tribes would overcome the weaker and force them to join the national government, or else they would be subdued and treated as slaves, or placed under tribute. As the patriarchal order was handed down from father to son so also would the political authority be perpetuated with the same claims to authority. We know that in ancient times in Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Babylon, Persia, and among all the petty nations of the Mesopotamia and Palestine, the monarch was succeeded by his posterity in hereditary right” (*The Progress of Man*, 3rd ed. [1944], 100–101.)

Abraham 1:24–27. The Pharaoh and the Priesthood

At times in the past, the power and authority to act in the name of the Lord was bestowed upon only a few worthy males and withheld from all others. In the days of Moses’ leadership of the children of Israel, for example, only the tribe of Levi had the privilege to hold the priesthood (see Numbers 8:5–26). Our day is the “long-promised day . . . when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood.” On 8 June 1978, the First Presidency announced:

“Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God’s eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

“He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all

candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

“We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel” (Official Declaration 2).

Abraham 1:27. What Does it Mean to “Fain Claim” the Right of Priesthood?

Fain means “content or willing to accept an alternative when the more desirable thing cannot be attained” (*Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, 2nd ed., 657). “The Pharaohs would fain claim [the priesthood] from Noah, through Ham” (Abraham 1:27).

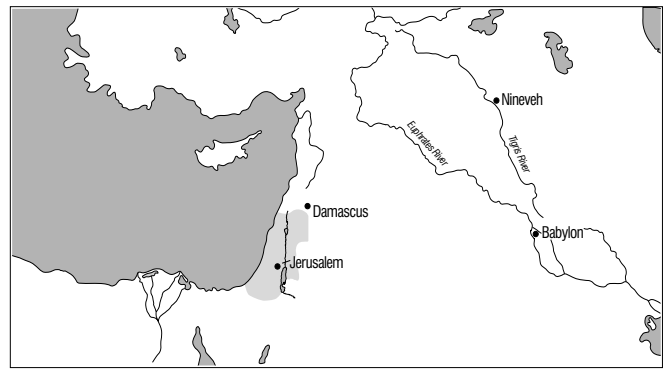
ABRAHAM 2:1–13 THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Abraham 2:1. The Famine Waxed Sore in the Land

The famine in the land was most likely caused by drought, a prolonged period of dry weather during which crops wither and animals die from lack of feed. Note how the Lord used famine to influence Abraham and his family: a famine in Ur helped Terah, Abraham’s father, turn from his idolatry and join his sons in the land of Haran (see Abraham 1:30); the famine in Ur also created an additional sense of urgency for Abraham to leave Ur (see Abraham 2:1–2); famine was a possible motivator for Abraham’s departure from the land of Haran, and was a probable factor in the death of Terah (see Abraham 2:17; see also Genesis 11:32); a famine persuaded Abraham and his family to leave the land of Canaan and continue their journey into Egypt (see Abraham 2:21). See also Helaman 11:3–20.

Abraham 2:6. What Was the “Strange Land” Promised to Abraham?

The Bible and the book of Abraham both identify the strange land as the land of Canaan (see Genesis 17:8; Abraham 2:15). It is not the same land possessed by the people of Canaan as recorded in Moses 7:6–8. Abraham’s Canaan was named for Canaan, the fourth son of Ham (see Genesis 9:22; 10:6). Canaan and his household originally inhabited the land located in the lowland toward the Mediterranean coast of Palestine. *Canaan* sometimes refers to all the country west of the Jordan River, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. This is the same land that Joshua parceled out to the twelve tribes of Israel (see Joshua 14–21). To learn more about the land and people of Canaan, see Genesis 15:18–21; 24:1–4; 28:1–2, 8–9; and Joshua 24:11.



Many of Abraham’s descendants have dwelt in the land of Canaan, yet from time to time some of them were driven out of that promised land (see Abraham 2:6). President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “The descendants of Abraham, the tribes of Israel, became the chosen people of the Lord according to the promise. The Lord honored them, nourished them, watched over them with a jealous care, until they became a great nation in the land the Lord had given to their fathers. Notwithstanding this tender care and the instructions and warnings this people received from time to time through their prophets, they failed to comprehend the goodness of the Lord and departed from him. Because of their rebellion they were driven out of their land and eventually were scattered among the nations” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:164).

Abraham 2:6. An Everlasting Possession

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that “Abraham’s inheritance in Canaan, for himself and his seed after him, was to be an eternal inheritance, one that would endure in time and in eternity. This promise is the hope of Israel, the hope that the meek shall inherit the earth, first during the millennial era and finally in that same immortal state when the earth becomes a celestial sphere” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:71).

Abraham 2:6, 9–11. The Abrahamic Covenant

God’s Promise	Scripture Reference
Land	Abraham 2:6
Posterity	Abraham 2:9
Priesthood	Abraham 1:18
Salvation and exaltation	Abraham 2:10

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“Abraham stands in the same position as Noah for all who have lived since his day, as far as eternal blessings are concerned. Even those who are not his literal seed shall receive their eternal blessings through him and the covenant God made with him. The Lord made repeated promises to Abraham that he would become a great nation and also that in him should ‘all families of the earth be blessed.’ (Genesis 12:2–3.) He was promised the land of

Canaan as an everlasting inheritance for him and for his seed. ‘And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.’ (Genesis 13:16.) This has reference to eternal increase, for no man’s seed could exceed in number the dust particles of the earth. ‘Look now toward heaven,’ the Lord said, ‘and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.’ And Abraham ‘believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.’ (Genesis 15:5–6.) All these things are part of the Abrahamic covenant.

“And yet again the Lord said to Abraham: ‘As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. . . . And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.’ (Genesis 17:4–8.) Abraham thus covenants for himself and for his seed that he and they will serve the Lord Jehovah, who in turn promises them eternal increase.

“In its purest and best form, as far as the ancient word is concerned, the Abrahamic covenant is thus set forth: [quotes Abraham 2:9–11.]

“What, then, is the Abrahamic covenant? It is that Abraham and his seed (including those adopted into his family) shall have all of the blessings of the gospel, of the priesthood, and of eternal life. The gate to eternal life is celestial marriage, which holy order of matrimony enables the family unit to continue in eternity, so that the participating parties may have posterity as numerous as the sands upon the seashore or the stars in heaven. The Abrahamic covenant enables men to create for themselves eternal family units that are patterned after the family of God our Heavenly Father. A lesser part of the covenant is that the seed of Abraham have the Millennial destiny of inheriting as an everlasting possession the very land of Canaan whereon the feet of the righteous have trod in days gone by” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 503–5; see also “The Abrahamic Covenant,” pp. 93–98 of this manual).

Abraham 2:10. Abraham’s Seed

Elder John A. Widtsoe stated: “All who accept the gospel become by adoption members of the family of Abraham” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 399). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “As the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 149–50).

Abraham 2:11. “This Right Shall Continue in Thee, and in Thy Seed”

Abraham desired the blessings of the fathers—the right to administer in the Melchizedek Priesthood. He was a rightful heir, and because of his righteousness he became a high priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood (see Abraham 1:2). The Lord promised him that his posterity would also be rightful heirs of the priesthood. “Being an heir to the Abrahamic covenant does not make one a ‘chosen person’ per se, but does signify that such are chosen to responsibly carry the gospel to all the peoples of the earth. Abraham’s seed have carried out the missionary activity in all the nations since Abraham’s day. (Matt. 3:9; Abr. 2:9–11)” (Bible Dictionary, “Abraham, covenant of,” 602).

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “The responsibility of the seed of Abraham, which we are, is to be missionaries to ‘bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations’ (Abraham 2:9)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 107; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 85).

The same keys of the priesthood given to Abraham have been restored to the earth in the latter days. On 3 April 1836 a prophet named Elias appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the newly dedicated Kirtland Temple and committed to them “the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed” (D&C 110:12). With these keys of the priesthood on earth once again, a person can receive all of the blessings given to Abraham (see D&C 132:29–33).

Abraham 2:13. “I Will Do Well to Harken unto Thy Voice”

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Abraham was guided in all his family affairs by the Lord; was conversed with by angels, and by the Lord; was told where to go, and when to stop; and prospered exceedingly in all that he put his hand unto; it was because he and his family obeyed the counsel of the Lord” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 251–52).

ABRAHAM 2:14–25 ABRAHAM CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY

Abraham 2:14. A Chronology of the Later Years of Abraham’s Life

Age	Event
?	Abraham left Ur for the land of Haran (see Abraham 2:3–4).
62	Abraham and his family left the land of Haran for the land of Canaan (see Abraham 2:14; note that Genesis 12:4 says that he was 75 years old when they left Haran).

- ? Abraham and his family lived in Egypt (see Genesis 12:11–20).
- ? Abraham settled in Hebron (in the land of Canaan) and the Lord appeared to him again (see Genesis 13).
- ? Abraham rescued Lot and met with Melchizedek (see Genesis 14).
- 86 Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar, was born (see Genesis 16:16).
- 99 The Lord again appeared to Abraham, confirming his covenant with him (see Genesis 17:1).
- 100 Isaac, Abraham's son by Sarah, was born (see Genesis 21:5).
- ? Abraham obeyed the command to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to the Lord; the Abrahamic Covenant was reconfirmed (see Genesis 22).
- ? Sarah, Abraham's wife, died (see Genesis 23).
- 175 Abraham died and was buried with Sarah in Hebron (see Genesis 25:7–10).

Abraham's call to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go to the lands of Canaan and Egypt altered the course of his life, the lives of his descendants, and ultimately other nations and civilizations.

Abraham 2:19. The Lord Appeared to Abraham Again

The scriptures reveal numerous occasions when the Lord spoke or appeared to Abraham. Thus far the book of Abraham told about:

- A vision of God, an angel, and the voice of the Lord while Abraham lay on the altar (see Abraham 1:15–19).
- An appearance of the Lord while Abraham prayed in the land of Haran (see Abraham 2:6–11).
- Another appearance of the Lord in answer to Abraham's prayer as he entered the land of Canaan (see v. 19).

Later, the Lord spoke or appeared to Abraham:

- Before Abraham went into Egypt (see Abraham 2:22).
- After he returned from Egypt and settled in the land of Canaan (see Genesis 13:14–18).
- When he prayed for offspring (see Genesis 15).
- When he was ninety-nine years old (see Genesis 17).
- When he pled for the residents of Sodom (see Genesis 18:17–33).
- Near the time Isaac was born (see Genesis 21:12–14).
- When he was commanded to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (see Genesis 22:1–2).

- At the offering of Isaac on the mount (see Genesis 22:6–19).

"Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne" (D&C 132:29).

Abraham 2:22–25. Abraham and Sarai in Egypt

Facsimile 3 shows that Abraham not only survived his experience in Egypt, but that he was invited by Pharaoh to sit on the throne and teach principles of astronomy. The Lord blessed Abraham and Sarai spiritually, socially, and economically during their time in Egypt (see also Genesis 12:16–20).

Abraham 2:24–25. Sarai's Obedience

Sarai was instructed to tell the Egyptians that she was Abraham's sister. It was a test of her faith, just as it was undoubtedly a difficult experience for Abraham. Whatever the Lord commands a person to do is right and must be obeyed (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 256). Abraham and Sarai understood this principle and passed the divine test the Lord had put before them. Elder Mark E. Petersen wrote: "To protect himself, Abraham had told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister, which of course she was. Had he divulged that she was his wife, he might have been slain. But as his sister, Pharaoh was willing to buy her at a good price" (*Abraham, Friend of God*, 69; see also Genesis 20:12; for further discussion of this, see S. Kent Brown, "Biblical Egypt: Land of Refuge, Land of Bondage," *Ensign*, Sept. 1980, pp. 45, 47).

Sarai comes from the root of a word meaning "princess" in Hebrew and "queen" in the Akkadian language. There is no doubt that Sarai was a woman of great spiritual stature. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "The Lord never sends apostles and prophets and righteous men to minister to his people without placing women of like spiritual stature at their sides. Adam stands as the great high priest, under Christ, to rule as a natural patriarch over all men of all ages, but he cannot rule alone; Eve, his wife, rules at his side, having like caliber and attainments to his own. Abraham is tested as few men have been when the Lord commands him to offer Isaac upon the altar (Gen. 22:1–19); and Sarah struggles with like problems when the Lord directs that she withhold from the Egyptians her status as Abraham's wife. . . . And so it goes, in all dispensations and at all times when there are holy men there are also holy women. Neither stands alone before the Lord. The exaltation of the one is dependent upon that of the other" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:302).

ABRAHAM 3:1–17

THE LORD SHOWED ABRAHAM THE STARS



Abraham 3:1. What Is the Urim and Thummim?

Urim and *thummim* come from Hebrew words meaning “lights” and “perfections.” The title *Urim and Thummim* was given to an instrument the Lord prepared to assist man in obtaining revelation and in translating languages. The earliest use of the Urim and Thummim mentioned in the scriptures is associated with the brother of Jared (see Ether 3:21–28).

The Prophet Joseph Smith was given the Urim and Thummim that had previously been in the possession of the brother of Jared (see D&C 17:1). The Prophet described them as being “two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim” (Joseph Smith—History 1:35).

The scriptures reveal that there were more than one Urim and Thummim. While the prophets of the Book of Mormon were using one set of stones (see Omni 1:20–21; Mosiah 8:13–19; 21:26–28; 28:11–20), the prophets of the Old Testament were using another (see Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63).

Abraham 3:2–16. The Name of the Great One Is Kolob

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “The Lord made known to him the following facts: That Kolob is the first creation, and is nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. It is the first in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. This measurement is according to celestial time. One day in Kolob is equal to a thousand years according to the measurement of this earth, which by the Egyptians was called Jah-oh-eh. Oliblish, so called by the Egyptians, stands next to Kolob in the grand governing creation near the celestial, or place where God resides. This great star is also a governing star and is equal to Kolob in its revolutions and in its measuring of time.

Other grand governing stars were also revealed to Abraham” (*Man: His Origin and Destiny* [1954], 461.)

Abraham 3:2–10, 16–17. Other Governing Stars

Abraham learned that, like Kolob, there were other stars that were “very great,” and that these great stars were governing stars (see Abraham 3:2–3). The Lord taught Abraham about “the set time of all the stars” (v. 10; see also vv. 4–9). Abraham also learned that there are other governing stars located nearer to Kolob and that they rotate more slowly, or “longer,” than many other stars (but not more slowly than Kolob).

Abraham 3:3–4. “The Same Order as That upon Which Thou Standest”



The Lord’s teachings about stars and planets helped Abraham understand more about this earth and its relationship to Kolob. For example, he taught Abraham that one day on Kolob was equal to one thousand years of time on our earth (see Abraham 3:4).

Abraham 3:5–7. The Measurement of Time May Vary

“Abraham learned that bodies in space have different periods of revolution and that they move in their own time frames of reference (Abr. 3:4). Each planet, or star, operates according to a time base which is set by its location from a central, governing body. . . .

“To further clarify, let us consider a moon explorer who is faced with an extended stay on the moon’s surface. After a while, he finds it more convenient to redefine his time base in terms of the sun’s motion across the moon sky (his new environment). Following the method he remembers from his experiences on earth (the old environment), he defines the moon day as beginning when the sun rises at one place on the horizon and ending when the sun sets on the opposite horizon. . . .

“Long after the moon days, months and years are well established for the intrepid moon voyager, he compares his moon system to the earthly calendar. He finds that one full moon day (complete rotation) corresponds to approximately 29 earth days. . . . The moon observer agrees that his day passes much slower than the days that are reckoned on the earth” (Fred Holmstrom, “Astronomy and the Book of Abraham,” *Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*, 1982: *The Pearl of Great Price* [1982], 110–11).

Abraham 3:13. The Lord Knows All of His Creations

The Lord identified by name several of the planets or stars in His creations. Speaking of His numerous and marvelous works, the Lord said:

“There are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them. . . .

“ . . . The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine” (Moses 1:35, 37).

Abraham 3:14. “I Will Multiply Thee, and Thy Seed after Thee”

The Lord fulfilled His promise to Abraham regarding his posterity, for many billions of people have been born on this earth who can consider themselves his children. The promise of great posterity applies to all the faithful. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, when he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

“The children of Abraham, if they will keep the covenant as they receive it in the house of the Lord, shall, as Abraham their father, continue on through all eternity to increase, and there shall be no end to their posterity. In this way the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are extended to them, and they become partakers to the fullest extent. For there is to be a continuation of the ‘seeds forever’ among those who receive exaltation in the kingdom of God” (*The Way to Perfection*, 96).

Abraham 3:16–17. Stars Differ in Greatness

Abraham learned that wherever there are two stars one will be greater than the other, and that there are other stars greater than those two, until Kolob, which is the greatest of all. He learned that it is not size that makes one star or planet greater than another, but rather its proximity to Kolob. So it is with the children of God—their greatness and glory will depend upon their proximity to the Creator, Jesus Christ, who is “nearest unto the throne of God,” “the great one,” “the first creation,” and is “set to govern all those which belong to the same order.” Thus the great star, Kolob, is a symbol of Jesus Christ.

Abraham 3:17. The Perfections of the Lord God

God sees to completion the actual accomplishment of everything that He takes into His heart. How different this is from the nature of mankind. The Lord explained:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. . . .

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

ABRAHAM 3:18–28

THE LORD TAUGHT ABRAHAM ABOUT THE PREMORTAL EXISTENCE

Abraham 3:18–23. The Spirit Children of Heavenly Father

Abraham learned that there are varying degrees of intelligence among Heavenly Father’s spirit children. (Abraham called the spirit children of our Heavenly Father “spirits” in Abraham 3:18–19, “intelligences” in verse 22, and “souls” in verse 23.) He learned that God dwelled in the midst of all the spirits or intelligences and that God “is more intelligent than they all.” (v. 19)

Abraham 3:18–23. The Premortal Existence

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: “God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with Himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits” (*History of the Church*, 6:312).

Abraham 3:18–19. What Does it Mean to Be “More Intelligent”?

Speaking of the differences between spirits, President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “We know they were all innocent in the beginning; but the right of free agency which was given to them enabled some to outstrip others, and thus, through the eons of immortal existence, to become more intelligent, more faithful, for they were free to act for themselves, to think for themselves, to receive the truth or rebel against it” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:59).

Abraham 3:18–19. Our Spirits Are Eternal

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “I am dwelling on the immortality of the spirit of man. Is it logical to say that the intelligence of spirits is immortal, and yet that it has a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic” (*History of the Church*, 6:311).

Speaking about the eternal nature of our spirit, President Brigham Young stated:

“Mankind are organized of element designed to endure to all eternity; it never had a beginning and never can have an end. There never was a time when this matter, of which

you and I are composed, was not in existence, and there never can be a time when it will pass out of existence; it cannot be annihilated.

“It is brought together, organized, and capacitated to receive knowledge and intelligence, to be enthroned in glory, to be made angels, Gods—beings who will hold control over the elements, and have power by their word to command the creation and redemption of worlds, or to extinguish suns by their breath, and disorganize worlds, hurling them back into their chaotic state. This is what you and I are created for” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 48; see also D&C 93:29–33).

Regarding the origin of our spirits in the premortal life, President Marion G. Romney, who was a counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “In origin, man is a son of God. The spirits of men ‘are begotten sons and daughters unto God’ (D&C 76:24). Through that birth process, self-existing intelligence was organized into individual spirit beings” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1978, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 14).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: “Admittedly we do not now understand all the implications of the words, ‘spirits . . . have no beginning; they existed before . . . for they are . . . eternal’ (Abraham 3:18). Yet we surely understand enough to see a loving and redeeming God at work, striving to help us become as He is—a cause for our deep gratitude and joy, instead of despair and doubt, and for a willing submission to whatever He perceives will further that purpose” (“*Not My Will, But Thine*,” 40).

Abraham 3:19–21. The Lord Is “More Intelligent than They All”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: “Let us not forget that great insight given us about the premortal world. The ascendancy of Jesus Christ (among all of our spirit brothers and sisters) is clearly set forth. Of Him it was said that He is ‘more intelligent than they all.’ (Abraham 3:19.) . . . Moreover, what the Lord knows is, fortunately, *vastly* more—not just *barely* more—than the combination of what all mortals know” (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* [1979], 22).

Abraham 3:22–23. The Noble and Great Ones

Among the spirits or intelligences that Abraham saw were many “noble and great ones” (Abraham 3:22). God said that these noble and great spirits were good and that He would make them His rulers. Abraham was one of the noble and great ones. President Joseph F. Smith also saw in a vision many of the noble and great spirits “who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God” (D&C 138:55). Of them President Smith stated: “Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (v. 56).

Abraham 3:23–24. “Thou Wast Chosen Before Thou Wast Born”

The Lord told Abraham that he, Abraham, was chosen in the premortal existence to be a ruler on earth. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: “As it was with Abraham, so it was with Joseph Smith. Each was foreordained [chosen and set apart before mortal birth] to preside over a great gospel dispensation” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 4).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365).

Abraham 3:24–28. “One among Them That Was Like unto God”

Abraham learned additional things about Jesus Christ. For example, Jesus Christ was the One who created the earth upon which the spirit children of Heavenly Father would dwell (see Abraham 3:24). He was also chosen and sent to earth to be the Savior (see vv. 27–28; see also Moses 4:1–4).

Abraham 3:24. “We Will Make an Earth”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “Christ, acting under the direction of the Father, was and is the Creator of all things. (D. & C. 38:1–4; 76:22–24; John 1:1–3; Col. 1:16–17; Heb. 1:1–3; Moses 1; 2; 3.) That he was aided in the creation of this earth by ‘many of the noble and great’ spirit children of the Father is evident from Abraham’s writings. . . . Michael or Adam was one of these. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Peter, James, and John, Joseph Smith, and many other ‘noble and great’ ones played a part in the great creative enterprise” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:194).

Abraham 3:25. “We Will Prove Them”

President Ezra Taft Benson succinctly restated the message of Abraham 3:25 when he said: “The *great test of life* is obedience to God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 4). We are not here to test or “prove” God, but to be tested and proved ourselves. We are on trial, not God.

Elder Rex C. Reeve Sr., who was a member of the Seventy, said: “This life is a time of testing. It is not the reward time. That will come later. We are here being tested. The test is going on now!” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 37; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 26).

Abraham 3:26. What Does it Mean to “Keep” an Estate?

The “first estate” refers to the period of time before we were born on this earth, also known as the premortal life. To “keep” this first estate, a spirit child of God in pre-earth life had to use his or her agency to choose to follow the plan of salvation offered by Heavenly Father. A third part of the spirit children of Heavenly Father followed

Lucifer (the devil) and rebelled against God and the plan of salvation, thereby failing to keep their first estate. They were therefore cast out of heaven, with no more opportunity to progress.

The “second estate” refers to mankind’s mortal existence on this earth. This estate is a probationary period in which individuals “prepare to meet God” (Alma 12:24). All who accept and obey the saving principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ will receive eternal life, the greatest gift of God, and will have “glory added upon their heads for ever and ever” (Abraham 3:26). Those who do not have the opportunity to accept and live the gospel in mortality are given that opportunity in the spirit world, after they die.

Additional insight on the first and second estates is offered by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“Premortality is not a relaxing doctrine. For each of us, there are choices to be made, incessant and difficult chores to be done, ironies and adversities to be experienced, time to be well spent, talents and gifts to be well employed. Just because we were chosen ‘there and then,’ surely does not mean we can be indifferent ‘here and now.’ . . .

“In fact, adequacy in the first estate may merely have ensured a stern, second estate with more duties and no immunities! Additional tutoring and suffering appears to be the pattern for the Lord’s most apt pupils. (See Mosiah 3:19; 1 Peter 4:19.) Our existence, therefore, is a continuum matched by God’s stretching curriculum. . . .

“Agreeing to enter this second estate, therefore, was like agreeing in advance to anesthetic—the anesthetic of forgetfulness. Doctors do not deanesthetize a patient, in the midst of what was previously authorized, to ask him, again, if it should be continued. We agreed to come here and to undergo certain experiences under certain conditions” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 21; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 17).

FACSIMILES 2–3

ABRAHAM TAUGHT THE EGYPTIANS

Facsimiles 2–3. Interpreting the Facsimiles

The figures in the facsimiles are symbolic. Explanations of the facsimiles other than those provided by the Prophet Joseph Smith, which are printed with the facsimiles in the Pearl of Great Price, are tentative and subject to revision by additional revelation and insight from modern prophets.

Facsimile 2. General Information

The type of drawing depicted in facsimile 2 is known among scholars as a “hypocephalus,” which means “under or beneath the head.” “A hypocephalus is a small disk-shaped object made of papyrus, stuccoed linen, bronze, gold, wood, or clay, which the Egyptians placed

under the head of their dead. They believed it would magically cause the head and body to be enveloped in flames or radiance, thus making the deceased divine. The hypocephalus itself symbolized the eye of Re or Horus,



i.e., the sun, and the scenes portrayed on it relate to the Egyptian concept of the resurrection and life after death” (Michael D. Rhodes, *The Joseph Smith Hypocephalus . . . Seventeen Years Later* [F.A.R.M.S. paper, RHO-94], 1).

If the hypocephalus represents the eye of God, as explained above, what might be depicted on it? We know that God’s focus and attention are upon bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39). It is not strange, therefore, that the symbolic drawing of the eye of God, as represented by Abraham facsimile 2, shows this great hope for all of His children. Indeed, facsimile 2 contains figures and explanations relating to the Lord’s plan of salvation. For example, the explanations for figures 3, 7, and 8 establish a clear relationship between the contents of facsimile 2 and the ordinances of the temple.

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “Abraham wrote things and sealed them up that they cannot be read. They cannot be revealed unto the world, but are to be had in the holy temple of God. They are certain keys and blessings that are obtained in the house of the Lord that we must have if we are to obtain exaltation” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:253).

Facsimile 2, figure 1. Kolob

The center of facsimile 2 contains a representation of Kolob. In his explanation for figure 1, the Prophet Joseph Smith said that Kolob is “first in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time.” This means that Kolob is the star nearest to the presence of God (see Abraham 3:2–3), is the governing star in all the universe (see v. 3), and that time passes more slowly on Kolob than on any other star in this order (see v. 4). Kolob is also symbolic of Jesus Christ, the central figure in God’s plan of salvation.

Facsimile 2, figure 3. A Crown of Eternal Light

Note in the explanation for figure 3 the mention of the crown of eternal light upon God's head. Note also that the stars represented by figures 22–23 receive their light from Kolob (as given in the explanation for figure 5). Jesus Christ is the source of all light (see D&C 88:7–13).

Facsimile 2, figure 5. Enish-go-on-dosh

The drawing shown in figure 5 represents another of the great stars in the expanse of space that help govern with power (see Abraham 3:2, 13). The moon, earth, and sun in our solar system are examples of these kinds of stars. These stars could also be symbolic of other great and noble spirits in the premortal existence (see Abraham 3:22–23). Note how close in this facsimile this “noble and great” one is to the central drawing of Kolob, or Jesus Christ.

Facsimile 2, figures 7–8. Returning to God's Presence

Egyptologists suggest that hypocephali contain information to help deceased persons return to the presence of God. Similarly, the Lord has given Latter-day Saints divine help to return to His presence. President Brigham Young taught: “Your [temple] endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 416).



Facsimile 3. General Information

In Abraham 3:15, the Lord told Abraham that he was to teach the Egyptians the things he had learned (see Abraham 3:15). Commenting on this, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “The learning of the Egyptians, and their knowledge of astronomy was no doubt taught them by Abraham and Joseph, as their records testify, who received it from the Lord” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 251).

Facsimile 3, figure 1. Abraham upon Pharaoh's Throne

In figure 1 of facsimile 3, Abraham is shown seated upon the throne of Pharaoh, “reasoning upon the principles of

Astronomy, in the king's court” (explanation for facsimile 3; see also the explanation for figure 1). It is clear in Abraham 3:1–16 and facsimile 2, figures 1–5, that Abraham gained great knowledge of the principles of astronomy. Figure 1 could also be symbolic of Abraham receiving his exaltation and sitting upon a throne in the presence of God (see D&C 132:37).

ABRAHAM 4–5 ABRAHAM'S VISION OF THE CREATION OF THE EARTH

There are three accounts of the Creation in the scriptures: Genesis 1–2; Moses 2–3; and Abraham 4–5. Each account contains a portion of the story, varying in some ways from the other accounts (see “A Harmony of the Creation Accounts,” pp. 82–92 of this manual).

Abraham 4:1. “They, That Is the Gods”

See also Moses 1:31–33; 2:1. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: “In the ultimate and final sense of the word, the Father is the Creator of all things. That he used the Son and others to perform many of the creative acts, delegating to them his creative powers, does not make these others creators in their own right, independent of him. He is the source of all creative power, and he simply chooses others to act for him in many of his creative enterprises” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 63).

Abraham 4:1. The Earth Was Formed from Existing Matter

The belief of traditional Christianity is that God created all things *ex nihilo*, which means “out of nothing.” The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “there is no such thing as immaterial matter” (D&C 131:7), and the Lord said that “the elements are eternal” (D&C 93:33). The word *create*, as found in the Genesis account of the Creation, is from a Hebrew word that means “to organize” (see Genesis 1:1, footnote c; see also Abraham 3:24). Joseph Smith likened the creative activity to the building of a ship (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 350–51). Just as a shipbuilder needs materials to create the ship, the Creator made the heavens and the earth out of existing materials.

Abraham 4:2. “The Earth, After It Was Formed, Was Empty and Desolate”

The Prophet Joseph Smith indicated that the translation “without form, and void,” as found in Genesis 1:2 and Moses 2:2, should read “empty and desolate,” as it does in Abraham 4:2 (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181).

Abraham 4:2. “The Spirit of the Gods Was Brooding”

“Brooding” is what a hen does with her eggs and chicks; she broods over them, meaning she protects, warms, nurtures, and defends them. Jesus used this analogy of a

hen gathering her chicks in His description of what He will do for His followers (see Matthew 23:37; 3 Nephi 10:3–6). In this sense, the Spirit is still brooding over the creations of God.

Abraham 4:5. Night and Day

One of the interesting differences between the Abraham account of the Creation and the other scriptural accounts is the idea found in Abraham 4:5: “From the evening until morning they called night; and from the morning until the evening they called day” (see also vv. 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). The other accounts simply refer to each creative period as a day. Additionally, the creative periods in Abraham 4 are called “times,” not days (see Abraham 4:8, 13, 19, 23, 31).

Abraham 4:6. Dividing the Waters from the Waters

See Moses 2:6–8 and the explanations for Abraham facsimile 1, figure 12, and facsimile 2, figure 4.

Abraham 4:12. “After His Kind”

Compared with the book of Moses, the book of Abraham seems to more forcefully state the idea that all beings could *only* reproduce after their own kind. Speaking of the Creation, Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “There was no provision for evolvement or change from one species to another” (“Christ and the Creation,” *Ensign*, June 1982, 12).

Abraham 5:1–3, 5. The Gods Counseled and Planned

On the subject of planning for the Creation, President Spencer W. Kimball said: “Before this earth was created the Lord made a blueprint, as any great contractor will do before constructing. He drew up the plans, wrote the specifications, and presented them. He outlined it and we were associated with him. . . . Our Father called us all together as explained in the scripture, and plans were perfected now for forming an earth. In his own words: ‘And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And

we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.’ (Abraham 3:24–25.) That assemblage included us all. The gods would make land, water, and atmosphere and then the animal kingdom, and give dominion over it all to man. That was the plan. . . . God was the Master-worker, and he created us and brought us into existence” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, Edward L. Kimball, ed. [1982], 29–30; see also Luke 14:28–30).

Abraham 5:7. The Breath of Life

Moses 3:7 states that God “formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Abraham 5:7 helps us understand that the breath of life was “the man’s spirit” (see also *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 301). Man is a dual being, made up of mortal flesh and an immortal spirit (see D&C 88:15).

Abraham 5:13. Time in the Garden of Eden Was according to the Time of Kolob

President Joseph Fielding Smith stated: “When this earth was created, it was not according to our present time, but it was created according to Kolob’s time, for the Lord has said it was created on celestial time which is Kolob’s time. Then he revealed to Abraham that Adam was subject to Kolob’s time before his transgression” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:79).

This helps us understand the Lord’s warning to Adam and Eve regarding their partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil: “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Moses 3:17; see also Genesis 2:17; Abraham 5:13). After Adam and Eve partook of the fruit, they did not die physically within a twenty-four hour period, as we now measure a day. Adam did, however, die within the period of one Kolob day (one thousand earth years, as measured after the Fall; see Abraham 3:4; explanation for Abraham facsimile 2, figure 1; see also 2 Peter 3:8). Moses 6:12 indicates that Adam died 930 years after the Fall.

JOSEPH SMITH— MATTHEW

Contents:

- *The destruction of Jerusalem*
- *Persecution and apostasy*
- *The abomination of desolation*
- *The Second Coming of Jesus Christ*
- *The destruction of the wicked*



What Is Joseph Smith—Matthew?

Joseph Smith—Matthew is the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 23:39–24:51.

“For December 1, 1831, Joseph Smith wrote the following note in his journal: ‘I resumed the translation of the Scriptures, and continued to labor in *this branch of my calling* with Elder Sidney Rigdon as my scribe’ [see *History of the Church*, 1:238, italics added]. This is a most important comment because it reveals how the Prophet himself viewed his work of translating the Bible—it was part of his divine calling as a prophet of God. . . . In December 1831 the Prophet had been at the translation some eighteen months and would continue working with it for another eighteen months. After that he would refine and prepare it for publication for the remaining eleven years of his life. Although he did not live to publish the entire work, it was the most unusual translation of the Bible ever attempted and stands as one of the witnesses to the world of Joseph Smith’s mission as a prophet of God in the last days” (Robert J. Matthews, “*A Plainer Translation*”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible, a History and Commentary* [1975], 3–4).

When Did the Prophet Joseph Smith Translate This Portion of the Bible?

“The exact date on which the Prophet started to translate the Bible has been lost to history, but the translation was probably under way as early as the summer of 1830” (Matthews, “*A Plainer Translation*,” 26). On 7 December 1830, the Lord commanded Sidney Rigdon to become the scribe for the Prophet Joseph Smith in the work of making the inspired changes to the Bible (see D&C 35:20).

Prior to His Crucifixion and Resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ answered His disciples' questions about His glorious Second Coming (see Matthew 24:3–25:46; see also Luke 21:7–36). On 7 March 1831 the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith portions of what He told His disciples (see D&C 45:16–75). In that revelation, speaking to the Prophet Joseph Smith, He said:

“And now, behold, I say unto you, it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter [Matthew 24], until the New Testament be translated, and in it [the Joseph Smith Translation] all these things shall be made known;

“Wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it [the New Testament], that ye may be prepared for the things to come.

“For verily I say unto you, that great things await you” (D&C 45:60–62).

With that direction, the Prophet began the next day, 8 March 1831, the work of translating the New Testament, beginning with Matthew 1.

A date written on one of the manuscripts of the New Testament translation indicates that on 26 September 1831 the transcription and refinement of Matthew continued, starting with Matthew 26:1 (see Matthews, “*A Plainer Translation*,” 32). The translation of Matthew 24 may, therefore, have occurred sometime during September 1831.

What Are Some of the Changes the Prophet Made to Matthew 24?

The Prophet Joseph Smith made more changes to Matthew 24 than to any other chapter in the New Testament. Matthew 24 in the King James Version contains 1,050 words, while Joseph Smith—Matthew contains some 1,500.

A major difference between Matthew 24 and Joseph Smith—Matthew is that Joseph Smith—Matthew clearly separates the statements Jesus made concerning events that would take place in Jerusalem in the years shortly after His death (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:5–21) from the events that would take place in the last days, prior to His Second Coming (see vv. 21–55).

Three statements are each repeated twice in Joseph Smith—Matthew (see vv. 10, 12, 23, 28, 30, 32), but only once each in the King James Version (see Matthew 24:6, 12, 15). Also, verses 6–8 of Matthew 24 became Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:23, 29, 19, respectively. The Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 24:55 is the only verse for which there is no correlating verse in the King James Version.

How Did Joseph Smith—Matthew Become a Part of the Pearl of Great Price?

The first edition of the Pearl of Great Price was printed in Liverpool, England, in July 1851. It was compiled as a pamphlet for use in the British Mission by Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

and president of the mission. In the preface to the pamphlet, Elder Richards explained that nearly all of its contents (which included Joseph Smith—Matthew) had appeared earlier in various Church publications in the United States, but with limited circulation. It is presumed that Elder Richards had access to these publications; however, he did not identify any of his source documents.

Why, among the Many Parts of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, Did the Translation of Matthew 24 Become a Part of Our Standard Works?

In Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:5–55, the Savior answered questions His disciples asked concerning the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, the scattering of the Jews, and events that would occur prior to His Second Coming. It is a chapter of scripture that should be of intense interest to every Latter-day Saint. It tells of the latter-day dispensation, including the gathering of Israel prior to the Second Coming of Christ. The text of Matthew 24 in the King James Version has many unclear passages and its organization is confusing. The Prophet Joseph Smith's work makes both the historical chronology of this prophecy and the doctrinal significance of its teachings plain and inspiring.

JOSEPH SMITH— MATTHEW 1:1–21

JESUS CHRIST PROPHESED ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:1. “I Am He”

Jesus said, “I am he of whom it is written by the prophets” (see also JST, Matthew 4:18). With those words, He proclaimed to His disciples that He was the Messiah, the Anointed One, of whom all the prophets had prophesied (see Helaman 8:16–23). Their prophecies concerning the Messiah foretold not only His suffering for the sins of the world, but also His glorious Second Coming at the end of the world.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:1. “And All the Holy Angels with Him”

Many angels will appear with Jesus at His Second Coming. The scriptures describe these angels as having power to prepare the earth for the coming of Christ and as those who will sound trumps at strategic times (see Revelation 7:1; 8:2; 14–16; see also D&C 77:8, 12). In addition, the righteous Saints who have died will accompany Him at His Second Coming (see D&C 45:44–45; 76:50, 63; 88:96–98).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:1. “He Should Come Again on the Earth”

The Second Coming of Christ is an event spoken of repeatedly, with great fervency and hope, throughout the scriptures. For example, in Old Testament times the Lord

showed Adam “whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation” (D&C 107:56), including the Second Coming of Christ. Adam made all these things known unto his children (see Moses 5:12). Enoch was shown in vision not only the coming of Christ in the meridian of time, but also “the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years” (Moses 7:65). Other Old Testament prophets prophesied of these wondrous latter days (see Job 19:25; Psalm 102:16; Isaiah 40:1–11; Daniel 7:13; Micah 1:3; Zechariah 13:6; Malachi 3:2). In the Book of Mormon, Jaredite prophets testified of the glorious coming of Christ (see Ether 3:16–25; 9:22; 13:1–12), as did the Nephite and Lamanite prophets (see Helaman 8:16–23). Furthermore, New Testament prophets and modern prophets have made many inspired pronouncements on this subject (see Acts 3:20–24; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 19–22; D&C 29; 45; 133). Of all of the prophecies in the scriptures concerning the latter days, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is by far the most highly anticipated.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:2–3. The Destruction of the Temple

See also Mark 13:1–2 and Luke 21:5–6. Because of the nature of the temple’s construction, the prophecy of its destruction may have seemed nearly impossible to the Jews. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the Seventy, wrote: “Some single stones were about 67 1/2 feet long, 7 1/2 feet high, and 9 feet broad; the pillars supporting the porches, all one stone, were some 37 1/2 feet tall. It is said that when the Romans destroyed and ploughed Jerusalem, six days battering of the walls failed to dislodge these mighty stones. The temple was, of course, finally leveled to the ground, and . . . the stones were rooted out and scattered elsewhere” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 1:637).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:4. The Mount of Olives

Known to some as *Olivet*, the Mount of Olives is a limestone ridge, a little more than one mile (1.6 kilometers) in length, east of the city of Jerusalem. It rises about two hundred feet (65 meters) above the city, with the Kidron Valley lying between it and the city. On its western side is the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the east, the villages of Bethany and Bethphage. This mount was the site of many events during biblical times (see 2 Samuel 15:30; Matthew 21:1–9; 26:30–56; Luke 21:37; John 8:1; Acts 1:12) and will be the site of prominent events associated with the latter days and the Messiah’s Second Coming (see Zechariah 14:4–5; D&C 45:48; 133:20).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:4. “Tell Us When Shall These Things Be”

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of Matthew 24:3 makes it clear that the disciples wanted to know about two events. The first event was “the destruction of

the temple, and the Jews.” This event occurred about A.D. 70, when the Romans subdued a Jewish revolt, slaughtered the people, destroyed the city of Jerusalem, and scattered the Jews to many nations.

The second event the disciples asked about was “the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked.” This will happen at the Second Coming of Christ in the last days. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, clarified what is meant by “the end of the world,” saying that it is “not the end of the earth but the end of the world, that is of the social conditions prevailing among worldly people. ‘The end of the world is the end of unrighteousness or of worldliness as we know it, and this will be brought about by “the destruction of the wicked.”’ (Jos. Smith 1:4 [Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:4].) When our world ends and the millennial era begins, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. (Isa. 65:17–25; D. & C. 101:23–24.) Lust, carnality, and sensuousness of every sort will cease, for it will be the end of the world.’ (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 767–768.)” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:640).

The Savior’s answer to His disciples’ inquiry concerning these two events provides an outline for understanding Matthew 24. Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:5–21 (compare with Matthew 24:4–22) is His response about the destruction of the temple and the Jews, while Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:21–55 (compare with Matthew 24:23–51) contains His statements about the sign of His coming and the end of the world.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:6, 9. Many False Prophets Tried to Deceive

Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, commented on the historical evidence of the fulfillment of this prophecy: “Among the false prophets, and men who claimed to be the duly accredited ministers of Christ, were Simon Magus who drew many people after him (Acts 8:9, 13, 18–24; see also *The Great Apostasy*, 7:1, 2), Menander, Dositheus, and Theudas, and the false apostles referred to by Paul (2 Cor. 11:13) and others, such as Hymeneus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17, 18). Dummelow’s *Commentary* applies here the record by Josephus concerning ‘a body of wicked men, who deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, who prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, pretending that God would there show them the signals of victory’” (*Jesus the Christ*, 587).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:7. The Disciples Were Afflicted and Killed

Most of the original Apostles spread throughout the world to teach the gospel, but were eventually martyred. For example, history suggests that Peter suffered death in Rome (as did Paul), and James was slain by a sword in Jerusalem.

But the Apostles were not the only martyrs. Many of the early Christians suffered great persecutions and were killed because of their faith. Some accounts of the persecution and martyrdom of early Saints are found in the New Testament (for example, see Acts 4:1–3, 17–18, 29; 5:17–19, 40; 7:54–60; 8:1–3; 11:19; 12:1–5; 13:50; 14:1–7, 19–20; 16:19–24; 17:1–9; 21–26; 2 Corinthians 11:23–29).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:8. What Does “Offended” Mean?

The Greek word for “offended” (*scandalizo*) means “to make to stumble.” From the same root comes the word *skandalon*, which is translated as “stumbling block.” In Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:8 the Savior was saying that many would fall away or turn away from the faith.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:10. What Does it Mean That Love Will “Wax Cold”?

To “wax” means to increase in intensity. Violence and corruption are signs that people have ceased to love or care about themselves and others. Coarseness and cruelty infect a society and spread like a disease. A cruel society exists when people are “without affection” and “hate their own blood” (Moses 7:33). As abuses by humans against other humans increase, men’s hearts turn cold and the spirit of Satan takes control of their actions.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:12. “The Abomination of Desolation”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“Daniel spoke prophetically of a day when there would be ‘the abomination that maketh desolate’ (Dan. 11:31; 12:11), and the phrase was re coined in New Testament times to say, ‘the *abomination of desolation*, spoken of by Daniel the prophet.’ (Matt. 24:15.) . . . Relying solely on the plain meaning of words, we can conclude that this phrase (abomination of desolation) would have reference to some great act or status of corruption and befoulment, of contamination and filthiness, which would bring to pass destruction, ruination, devastation, desolation.

“Such is the case. These conditions of desolation, born of abomination and wickedness, were to occur *twice* in fulfilment of Daniel’s words. The first was to be when the Roman legions under Titus, in 70 A.D., laid siege to Jerusalem, destroying and scattering the people, leaving not one stone upon another in the desecrated temple, and spreading such terror and devastation as has seldom if ever been equalled on earth” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 12).

The second occurrence of the abomination of desolation, prophesied by the Savior in Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:32, refers to a latter-day destruction.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:13–17. The Saints Were Told to Flee for Safety

Concerning those who heeded the warning to flee, Elder James E. Talmage wrote: “The warning to all to flee from Jerusalem and Judea to the mountains when the armies would begin to surround the city was so generally heeded by members of the Church, that according to the early Church writers not one Christian perished in the awful siege (see Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, book iii, ch. 5). . . . All Jews who had faith in the warning given by Christ to the apostles, and by these to the people, fled beyond Jordan, and congregated mostly at Pella” (*Jesus the Christ*, 588).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:18. The Tribulation on the Jews

The wickedness of the Jews at Jerusalem persisted and increased after the Resurrection of the Savior, setting the scene for the destruction that Jesus prophesied. Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, referring to a history written by Will Durant, said: “The siege of Jerusalem under Titus [lasted] for 134 days, during which 1,110,000 Jews perished and 97,000 were taken captive; . . . the Romans destroyed 987 towns in Palestine and slew 580,000 men, and a still larger number, we are told, perished through starvation, disease, and fire” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1950, 74).

“Thousands [of Jews] were carried off to Egypt to work in the quarries and mines as lifelong slaves. Boys and women were sold to slave traders, and thousands of others died of starvation in the prison camps. A remnant of this conquered people was scattered to the ends of the earth” (H. Donl Peterson, “The Fall of Jerusalem,” *Ensign*, May 1972, 42).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:19. “Only the Beginning of the Sorrows”

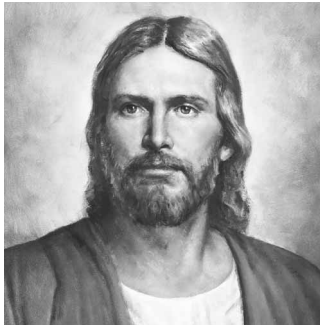
The suffering of the Jews following the death and Resurrection of Christ was clearly prophesied by Nephi and Jacob in the Book of Mormon (see 1 Nephi 19:14; 2 Nephi 6:9–11; 10:3–6; 25:9–16). Historical events, such as the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the Holocaust, are other times since A.D. 70 when the Jews have been persecuted and destroyed.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:21. “These Things I Have Spoken”

By saying “and again, after the tribulation of those days which shall come upon Jerusalem,” Jesus gave a clear indication that He had finished prophesying about the “destruction of the temple, and the Jews,” and would next prophesy concerning the “end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:4).

JOSEPH SMITH— MATTHEW 1:22–37

JESUS CHRIST PROPHESED ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD



Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22. “In Those Days”

Beginning with the latter part of Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:21, Jesus Christ answered the question His disciples asked in verse 4 about the signs of the end of the world and His Second Coming.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22. False Christs

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“False Christs! False Redeemers, false Saviors! Will there actually be men who will claim to fulfill the Messianic prophecies and who will step forth to offer their blood for the sins of the world? Is it possible that some will say, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life; come unto me and be ye saved’? Or that others will profess to return in glory bearing the wounds with which the true Christ was wounded in the house of his friends?

“True, there may be those deranged persons who suppose they are God, or Christ, or the Holy Ghost, or almost anything. None but the lunatic fringe among men, however, will give them a second serious thought. The promise of false Christs who will deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect, who will lead astray those who have made eternal covenant with the Lord, is a far more subtle and insidious evil.

“A false Christ is not a person. It is a false system of worship, a false church, a false cult that says: ‘Lo, here is salvation; here is the doctrine of Christ. Come and believe thus and so, and ye shall be saved.’ It is any concept or philosophy that says that redemption, salvation, sanctification, justification, and all of the promised rewards can be gained in any way except that set forth by the apostles and prophets” (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 47–48).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22. False Prophets

The Prophet Joseph Smith warned: “When a man goes about prophesying, and commands men to obey his teachings, he must either be a true or false prophet. False prophets always arise to oppose the true prophets and they will prophesy so very near the truth that they will deceive almost the very chosen ones” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365).



He also taught: “The world always mistook false prophets for true ones, and those that were sent of God, they considered to be false prophets, and hence they killed, stoned, punished and imprisoned the true prophets, and these had to hide themselves ‘in deserts and dens, and caves of the earth,’ and though the most honorable men of the earth,

they banished them from their society as vagabonds, whilst they cherished, honored and supported knaves, vagabonds, hypocrites, impostors, and the basest of men” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 206).

Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, warned about false prophets and false teachers:

“Jesus cautioned several times that prior to His Second Coming, ‘many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many’ (Matthew 24:11). As Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our duty to be watchmen on the tower, warning Church members to beware of false prophets and false teachers who lie in wait to ensnare and destroy faith and testimony. Today we warn you that there are false prophets and false teachers arising; and if we are not careful, even those who are among the faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will fall victim to their deception. . . .

“When we think of false prophets and false teachers, we tend to think of those who espouse an obviously false doctrine or presume to have authority to teach the true gospel of Christ according to their own interpretation. We often assume that such individuals are associated with small radical groups on the fringes of society. However, I reiterate: there are false prophets and false teachers who have or at least claim to have membership in the Church. There are those who, without authority, claim Church endorsement to their products and practices. Beware of such. . . .

“Therefore, let us beware of false prophets and false teachers, both men and women, who are self-appointed declarers of the doctrines of the Church and who seek to spread their false gospel and attract followers by sponsoring symposia, books, and journals whose contents challenge fundamental doctrines of the Church. Beware of those who speak and publish in opposition to God’s true prophets and who actively proselyte others with reckless disregard for the eternal well-being of those whom they seduce. Like Nehor and Korihor in the Book of Mormon, they rely on sophistry to deceive and entice others to their views. They ‘set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion’ (2 Nephi 26:29).

“Of such President Joseph F. Smith warned when he spoke of the ‘proud self-vaunting ones, who read by the lamps of their own conceit; who interpret by rules of their own contriving; who have become a law unto themselves, and so pose as the sole judges of their own doings’ (*Gospel Doctrine*, 381)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 77–78; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 62–63).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22. Great Signs and Wonders

Elder James E. Talmage cautioned Latter-day Saints not to be deceived by miracles that are performed by false prophets. After quoting Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22, Elder Talmage said: “The invalidity of miracles as proof of divinely appointed ministry is declared in an utterance of Jesus Christ regarding the events of the great judgment: ‘Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’ The Jews to whom these teachings were addressed knew that wonders could be wrought by evil powers, for they charged Christ with working miracles by the authority of Beelzebub the prince of devils” (*The Articles of Faith*, 231).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22. “If Possible, They Shall Deceive the Very Elect”

After quoting Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22, President Harold B. Lee defined the elect as “members of this Church” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places*, 384). Similarly, Elder Marion G. Romney, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “Now, those ‘who are the elect according to the covenant’ are members of the Church, so we ourselves are on notice to beware” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, 70; see also D&C 29:7–9).

President Joseph F. Smith warned: “Let it not be forgotten that the evil one has great power in the earth, and that by every possible means he seeks to darken the minds of men, and then offers them falsehood and deception in the guise of truth. Satan is a skilful imitator, and as genuine gospel truth is given the world in ever-increasing abundance, so he spreads the counterfeit coin of false doctrine. Beware of his spurious currency, it will purchase for you nothing but disappointment, misery and spiritual death. The ‘father of lies’ he has been called, and such an adept has he become, through the ages of practice in his nefarious work, that were it possible he would deceive the very elect” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 376).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:23, 29. “For the Elect’s Sake”

Concerning the prophecies of the last days, President Wilford Woodruff said:

“These things are about to come to pass upon the heads of the present generation, notwithstanding they are not looking for it, neither do they believe it. Yet their unbelief

will not make the truth of God of none effect. The signs are appearing in the heavens and on the earth, and all things indicate the fulfillment of the Prophets. . . .

“. . . Why should not God reveal His secrets unto His servants the Prophets, that the Saints might be led in paths of safety, and escape those evils which are about to engulf a whole generation in ruin?” (in *History of the Church*, 6:27).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:23. “Be Not Troubled”

The word *troubled* here is taken from the Greek *throeo*, meaning “to clamor” or “to be frightened.” The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that gospel knowledge “does away with darkness, suspense and doubt” and that “there is no pain so awful as that of suspense” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 288).

Elder M. Russell Ballard taught:

“Living in these difficult times, brothers and sisters, requires each one of us to maintain a positive, hopeful perspective about the future. . . .

“. . . More and more people are expressing great alarm at what appears to be an acceleration of worldwide calamity. As members of the Church, we must not forget the Savior’s admonition: ‘Be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass.’ . . .

“My message to you today, my brothers and sisters, is simply this: the Lord is in control. He knows the end from the beginning” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 41–42; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 31–32; see also 1 Nephi 22:17–19).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:25. If They Say He Is in the Desert

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “‘If these false religious systems with their false teachers invite you to the desert to find Christ in a life of asceticism [strict self-denial], go not forth, he is not there; if they call you to the secret chambers of monastic seclusion [withdrawal from the world] to find him, believe them not, he is not there” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:648).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:26. “As the Light of the Morning”



Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “All people shall see it together! It shall spread over all the earth as the morning light! . . . Surely this is that of which Isaiah said: ‘And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’ (Isa. 40:5.) Surely this is that of which our revelation speaks: ‘Prepare for the revelation which is to come, when the veil of the covering of my temple, in my tabernacle, which hideth the earth, shall be taken off, and all flesh shall see me together.’ (D&C 101:23.) Surely this is that day of which Zechariah prophesied: ‘The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. . . . And the Lord shall be king over all the earth.’ (Zech. 14:5–9.)” (*The Millennial Messiah*, 419–20).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:27. A Parable about the Gathering of Israel

“The manner of the gathering, we are told, will be in the same miraculous and mysterious way as the gathering of eagles to a carcass lying in the desert—they appear suddenly and inexplicably in the four quarters of the sky and come together from vast distances to that single spot” (Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* [1989], 472).

The use of the word *carcass* makes one think of a dead and worthless body, but it may also refer to a structure or framework, which better fits its use in Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:27. This is supported by the language in the Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 17:37, “Whosoever the body is gathered; or, in other words, whithersoever the saints are gathered, thither will the eagles be gathered together; or, thither will the remainder be gathered together.” Today, the framework, or body, of the Church is found throughout the world in stakes, wards, and branches, while the eagles symbolize the Saints and the continuing stream of converts who embrace the restored gospel and gather into the Church.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:28–29. Wars and Famines

See also Doctrine and Covenants 45:26, 63 and 63:33–34. In accordance with these revelations, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared: “I will prophesy that the signs of the coming of the Son of Man are already commenced. One pestilence will desolate after another. We shall soon have war and bloodshed. The moon will be turned into blood. I testify of these things, and that the coming of the Son of Man is nigh, even at your doors” (*History of the Church*, 3:390).

President Harold B. Lee affirmed that the signs are now upon us:

“We are seeing the signs of our times as foretold by the prophets and by the Master himself. . . .

“Brothers and sisters, this is the day the Lord is speaking of. You see the signs are here” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 168, 170; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 128–29).

In 1992, concerning earthquakes increasing in number, Elder M. Russell Ballard said: “Recently I read a newspaper article that cited statistics from the U.S. Geological Survey indicating that earthquakes around the world are increasing in frequency and intensity. According to the article, only two major earthquakes (earthquakes measuring at least six on the Richter scale) occurred during the 1920s. In the 1930s the number increased to five, and then it decreased to four during the 1940s. But in the 1950s, nine major earthquakes occurred, followed by fifteen during the 1960s, forty-six during the 1970s, and fifty-two during the 1980s. Already almost as many major earthquakes have occurred during the 1990s as during the entire decade of the 1980s” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 41–42; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 31).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:30. “The Love of Men Shall Wax Cold”

The Prophet Joseph Smith told of a vision he had of the future: “I saw men hunting the lives of their own sons, and brother murdering brother, women killing their own daughters, and daughters seeking the lives of their mothers. I saw armies arrayed against armies. I saw blood, desolation, fires. The Son of Man has said that the mother shall be against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. These things are at our doors. They will follow the Saints of God from city to city. Satan will rage, and the spirit of the devil is now enraged” (*History of the Church*, 3:391).

He later said: “I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God of Israel, anguish and wrath and tribulation and the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from the earth await this generation, until they are visited with utter desolation. This generation is as corrupt as the generation of the Jews that crucified Christ; and if He were here to-day, and should preach the same doctrine He did then, they would put Him to death” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 328).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:31. “This Gospel of the Kingdom Shall Be Preached in All the World, . . . and Then Shall the End Come”

The Prophet Joseph Smith prophesied the following about missionary work: “Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and . . . the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done” (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained that when the gospel is taken to all the earth, we can know the end is near: “This commission to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people is one of the signs by which believers will recognize the nearness of the Savior’s return to earth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 63; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 43). Elder James E. Talmage wrote: “When such witness among the nations is made complete, ‘then shall the end come’; and the nations ‘shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory’” (*Jesus the Christ*, 777).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:36. “Then Shall All the Tribes of the Earth Mourn”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “When our Lord returns, there shall be—among the wicked and ungodly—such wailing and mourning as has never before been known on earth, for the summer will be over, the harvest past, and their souls not saved” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:439).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:36. “They Shall See the Son of Man Coming”

This is the great event that will wind up the latter days. Christ will come to establish an earthly kingdom over the earth for a thousand years (see Articles of Faith 1:10). “So great shall be the glory of his presence that the sun shall hide his face in shame” (D&C 133:49). “The presence of the Lord shall be as the melting fire that burneth, and as the fire which causeth the waters to boil” (v. 41); “element shall melt with fervent heat” (D&C 101:25) and “the mountains [shall] flow down at [Christ’s] presence” (D&C 133:44).

At this time, the righteous Saints will be “quicken” and will join those “who have slept in their graves,” who will also be caught up to meet Christ “in the midst of the pillar of heaven” (see D&C 88:96–98). Christ will descend to earth “in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). With the coming of Christ, the millennial era of peace, harmony, and righteousness will begin. Satan will have “no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth” (1 Nephi 22:26).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37. Treasuring Up God’s Word

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “Treasuring up his word is far more than merely reading it. To treasure it one must not only read and study, but seek in humility and obedience to do the commandments given, and gain the inspiration which the Holy Spirit will impart” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:305).

JOSEPH SMITH— MATTHEW 1:38–55 JESUS CHRIST TAUGHT US TO PREPARE FOR HIS SECOND COMING



Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:38. The Parable of the Fig Tree

Figs are an important food in the Middle East. The failure of fig trees is a national calamity, while their productivity is a token of peace and divine favor.

The fig tree is one of the earliest to show its fruit buds, which appear before the leaves; thus a fig tree with leaves would be expected also to have fruit. The time when the leaves appear indicates that summer is near. The fig tree differs from most other fruit trees in that its fruit is green and inconspicuous, concealed among leaves until near the time of ripening. (See Bible Dictionary, “fig tree,” 674.)

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:40. “No One Knoweth”

Concerning the Savior’s coming, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come. Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and all that say so are false teachers” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 341; see also D&C 49:7).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“The time for the Second Coming of Christ is as fixed and certain as was the hour of his birth. It will not vary as much as a single second from the divine decree. He will come at the appointed time. The Millennium will not be ushered in prematurely because men turn to righteousness, nor will it be delayed because iniquity abounds. . . .

“. . . [Jesus Christ] knows the set time and so does his Father” (*The Millennial Messiah*, 26–27).

Occasionally, publications circulate among members of the Church that specify or speculate on the time of the Second Coming. President Harold B. Lee warned members of the Church about these kinds of publications. After listing several passages in the scriptures that teach about the signs of the Second Coming of Christ, President Lee said: “These [scriptures] are some of the writings with which you should concern yourselves, rather than commentaries that may come from those whose information may not be the most reliable and whose motives may be subject to question” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1972, 128; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 106).

Joseph—Matthew 1:41–43. “As it Was in the Days of Noah”



Concerning the last days, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “As in the days of Noah, people will also be preoccupied with the cares and the pleasures of the world (see Matthew 24:37). Ironically, most therefore will even miss such signs as God gives pertaining to Jesus’ glorious second coming” (*Sermons Not Spoken* [1985], 62). He also said: “It is no accident that the scriptures have preserved for us certain precious insights about the times in which Noah lived. Those were times, we read, that were ‘filled with violence’ (Genesis 6:11), and corruption abounded. There was apparently a sense of self-sufficiency, a condition to which Jesus called attention. (Matthew 24:36–41.) Jesus said this condition would be repeated in the last days. The people of Noah’s time were desensitized to real dangers. So we may become in our time. Noah and those with him had to let go of their world or perish with it!” (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, 13).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:44–45. “One Shall Be Taken, and the Other Left”

Concerning the parables in Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:44–45, President Heber C. Kimball, who was a counselor in the First Presidency, said: “The servants of God are angels in one sense, sent forth to gather the house of Israel from the four corners of the earth; and the Elders of this Church in their labors have fulfilled, partly, the sayings of the Savior, when they have found two working in the field, one has received the Gospel and been gathered, and the other left; two working in a mill, one has been taken and the other left; two lying in a bed, the one has been taken and the other left. But no doubt these sayings will have their final and complete fulfilment about the time of the second coming of the Savior” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:103).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:46–47. As a Thief in the Night

Elder Bruce R. McConkie added further insight to the meaning of this passage when he said: “Those who

treasure up his word will not be deceived as to the time of that glorious day, nor as to the events to precede and to attend it. (Jos. Smith 1:37.) The righteous will be able to read the signs of the times. To those in darkness he will come suddenly, unexpectedly, ‘as a thief in the night,’ but to ‘the children of light’ who ‘are not of the night, nor of darkness,’ as Paul expressed it, that day will not overtake them ‘as a thief.’ They will recognize the signs as certainly as a woman in travail foreknows the approximate time of her child’s birth. (1 Thess. 5:1–6.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 688).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:48. “Therefore Be Ye Also Ready”

Concerning the need to be prepared for the Second Coming but not to fear it, in a 1927 Christmas message the First Presidency stated: “Each passing year brings us nearer the date of the Lord’s coming in power and glory. True, the hour and the day when this great event is to take place, no man knoweth; but all the promised signs indicate that it is not far distant. Meanwhile the duty of the Saints is to watch and work and pray, being valiant for truth, and abounding in good works. Despite the uneasiness and discontent in many parts of the earth, the suspicions and jealousies among the nations, the mounting wave of lawlessness and crime, and the seeming spread of the elements of destruction . . . those who continue to stand in holy places can discern through it all the handworking of the Almighty in consummation of His purposes and in furtherance of His will. That which, viewed with the natural eye, is portentous and dreadful, causes no apprehension to those who have faith that whatever happens, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5:256).

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:49–54. A Parable of the Lord and His Servants

In Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:49 the Lord asked a piercing question: “Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant . . . ?” It is a question similar to the ones asked in Psalm 24:3, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?” and in Malachi 3:2, “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.” These are questions we should each ask ourself.

Faithful and wise servants can always be found doing what they have been commanded to do, such as giving “meat in due season” (food at the proper time) to the households over which they have been made “rulers.” Such servants will be given responsibility over all of their master’s possessions. The evil servant will rationalize that he will do what he has been commanded later, and instead of feeding his household as he should, he will begin to abuse his fellow servants and feed himself, along with other drunkards. And the Lord will come to the evil servant at a time he least expects and is least prepared. The evil servant will not be made a ruler, but will be cut asunder and appointed his portion with the hypocrites.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:55. “The End of the Earth”



The end of the world is the end of wickedness. But the end of the earth occurs when this earth is transformed into a celestial kingdom. President Brigham Young said: “When the Savior has completed the work, when the faithful Saints have preached the Gospel to the last of the spirits who have lived here and who are designed to

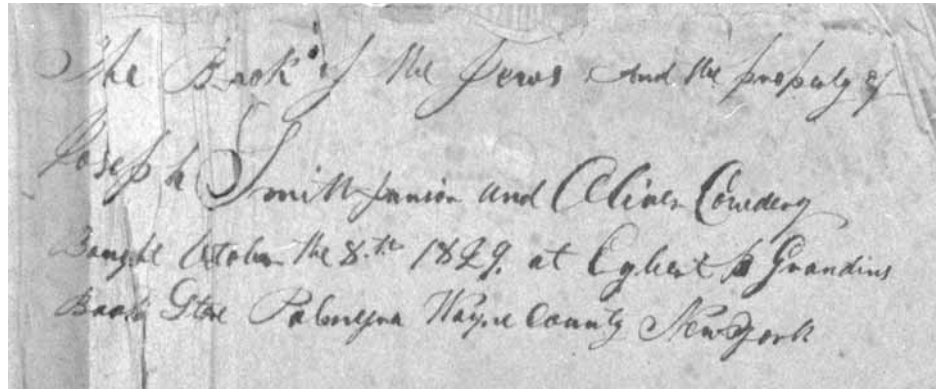
come to this earth; when the thousand years of rest shall come and thousands and thousands of Temples shall be built, and the servants and handmaids of the Lord shall have entered therein and officiated for themselves, and for their dead friends back to the days of Adam; when the

last of the spirits in prison who will receive the Gospel has received it; when the Savior comes and receives his ready bride, and all who can be are saved in the various kingdoms of God—celestial, terrestrial and telestial, according to their several capacities and opportunities; when sin and iniquity are driven from the earth, and the spirits that now float in this atmosphere are driven into the place prepared for them; and when the earth is sanctified from the effects of the fall, and baptized, cleansed, and purified by fire, and returns to its paradisiacal state, and has become like a sea of glass, a urim and thummim; when all this is done, and the Savior has presented the earth to his Father, and it is placed in the cluster of the celestial kingdoms, and the Son and all his faithful brethren and sisters have received the welcome plaudit—‘Enter ye into the joy of your Lord,’ and the Savior is crowned, then and not till then, will the Saints receive their everlasting inheritances” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 17:117).

JOSEPH SMITH— HISTORY

Contents:

- Joseph Smith's preparation
- The First Vision—the appearance of the Father and the Son
- Moroni's appearances to Joseph Smith
- Joseph Smith receives, safeguards, and translates the gold plates
- The restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood



What Is Joseph Smith—History?

Joseph Smith—History tells of the Prophet's experiences from his early years through May 1829. It was extracted by Elder Franklin D. Richards, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, from a much longer history the Prophet Joseph Smith began in 1838. The extract was first published in England in 1851 as part of the first Pearl of Great Price pamphlet (see the Introductory Note at the beginning of the Pearl of Great Price).



Joseph Smith—History contains an account of the First Vision, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods. The excerpts come from the first five chapters of what eventually became the seven-volume *History of the Church* (see 1:1–44). Joseph Smith—History became scripture in 1880 when the Pearl of Great Price was canonized as one of the standard works of the Church.

Who Wrote Joseph Smith—History?

The account in the Pearl of Great Price was not the first attempt to record the Prophet's early experiences. In April 1830 he received a revelation from the Lord requiring that a record or history be kept (see D&C 21:1). However, his efforts were hindered by lawsuits, imprisonments, poverty, and mobs. Oliver Cowdery "served as Church Recorder from April 1830 to March 1831 and again from September 1835 to 1837. He wrote a history of the Church covering the period from 'the time of the finding of the plates up to June 12th, 1831'" (Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History," *Brigham Young University Studies*, summer 1971, 442). In March 1831, John Whitmer was appointed to "write and keep a regular history, and assist you, my servant Joseph, in transcribing all things which shall be given you" (D&C 47:1). John Whitmer's brief written history was lost for many years, but is now available. Oliver Cowdery also wrote eight letters about

Joseph Smith's early visions, which were published in the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* in 1834–35.

Joseph Smith commenced work on a history between July and November 1832. It began with the words “A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr., an account of his marvelous experience and of all the mighty acts which he doeth in the name of Jesus Christ the son of the living God of whom he beareth record and also an account of the rise of the church of Christ” (Dean C. Jessee, “The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, spring 1969, 278).

Various clerks and historians began three more historical accounts between 1834 and 1836. In the difficult years of 1837 and 1838, Joseph Smith and the First Presidency worked on the history of the Church, sometimes taking a grammar lesson before the writing sessions. Finally, in June 1839, the Prophet undertook the work again. Materials from the previous efforts were assimilated into a new history, which eventually was published in the *Times and Seasons* beginning 1 March 1842. Elder Franklin D. Richards published extracts from that 1842 history in 1851, and they are now called Joseph Smith—History.

Some Fundamental Messages of Joseph Smith—History



- *The reality of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world.* Joseph Smith left the Sacred Grove with a personal knowledge of the reality of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. He knew that Jesus is the Son of God; that because of the mercy and grace of His Atonement his sins were forgiven; that Heavenly Father was pleased with His Son, the Savior; and that he was to listen to and obey the words of the Savior.

- *There was an apostasy and loss of the true Church from the earth.* Joseph was told to join none of the churches, “for they were all wrong” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19). Such a statement makes it clear that the gospel and church established by the Savior during His mortal ministry had been lost and that “none of them was acknowledged of God as His Church and kingdom” (*History of the Church*, 4:536).
- *Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.* Joseph wrote that the angel Moroni told him that “God had a work for me to do” (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). Every event in the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith chronicles the fact that God had spoken again to man through a prophet.
- *The Book of Mormon is the word of God.* The events surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon testify of its divinity, and its message not only testifies of Christ, but is a catalyst for greater revelation from God and for the gathering of scattered Israel into the church and kingdom of God.
- *The Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to earth in the latter days.* Joseph was promised that the fulness of the gospel would be made known through him (see *History of the Church*, 4:536). The translation of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the priesthood laid the foundation for the reestablishment of the church and kingdom of God on earth.

JOSEPH SMITH— HISTORY 1:1–10 AN UNUSUAL EXCITEMENT

Date	Significant Event
23 December 1805	Joseph Smith Jr. was born in Sharon township, Windsor County, Vermont.
1816	The Smith family moved from Norwich, Vermont, to Palmyra, New York (near where the Book of Mormon plates were buried).
1820	An unusual excitement on the subject of religion led young Joseph to wonder which church to join.

Joseph Smith—History 1:1. What Were the “Many Reports . . . by Evil-Disposed and Designing Persons”?

“From the outset the Church had an unpopular public image that was added to by apostates and nurtured by the circulation of negative stories and articles in the press. People gave many reasons for apostatizing. For example, Norman Brown left the Church because his horse died on the trip to Zion. Joseph Wakefield withdrew after he saw Joseph Smith playing with children upon coming down

from his translating room. Simonds Ryder denied Joseph's inspiration when Ryder's name was misspelled in his commission to preach. Others left the Church because they experienced economic difficulties.

"Ezra Booth, a former Methodist minister, was an influential apostate during this period [the early 1830s]. . . .

". . . He published nine letters in the *Ohio Star* in Ravenna, from 13 October to 8 December 1831, detailing his objections to the Church.

"These letters . . . later became a major section of the first anti-Mormon book, . . . published in 1834" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times* [Religion 341–43 student manual, 2nd ed., 2000], 113–14).

Many members of the Church apostatized following a period of economic stress in 1837. Backbiting against the Prophet Joseph Smith was common in Kirtland, particularly when he was away on business or on missions. Some men who held positions of trust in the Church rejected his leadership and declared that he was no longer a true prophet. "As a result of this apostasy fifty leading members of the Church were excommunicated under the direction of Joseph Smith, but the problems continued to fester. Several apostates tormented the faithful members with lawsuits and threatened loss of property. Anti-Mormons added their part by boycotting, ostracizing, and denying employment to those who were true to the Prophet and the Church" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 177).

After settling with his family in Far West, Missouri, Joseph, "with the assistance of Sidney Rigdon . . . embarked on the ambitious project of writing the history of the Church from its beginning. . . . The history of Joseph Smith and the early events of the Restoration now found in the Pearl of Great Price were a product of this project begun in April 1838" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 187).

Joseph Smith—History 1:3. What Was Joseph Smith's Early Life Like?

"Joseph Smith grew up on the family farm and was almost exclusively under his family's influence. . . . During his formative years, Joseph Smith began to incorporate and manifest qualities that would help him fulfill his foreordained mission.

". . . He developed strong family bonds, learned to work hard, to think for himself, to serve others, and to love liberty" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 15).

His parents, Lucy Mack and Joseph Smith Sr., were married on 24 January 1796 and settled on a family farm in Tunbridge, Vermont. Joseph and Lucy rented a farm from Solomon Mack, Lucy's father, in the summer of 1805 and Joseph also taught school in the winter. It was there that their fifth child, Joseph Smith Jr., was born on 23 December 1805. Lucy and Joseph taught their children religious precepts and Lucy especially encouraged the study of the Bible. Joseph Sr. was suspicious of traditional churches but always retained a strong belief in God.



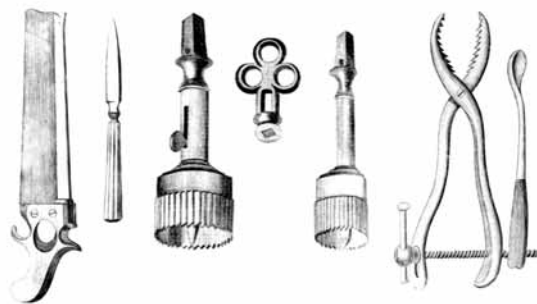
Joseph Smith Sr.



Lucy Mack Smith

"During Joseph Smith's earliest years, his family moved frequently, looking for fertile soil or some other way to earn a livelihood. . . . In 1811 the Smiths moved to the small community of West Lebanon, New Hampshire. . . .

"Seven-year-old Joseph, Jr., recovered from . . . [typhoid] after two weeks but suffered complications that eventually required four surgeries. The most serious complication involved a swelling and infection in the tibia of his left leg." An operation on his leg to remove the infection was endured by Joseph "without being bound or drinking brandy wine to dull his senses" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 22–23).



Surgical instruments from Joseph Smith's time

In 1816, Joseph Sr. went to Palmyra, New York, to investigate the report of good land at low cost. Joseph Jr., at the time a boy of ten, remembered that even though he was not yet fully recovered from his leg operation, the teamster engaged to assist the Smiths in their journey made him walk through snow, forty miles per day for several days, during which time he suffered the most excruciating weariness and pain.

"Joseph Smith, Sr., the father of a family of ten—eleven by 1821—worked hard for a living. After two years in Palmyra, he accumulated enough money for a down payment on one hundred acres of wooded land in the nearby township of Farmington. During the first year he and his sons cleared thirty acres of heavy timber, prepared the ground for cultivation, and planted wheat. . . . Young Joseph later recalled that 'it required the exertions of all that were able to render any assistance for the support of the Family' ['History of Joseph Smith by Himself,' 1]. . . .

"At this time Joseph's opportunities for schooling were limited. He attributed this to the 'indigent circumstances' he was raised under. 'We were deprived of the benefit of an

education. Suffice it to say, I was merely instructed in reading, writing, and the ground rules of arithmetic which constituted my whole literary acquirements' ["History of Joseph Smith by Himself," 1]" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 29–30).

Joseph Smith—History 1:4. Joseph Smith’s Family

Elder Carlos E. Asay, who was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, said that the Prophet Joseph Smith “was the product of a God-fearing family—a family that thirsted after righteousness and exercised a simple but deep faith in the Lord. His school was the home, his teachers were loving parents, and his textbook was the Holy Bible” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 79; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 63).

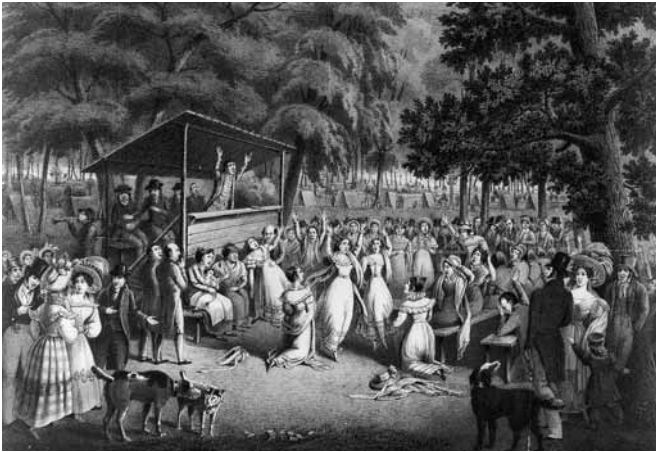
President Brigham Young said that the Lord had watched over Joseph Smith’s ancestors for generations: “It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fulness 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” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:289–90; see also 2 Nephi 3:7–15).

Joseph Smith—History 1:5–10. What Was Going on in Palmyra, New York, Just Before the First Vision?

“As more and more Americans crossed the Catskill and Adirondack mountains to settle in the Finger Lakes area of western New York, they tended to lose contact with established churches in their former homes. These ‘unchurched’ settlers worried religious leaders of the main denominations, principally the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, who established proselyting programs for their disadvantaged brothers in the West.

“The Methodists and Baptists were particularly zealous in their efforts to bring religion to those without its benefits. The Methodists employed circuit riders. These were traveling ministers who rode horseback from town to town throughout a given region, or circuit, ministering to the religious needs of the people. The Baptists used the farmer-preacher system. In this system a local man earned his living by farming but occupied a nearby pulpit on the Sabbath.

“These efforts were bolstered by the enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening which was then sweeping the United States. Nearly all churches in upstate New York conducted revivals. These were evangelistic gatherings designed to awaken the religiously inert. Revivals were often in the form of camp meetings held on the edge of a grove of



trees or in a small clearing in the forest. Participants often traveled many miles over dusty or rut-filled roads to pitch their tents or park their wagons on the outskirts of the encampment. Camp meetings frequently lasted several days with some sessions lasting nearly all day and into the night. Ministers rotated, but it was not uncommon to find two or three ministers exhorting their listeners simultaneously. So fervent and enthusiastic was the religious zeal in western New York in the early 1800s that the region came to be known as the Burned-Over District. Because the Finger Lakes area was set figuratively ablaze with evangelistic fire, it is not surprising that young Joseph Smith and his family were caught up in the fervor” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 30).

**JOSEPH SMITH—
HISTORY 1:11–20
THE FIRST VISION**

Date	Significant Event
Early spring 1820	Fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son in a grove near the family’s log home.
Early spring 1820	Joseph Smith told his family about his vision and they believed him.

Joseph Smith—History 1:11–13. Why Did Joseph Go into the Woods near His Home?

Amid the war of words and feelings that surrounded the boy Joseph, his mind was drawn to the scriptures. He reflected upon the message of James 1:5 again and again and decided for the first time in his life to pray vocally about the matter. After months of mental and spiritual struggle, he finally knew what he must do. Sometime in the early spring of 1820 he went to a familiar spot in the woods near his home to make the attempt. Joseph told an editor of the *New York Spectator*: “I immediately went out into the woods where my father had a clearing, and went to the stump where I had struck my axe when I had quit work, and I kneeled down, and prayed” (in Allen, *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1970, 13).

Joseph's "months of anguish had resulted in obvious spiritual maturity, and he had at least three serious questions on his mind: (1) He was concerned for his own salvation and sought forgiveness of his sins; (2) he was concerned for the welfare of mankind in general, for, he said, 'I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world'; (3) he wanted to know which, if any, of the churches was right, and which he should join" (Allen, *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1970, 9).

Joseph Smith—History 1:15–16. The Powers of Darkness

Speaking of Joseph Smith's experience with Satan, Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: "The powers of darkness preceded the light. When [Joseph Smith] knelt in solitude in the silent forest, his earnest prayer brought on a battle royal which threatened his destruction. For centuries, Lucifer with unlimited dominion had fettered men's minds. He could ill-afford to lose his satanic hold. This threatened his unlimited dominion" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 98).

Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17. A Pillar of Light

Elder Orson Pratt wrote that the pillar of light young Joseph saw descended gradually, increasing in brightness so that "by the time it reached the tops of the trees the whole wilderness, for some distance around, was illuminated in a most glorious and brilliant manner. He expected to have seen the leaves and boughs of the trees consumed, as soon as the light came in contact with them. . . . It continued descending slowly, until it rested upon the earth, and he was enveloped in the midst of it.

" . . . When it first came upon him, it produced a peculiar sensation throughout his whole system; and, immediately, his mind was caught away from the natural objects with which he was surrounded; and he was enwrapped in a heavenly vision" (in Allen, *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1970, 10).

Joseph Smith—History 1:17. The Father Introduced the Son

The Father introduced the Son who then spoke to Joseph Smith. Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: "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" (*Jesus the Christ*, 39; see also Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 3 Nephi 11:7).

Joseph Smith—History 1:18–19. "Join None of Them"

Speaking of the Lord's statement about other churches in Joseph Smith—History 1:19, Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: "Now this is not to say that the churches, all of them, are without some truth. They have some truth—some of them

very much of it. They have a form of godliness. Often the clergy and adherents are not without dedication, and many of them practice remarkably well the virtues of Christianity. They are nonetheless, incomplete" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, 8; or *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 40).

Joseph Smith—History 1:20. "Many Other Things"

President Ezra Taft Benson said that "at no time did Joseph reveal everything he learned in the First Vision" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 112). We do, however, learn from the Prophet Joseph Smith that during the First Vision the Savior told him that "the fullness of the Gospel should at some future time be made known unto me" (*History of the Church*, 4:536). In addition, he was told "many other things" that he was unable to write, and in the 1835 account he said that he saw many angels in his vision.

JOSEPH SMITH— HISTORY 1:21–26 THE BEGINNING OF THE PERSECUTION OF JOSEPH SMITH

Date	Significant Event
Early spring 1820	Joseph told others besides his family about his vision, but many did not believe him.
1820–23	Bitter persecution from "professors of religion" and neighbors caused Joseph great sorrow.

Joseph Smith—History 1:21–24. Bitter Persecution

Joseph told the story of his vision to his family. His brother William affirmed: "We all had the most implicit confidence in what he said. He was a truthful boy. Father and Mother believed him, why should not the children?" (*Deseret Evening News*, 20 Jan. 1894, 11; see also *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 34.)

Given the tender feelings of this fourteen-year-old boy, it is little wonder that he should wish to tell his experience to his friends and acquaintances outside the family. One can sense his profound disappointment when, as was recorded by Elders Orson Pratt and Orson Hyde, he "could find none that would believe the heavenly vision" (in Allen, *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1970, 11). William Smith later reflected: "We never knew we were bad folks until Joseph told his vision. We were considered respectable till then, but at once people began to circulate falsehoods and stories in a wonderful way" (*Deseret Evening News*, 20 Jan. 1894, 11; see also *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 35).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

"Why should so many religionists unite against an unknown youth of no renown or standing in the community? Would the whole sectarian world shiver

and shake and call for a sword if some other unknown fourteen-year-old youth in an obscure frontier village should claim that he was visited by angels and that he saw the Lord? The problem when Joseph Smith announced such a claim was that it was true and that Lucifer knew of its verity.

“... Is not the persecution itself a witness of the reality of the First Vision? Or if it were not true, would the worldly wise and the intellectual religionists today devote their talents and means to defaming Joseph Smith and the work that bears his imprint? What is it to anyone else what we believe unless they in their unbelief fear lest our doctrines are true and our practices may have divine approval?” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 8–10).

Joseph Smith—History 1:25–26. “I Had Seen a Vision”

When the Old Testament prophet Samuel was young, “there was no open vision” (1 Samuel 3:1). But as Samuel grew, “the Lord was with him . . . and all Israel . . . knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord” (vv. 19–20). But, while all of ancient Israel accepted Samuel as a prophet, many people in Joseph Smith’s day and today have difficulty accepting the fact that God would speak again to a prophet on earth (see Amos 3:7).



Elder Hugh B. Brown, then an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, related the following conversation he had with a noted judge, before the outbreak of World War II, illustrating this point:

“I began by asking, ‘May I proceed, sir, on the assumption that you are a Christian?’

“‘I am.’

“‘I assume you believe in the Bible—the Old and New Testament?’

“‘I do!’

“‘Do you believe in prayer?’

“‘I do!’

“‘You say that my belief that God spoke to a 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 . . . I am submitting to you in all seriousness that 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 anymore because he cannot. He has lost the power.’

“‘He said, ‘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,’ he said, ‘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. Perhaps you can tell me why he doesn’t speak.’

“‘My answer was, ‘He does speak; he has spoken; but men need faith to hear him’” (*The Profile of a Prophet*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [4 Oct. 1955], 3–5).

**JOSEPH SMITH—
HISTORY 1:27–54
THE ANGEL MORONI APPEARED
TO JOSEPH SMITH**



Date	Significant Event
1820–23	Young Joseph matured while suffering persecution and waiting for further instructions from the Lord.

21–22 September 1823	Moroni first appeared to Joseph Smith.
19 November 1823	Joseph Smith's eldest brother, Alvin, died.
1824–27	Joseph Smith made four annual visits to the hill where the gold plates were buried.

Joseph Smith—History 1:27–28. Joseph Smith's Daily Activities

Concerning Joseph Smith's life between the time of the First Vision and the appearance of the angel Moroni, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: "His manner of living was not greatly different from that of the ordinary farm boy of his day, except that he was often referred to as a dreamer and was made an object of ridicule. But he continued to work on his father's farm, to work for others in the area, and to associate with companions of his own age. Those acquainted with him describe him as a strong, active boy of cheerful disposition, who enjoyed wrestling and other sports" (*Truth Restored* [1947], 7).

Joseph Smith—History 1:28. The Weakness of Youth

Like all people, Joseph faced the challenges of mortality. Because of his weaknesses, he questioned his personal worthiness before the Lord. Other prophets expressed similar concerns about their personal worthiness and their weaknesses (for example, see 2 Nephi 4:17–19; Moses 6:31). Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: "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!" (*Notwithstanding My Weakness*, 16–17).

Joseph Smith—History 1:30. Where Did Moroni's Visit Take Place?

In 1822, Joseph began helping his older brother Alvin build a new frame house for the family. By September 1823, it was two stories high but without a roof. The family, therefore, continued to live in a small log house a short distance from the frame house. It is to the log house, not the frame house, that Moroni went. Joseph would have undoubtedly slept in the same room with some of his brothers, because the log house was very small for the family of nine.

The Church has excavated the foundation of the log house and built a replica of it on the site. The Church also maintains the frame house in order to help today's visitors to the Smith family farm envision the scenes and sense the significance of the events that took place there.



Joseph Smith—History 1:30–32. Was Moroni a Spirit or a Resurrected Being?

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated that the angel Moroni was a resurrected being (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 119).

Joseph Smith—History 1:33. "My Name"

Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught: "Young Joseph was told that his name would be 'both good and evil spoken of' throughout the world (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). Except from a divine source, how audacious a statement! Yet his contemporary religious leaders, then much better known than Joseph, have faded into the footnotes of history, while the work of Joseph Smith grows constantly and globally" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, 75; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 54).

Joseph Smith—History 1:34. The Fulness of the Everlasting Gospel

Revelation 14:6–7 says that an angel would fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel. President N. Eldon Tanner, who was a counselor in the First Presidency, after quoting Revelation 14:6–7, explained: "This revelation was fulfilled and clearly understood when the Angel Moroni did fly in the midst of heaven and appeared to Joseph Smith and told him of the plates which contained the gospel in its fullness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 62).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained the meaning of "the fulness of the everlasting gospel": "According to the revealed word, the Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel; so also does the Bible, and so do both the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Each of them contains the word of the gospel; each of them is a record of God's dealings with a people who had the fulness of the gospel; each of them is a scriptural record that summarizes the plan of salvation and sets forth what men must do to gain the fulness of reward in the mansions that are prepared. The gospel itself is the

power of God by which salvation comes; it is the power that saves a human soul; and the fulness of the gospel is all of the truths and powers needed to enable men to gain a fulness of reward in the highest heaven of the celestial world" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 399).

Joseph Smith—History 1:34–35. What Was in the Stone Box?

In the stone box were a book and the Urim and Thummim. The book was written on gold plates and included the book of Lehi, the small plates of Nephi, the plates of Mormon, and the sealed plates that Joseph was commanded not to translate (see “A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon” in the introductory pages of the Book of Mormon). The Urim and Thummim was a divine instrument prepared by the Lord for the purpose of translation. It consisted of two stones in silver bows and a breastplate onto which it was attached.

Joseph Smith—History 1:36–41. What Is the Significance of the Bible Verses Moroni Quoted to the Prophet Joseph Smith?

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that Moroni quoted many passages of scriptures to him (see Joseph Smith—History 1:41). Following are the Old Testament prophecies that the Prophet specifically identified:

Scripture Reference	Comments Made by Moroni or Joseph Smith
Part of Malachi 3	None
Malachi 4:1, 5–6	Wording varies from the King James Version biblical text (see v. 36).
Isaiah 11	It was about to be fulfilled (see v. 40).
Acts 3:22–23 (quoting Moses)	Wording of King James Version biblical text precisely matches Moroni’s quotation. The prophet referred to is Jesus Christ. The day had not yet come, but soon would come, that they who would not hear Christ’s voice would be “cut off from among the people” (see v. 40).
Joel 2:28–32	Not yet fulfilled, but soon would be (see v. 41).

Joseph Smith also added that Moroni said “the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in” (v. 41). We do not know which verses Moroni quoted from Malachi 3, but verses 1–4 and 16–18 are appropriate to the themes of the other scripture references. Isaiah 11 is also quoted in 2 Nephi 21, and an explanation of parts of Isaiah 11 is in

Doctrine and Covenants 113:1–6. The prophecy about Jesus Christ in Acts 3:22–23 is one of the most frequently mentioned prophecies in the scriptures (see Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 7:37; 1 Nephi 10:4; 22:20; 3 Nephi 20:23; 21:11; D&C 133:63; Joseph Smith—History 1:40).

The Lord taught the Nephites that prior to the Second Coming there would be a sign given in the last days that would signal the beginning of the gathering of Israel in power (see 3 Nephi 21:1–7). That sign is the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

All of the passages Moroni quoted point to the same theme: The coming forth of the Book of Mormon will initiate a progression of events that will lead to the Second Coming, when the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous will reign on earth with Jesus Christ. In essence, Joseph Smith was being told that the work he was to do would help usher in Christ’s millennial reign and that the Savior’s coming would be “soon.”

Joseph Smith—History 1:41. Do We Know What the “Other Passages of Scripture” Are or What Other Explanations Moroni Gave?

We gain additional insights on this matter from a letter Oliver Cowdery wrote to W.W. Phelps, which contains an account of Moroni’s visit to Joseph Smith: “Though fear was banished from his heart, yet his surprise was no less when he heard him declare himself to be a messenger sent by commandment of the Lord, to deliver a special message, and to witness to him that his sins were forgiven, and that his prayers were heard; and that the scriptures might be fulfilled, which say—‘God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are, that no flesh should glory in his presence’ [1 Corinthians 1:27–28]” (*Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, Feb. 1835, 79).

In his account, Oliver Cowdery also cited Moroni quoting (sometimes only phrases) from Isaiah 28:21; 29:11–14; and John 10:16 (see *Messenger and Advocate*, 79–80).

Joseph Smith—History 1:42–49. A Comparison of Moroni’s Four Visits to Joseph Smith on 21–22 September 1823

- First visit (see Joseph Smith—History 1:30–43):
- Called Joseph Smith by name
 - Introduced himself to Joseph
 - Told Joseph that God had a work for him to do
 - Told Joseph that his name would be known for good and evil among all people
 - Told Joseph about the Book of Mormon
 - Quoted Old and New Testament prophecies regarding the last days

- Quoted many other passages of scripture
- Offered many scriptural explanations
- Warned Joseph not to show the plates to anyone unless commanded or he would be destroyed
- Joseph saw in vision the place where the plates were deposited.

Second visit (see vv. 44–45):

- Repeated what he said during the first visit “without the least variation”
- Told Joseph that great judgments were coming upon the earth, including desolations such as famine, sword, and pestilence

Third visit (see vv. 46–47):

- Repeated what he had said before
- Added a caution concerning Satan’s temptation to use the gold plates to obtain wealth
- Said Joseph must have no other motive than to glorify God and build the kingdom of God

Fourth visit (see vv. 48–49):

- Called Joseph by name
- Related all that he had said the night before
- Commanded Joseph to tell his father of the vision and the commandments he had received

A significant point in comparing the four visits of Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith is the repetition of instruction. Furthermore, Moroni seems to have discerned the thoughts and feelings Joseph was having between each visit. For example, Moroni added instructions on the impending end of the world during the second visit, a subject Joseph seems most concerned about after the first visit. Then Moroni added a warning during the third visit about Joseph’s motives in getting the plates, a temptation Joseph could have easily experienced after the second visit. Finally, Moroni added the commandment for Joseph to tell his father of the visitation, a command that Joseph might have felt impractical, or at least inconvenient, in the middle of the night.

Joseph Smith—History 1:49–50. Joseph Told His Father

Lucy Mack Smith’s history of this event adds the following information: “The messenger whom he saw the previous night, visited him again, and the first thing he said was, ‘Why did you not tell your father that which I commanded you to tell him?’ Joseph replied, ‘I was afraid my father would not believe me.’ The angel rejoined, ‘He will believe every word you say to him!’” (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 79).

Joseph Smith—History 1:50–53. Joseph’s First Visit to the Hill Cumorah

“As Joseph approached the Hill Cumorah, he had thoughts about the poverty of his family and the possibility that the plates or the popularity of the translation would produce enough wealth to ‘raise him above a level with the common earthly fortunes of his



fellow men, and relieve his family from want’ [Oliver Cowdery, in *Messenger and Advocate*, July 1835, 157]. When he reached down for the plates he received a shock and was thus prevented from taking them out of the box. Twice more he tried and was thrown back. In frustration he cried out, ‘Why can I not obtain this book?’ Moroni appeared and told him it was because he had not kept the commandments but had yielded to the temptations of Satan to obtain the plates for riches instead of having his eye single to the glory of God as he had been commanded [Cowdery, in *Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1835, 198].

“Repentant, Joseph humbly sought the Lord in prayer and was filled with the Spirit. A vision was opened to him, and the ‘glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. . . . He beheld the prince of darkness. . . . The heavenly messenger [Moroni] 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.’ . . . 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’ [Cowdery, in *Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1835, 198]. Moroni concluded by warning Joseph that he would not be allowed to obtain the plates ‘until he had learned to keep the commandments of

God—not only till he was willing but able to do it’ [in Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 81; italics added]” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 40–41)

Joseph Smith—History 1:54. Joseph’s Annual Visits to the Hill

Between 1823, when Joseph first saw the plates, and 1827, when he was allowed to take them from the hill, Joseph received additional heavenly instruction. Lucy Mack Smith’s history says that during this time, Joseph “continued to receive instructions from the Lord” (*History of Joseph Smith*, 82). President John Taylor said: “When Joseph Smith was raised up as a Prophet of God, Mormon, Moroni, Nephi and others of the ancient Prophets who formerly lived on this Continent, and Peter and John and others who lived on the Asiatic Continent, came to him and communicated to him certain principles pertaining to the Gospel of the Son of God” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 17:374).

Joseph Smith’s mother also wrote: “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” (*History of Joseph Smith*, 83).

**JOSEPH SMITH—
HISTORY 1:55–65
JOSEPH SMITH RECEIVED
THE GOLD PLATES**

Date	Significant Event
October 1825	Joseph met Emma Hale while working for Josiah Stool
18 January 1827	Joseph married Emma Hale
22 September 1827	Joseph received the Book of Mormon plates
February 1828	Martin Harris visited Charles Anthon in New York City
7 April 1829	Joseph resumed translating the plates, with the help of Oliver Cowdery

Joseph Smith—History 1:56. Joseph’s Brother, Alvin Smith

“Alvin was a faithful and serious young man, and Joseph idolized him. Joseph saw in him a guileless person who lived an upright life. Alvin loved Joseph, too, and was greatly interested in the sacred record. As death neared he counseled

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’ [in Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 87]. Joseph learned by revelation years later that Alvin was an heir to the celestial kingdom (see D&C 137:1–6)” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 42).

Joseph Smith—History 1:55–56. Money-Digging

Concerning Joseph’s money-digging for Josiah Stool, Joseph’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote the following in her history:

“A man by the name of Josiah Stool came from Chenango county, New York, with the view of getting Joseph to assist him in digging for a silver mine. He came for Joseph on account of having heard that he possessed certain means by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye.

“Joseph endeavored to divert him from his vain pursuit, but he was inflexible in his purpose and offered high wages to those who would dig for him in search of said mine, and still insisted upon having Joseph to work for him. Accordingly, Joseph and several others returned with him and commenced digging. After laboring for the old gentleman about a month, without success, Joseph prevailed upon him to cease his operations, and it was from this circumstance of having worked by the month, at digging for a silver mine, that the very prevalent story arose of Joseph’s having been a money digger” (*History of Joseph Smith*, 91–92).

Joseph Smith—History 1:57–58. Emma Hale



“[Emma] was born in Harmony on July 10, 1804. She is reported to have been a beautiful woman, above average in size, dignified in body, with ‘bewitching dark eyes’ and raven hair. She was an attractive personality, intelligent and capable. For one year she attended an academy for girls where she received training in social behavior. It was said of her that she ‘never used slang and was very particular about her grammar and choice of words.’ She had the reputation of being a meticulous housekeeper and an excellent cook. She, like her mother, was a member of the Methodist Church, had a good singing voice, and sang in the village choir” (Ivan J. Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration*, [1973], 71).

Joseph Smith’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote:

“While Joseph was in the employ of Mr. Stool, he boarded a short time with one Isaac Hale, and it was during this interval that Joseph became acquainted with his daughter, Miss Emma Hale, to whom he immediately commenced paying his addresses, and was subsequently married. . . .

“ . . . Joseph called my husband and myself aside and said, ‘I have been very lonely ever since Alvin died and I have concluded to get married, and if you have no objections to my uniting myself in marriage with Miss Emma Hale, she would be my choice in preference to any other woman I have ever seen.’ We were pleased with his choice and not only consented to his marrying her, but requested him to bring her home with him and live with us” (*History of Joseph Smith*, 92–93).

Joseph Smith—History 1:59–60. Joseph Received the Plates

“Little is known of Joseph’s visits with Moroni between 1824 and 1827, but sometime before fall of 1827, Joseph returned home one evening later than usual. His family was concerned, but he told them he had been delayed because he had just received a severe chastisement from Moroni. He said that as he passed by the Hill Cumorah, ‘The angel met me and said that I had not been engaged enough in the work of the Lord; that the time had come for the record to be brought forth; and that I must be up and doing and set myself about the things which God had commanded me to do’ [Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 100].

“Much must have transpired in Joseph’s four years of preparation. He passed through his teens largely untainted by the precepts of men. He enjoyed the emotional support of his family, and he took on the responsibilities associated with marriage. Angels prepared him to translate a divinely inspired record and taught him the necessity of self-discipline and obedience. He was undoubtedly anxious to begin translating the Book of Mormon. At this time Joseph Knight and Josiah Stowell were in Manchester visiting with the Smith family. This might have been in anticipation of Joseph’s receiving the plates.

“Long before sunrise on 22 September 1827, Joseph and his wife hitched Joseph Knight’s horse to Josiah Stowell’s spring wagon and drove the three miles to the Hill Cumorah. Leaving Emma at the base, Joseph climbed the hill for his final interview with Moroni. Moroni gave him the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. He also gave Joseph a specific warning and promise concerning his responsibilities. Joseph was now responsible for these sacred objects, and if he was careless or negligent and lost them he would be cut off. On the other hand, if he used all his efforts to preserve them until Moroni returned for them, he was assured that they would be protected (see Joseph Smith—History 1:59).

“For the first time in over fourteen hundred years the precious records were entrusted to a mortal. Joseph carefully hid the plates in a hollow log near his home. The Prophet’s friends were not the only ones who eagerly anticipated his receiving the plates. Others in the neighborhood had heard that Joseph was going to bring

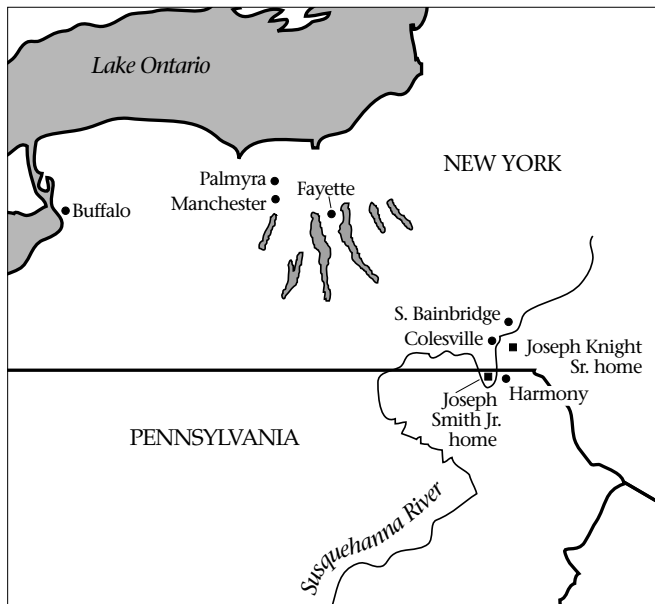
home valuable metal plates. . . . Joseph soon learned why Moroni had strictly charged him to protect the plates. ‘Every stratagem that could be invented’ was used to get them from him (v. 60). For example, Willard Chase, a neighboring farmer, along with other treasure seekers, sent for a sorcerer to come and find the place where the plates were hidden. When the Smiths learned of the plot they sent Emma to get Joseph, who was working in Macedon a few miles west of Palmyra. He returned immediately and retrieved the plates. Wrapping them in a linen frock, he started through the woods, thinking it might be safer than the traveled road. But just as he jumped over a log, he was struck from behind with a gun. Joseph, however, was able to knock his assailant down and flee. Half a mile later he was assaulted again but managed to escape, and before he arrived home he was accosted a third time. His mother said that when he reached home he was ‘altogether speechless from fright and the fatigue of running’ [*History of Joseph Smith*, 108].

“Efforts to steal the plates intensified, but Moroni’s promise of protection was also fulfilled. Joseph often moved the plates from their hiding place just minutes before the treasure seekers arrived. Once he hid them under the hearthstone of the fireplace of his home. A large group of men gathered in front of the house, but they scattered when Joseph and his brothers faked a counterattack by running out the front door screaming and yelling as if a large company of men were assisting them. Joseph then hid the chest under the wooden floor of the cooper shop on the Smith farm, but he was prompted to conceal the records themselves under the flax in the loft. That night his enemies tore up the floor of the cooper shop, but the plates remained safe” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 43–45).

Joseph Smith—History 1:60. Attempts to Get the Plates from Joseph

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “Joseph soon learned why Moroni had charged him so strictly to guard the record taken from the hill. No sooner was it rumored that he had the plates than efforts were made to seize them from him. To preserve them he first carefully hid them in a hollow birch log. Then he locked them in a chest in his father’s home. Later they were buried beneath the hearthstone of the family living room. A cooper’s shop across the street was their next hiding place. All of these and other stratagems were employed to keep them safe from neighborhood mobs who raided and ransacked the Smith home and surrounding premises, and even employed the services of a diviner in their zeal to locate the record” (*Truth Restored*, 13–14).

Joseph Smith—History 1:61–62. Preserving the Plates

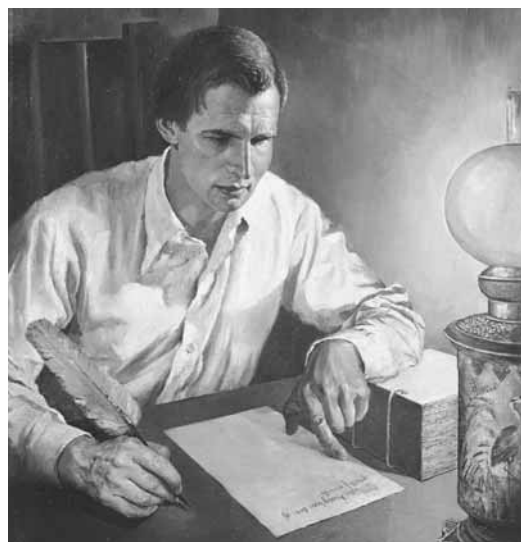


“The Smiths continued to be harassed, and the Prophet had to resort to numerous hiding places. Joseph Smith first placed them in Hyrum’s chest, then, at various times, secreted the plates under the hearth of his father’s home, in a pile of flax in the cooper’s loft, in Father Beman’s Ontario glass box, and in Emma’s red Morocco trunk [see Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 112–13].

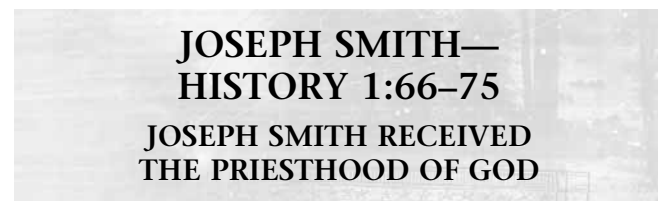
“However, Joseph Smith’s calling was not merely to preserve the gold plates, but also to translate them. With people in the area around Manchester so intent on stealing the plates, Joseph and Emma decided to move to Harmony to live on her father’s farm. They hoped to have the necessary peace there to accomplish the divine task. Martin Harris gave Joseph \$50 to make the move, and Emma’s brother Alva lent them a team and wagon. They left after hiding the record in a barrel of beans in the wagon. Several men detained the travelers but were unsuccessful in finding the plates. [See Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (1984), 85.]

“In Harmony, the couple moved into a two-room house owned by Jesse, another of Emma’s brothers, about 150 yards from Isaac Hale’s house. The Prophet was ready to begin the translation. On at least six different occasions, Joseph Smith gave brief descriptions of how he translated the Book of Mormon. All six accounts agree that he translated them by the gift and power of God, through the Urim and Thummim [see Joseph Smith—History 1:62; D&C 9:4–12; Warren Cowdery, Manuscript History of the Church, Book A-1, in LDS Church Archives, 121–22; *Elder’s Journal*, 1 July 1838, 43; *Times and Seasons*, 3 May 1842, 772; and *Times and Seasons*, 4 Nov. 1843, 373]” (Kenneth W. Godfrey, “A New Prophet and a New Scripture: The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 11).

Joseph Smith—History 1:63–65. Prophecy Fulfilled



See Isaiah 29:11–12 and 2 Nephi 27:6–26. Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “Joseph began his work with the plates by patiently copying a number of characters, adding his translation to some of the pages thus prepared. The prophet’s first assistant in the labor, Martin Harris, obtained permission to take away some of these transcripts, with the purpose of submitting them to the examination of men learned in ancient languages. He placed some of the sheets before Professor Charles Anthon, of Columbia College, who, after examination, certified that the characters were in general of the ancient Egyptian order, and that the accompanying translations appeared to be correct. Hearing how this ancient record came into Joseph’s hands, Professor Anthon requested Mr. Harris to bring the original book for examination, stating that he would undertake the translation of the work; then, learning that a part of the book was sealed, he remarked, ‘I cannot read a sealed book’; and thus unwittingly did this man fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the coming forth of the volume: ‘And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed’ [Isaiah 29:11]. Another linguist, a Doctor Mitchell, of New York, having examined the characters, gave concerning them a testimony in all important respects corresponding to that of Professor Anthon” (*The Articles of Faith*, 267–68).



Date	Significant Event
15 May 1829	John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood

May or June 1829 Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek Priesthood



Joseph Smith—History 1:66–67. Oliver Cowdery

“Oliver Cowdery was born 3 October 1806 in Wells, Rutland County, Vermont. He was the youngest of eight children. As he grew up he received an education consisting of reading, writing, and the basic rules of arithmetic. Several of the elder Cowdery brothers had found that business opportunities were limited in Vermont and had moved to western New York. In 1825 Oliver followed and took employment as a clerk in a village general store. He also engaged in blacksmithing and farming. Oliver was slight of build, about five feet five inches tall, with dark, wavy hair and piercing dark eyes.

“Early in 1829 one of Oliver’s older brothers, Lyman Cowdery, was hired to teach at the village school in Manchester township close to where Joseph Smith’s family lived. Lyman was unable to fulfill his commitment and suggested that the trustees hire his brother Oliver. Approved by the trustees, one of whom was Hyrum Smith, Oliver commenced teaching and was invited to board at the home of Joseph Smith, Sr. Lucy Smith related that almost immediately ‘he began to hear from all quarters concerning the plates, and as soon began to importune Mr. Smith upon the subject, but for a considerable length of time did not succeed in eliciting any information’ [*History of Joseph Smith*, 138]. The Smiths were reluctant to share their experiences because they had been ridiculed by neighbors in the past” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 52–53).

Oliver Cowdery pressed the Smiths for more information about Joseph and the Book of Mormon. Lucy Smith’s memoirs indicate that Oliver became obsessed with the story and insisted on traveling with Samuel Smith (Joseph’s brother) when he went to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to visit the Prophet. Oliver had prayed for understanding and felt there was a work for him to do with Joseph. Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony on Sunday, 5 April 1829, and Joseph recognized him as the assistance the Lord had promised. They sat down together and discussed Joseph’s experiences until late in the evening. The next day they

attended to some business, and on Tuesday, 7 April, they commenced the work of translation.

Regarding his experiences working with Joseph Smith, Oliver later reminisced: “These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim” (Joseph Smith—History endnote).

Joseph Smith—History 1:67. The Translation of the Book of Mormon

Concerning his translating the Book of Mormon, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “With the records was found a curious instrument, which the ancients called ‘Urim and Thummim,’ which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breast plate. Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God” (*History of the Church*, 4:537).

“Joseph and Oliver labored ‘with little cessation’ on the translation throughout April. With Oliver’s help, Joseph proceeded faster than ever before. During the next three months Joseph and Oliver completed the amazing task of translating approximately five hundred printed pages. This was a glorious period in their lives” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 53).

Joseph Smith—History 1:68–74. Aaronic Priesthood Restored

On 22 September 1823, the Angel Moroni announced: “When they [the gold plates] 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” (in Oliver Cowdery, *Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1835, 199).

As Joseph and Oliver translated the Book of Mormon they came to the Savior’s visit to the inhabitants of the western hemisphere and His teachings about baptism (see 3 Nephi 11:18–41). They determined to go to the Lord in mighty prayer to learn how they could obtain the blessing of baptism. On 15 May 1829, Joseph and Oliver went into the nearby woods along the Susquehanna River to pray. Oliver described their experience: “On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was racked and distracted . . . our eyes beheld, our ears heard” (Joseph Smith—History endnote).

John the Baptist appeared and restored the Aaronic Priesthood and significant spiritual manifestations attended Joseph’s and Oliver’s baptism (see Joseph Smith—History 1:73–74).

Joseph Smith—History 1:72. Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood

Soon after John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood on Joseph and Oliver, “the Lord’s chief Apostles, Peter, James, and John, appeared to them on the banks of the Susquehanna River (see D&C 128:20). The angelic visitors conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the holy Melchizedek Priesthood and the keys of the apostleship (see D&C 27:12). Joseph and Oliver now had the authority to act as legal agents for the Lord in building the kingdom of God upon the earth” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 56). This restoration most probably occurred between 16–28 May 1829 (see Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 33–47).

President Wilford Woodruff explained: “Joseph Smith never attempted to organize this Church until he received commandment so to do from God. He never attempted to baptize a man until he received the Aaronic priesthood under the hands of John the Baptist. . . . He never attempted to officiate in any of the ordinances of the Gospel until he received the Apostleship under the hands of Peter, James and John. These men appeared to him. They laid their hands upon his head and sealed the Apostleship upon him with all the power thereof” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:241).

On 13 January 1849, Oliver Cowdery penned the following lines at the request of Samuel W. Richards, who was hosting Oliver and his wife in the Richards home in the upper part of Missouri:

“While darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people; long after the authority to administer in holy things had been taken away, the Lord opened the heavens and sent forth his word for the salvation of Israel. In fulfilment of the

sacred scriptures, the everlasting gospel was proclaimed by the mighty angel (Moroni) who, clothed with the authority of his mission, gave glory to God in the highest. This gospel is the ‘stone taken from the mountain without hands.’ John the Baptist, holding the keys of the Aaronic priesthood; Peter, James and John, holding the keys of the Melchizedek priesthood, have also ministered for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and with these administrations ordained men to the same priesthood. These priesthoods, with their authority, are now, and must continue to be, in the body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Blessed is the elder who has received the same, and thrice blessed and holy is he who shall endure to the end.

“Accept assurances, dear brother, of the unfeigned prayer of him who, in connection with Joseph the Seer, was blessed with the above ministration and who earnestly and devoutly hopes to meet you in the celestial glory” (in B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. [1909–11], 2:289–90).

Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, then Presiding Bishop of the Church, explained: “By divine direction, the Apostolic Presidency, Peter, James, and John bestowed upon Joseph Smith and his associate the Melchizedek Priesthood which holds the keys of loosening and binding both upon the earth and in the heavens, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, the keys to preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, the keys for the work for the dead, and, hence, the relationship which existed between the prophets and apostles of old was established in this day to the end that the Lord’s plans for the eternal blessing of his children might be brought into fruition” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1954, 4; see also Matthew 16:13–19; 17:3; John 15:16; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157–58).

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

Contents:

- *The members of the Godhead*
- *We will be punished only for our own sins*
- *All may be saved through the Atonement of Christ*
- *The first principles and ordinances of the gospel*
- *The need for and the nature of authority in the ministry*
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What Are the Articles of Faith?

“The Prophet [Joseph Smith] was occasionally called on to explain the teachings and practices of Mormonism to outsiders. A significant example was the Wentworth Letter. In the spring of 1842, John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, asked Joseph Smith to provide him with a sketch of ‘the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-Day Saints’ [“Church History,” *Times and Seasons*, 1 Mar. 1842, 706]. . . . Joseph complied with this request and sent Wentworth a multi-page document containing an account of many of the early events in the history of the Restoration, including the First Vision and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The document also contained thirteen statements outlining Latter-day Saint beliefs, which have come to be known as the Articles of Faith. . . .

“Wentworth did not publish this document in the *Chicago Democrat*, nor did it ever appear in any history of New Hampshire. But the Church’s newspaper, *Times and Seasons*, published it in March 1842, and it has become one of the most important statements of inspiration, history, and doctrine for the Church” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 256–57).

The Wentworth Letter

Following is the complete text of the Wentworth Letter, as written by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“I was born in the town of Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, on the 23rd of December, A.D. 1805. When ten years old, my parents removed to Palmyra, New York, where we resided about four years, and from thence we removed to the town of Manchester. My father was a farmer and taught me the art of husbandry. When about fourteen years of age, I began to reflect upon the importance of being prepared for a future state, and upon inquiring [about] the plan of salvation, I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment; if I went to one society they referred me to one plan, and another to another; each one pointing to his own particular creed as the *summum bonum* of perfection. Considering that all could not be right, and that God could not be the author of so much confusion, I determined to investigate the subject more fully, believing that if God had a Church it would not be split up into factions, and that if He taught one society to worship one way, and administer in one set of ordinances, He would not teach another, principles which were diametrically opposed.

“Believing the word of God, I had confidence in the declaration of James—‘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.’ I retired to a secret place in a grove, and began to call upon the Lord; while fervently engaged in supplication, my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon day. They told me that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as His Church and kingdom: and I was expressly commanded ‘to go not after them,’ at the same time receiving a promise that the fullness of the Gospel should at some future time be made known unto me.

“On the evening on the 21st of September, A.D. 1823, while I was praying unto God, and endeavoring to exercise faith in the precious promises of Scripture, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a far purer and more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room, indeed the first sight was as though the house was filled with consuming fire; the appearance produced a shock that affected the whole body; in a moment a personage stood before me surrounded with a glory yet greater than that with which I was already surrounded. This messenger proclaimed himself to be an angel of God, sent to bring the joyful tidings that the covenant which God made with ancient Israel was at hand to be fulfilled, that the preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence; that the time was at hand for the Gospel in all its fullness to be preached in power, unto all nations that a people might be prepared for the Millennial reign. I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of His purposes in this glorious dispensation.

“I was also informed concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country and shown who they were, and from whence they came; a brief sketch of their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments, of their righteousness and iniquity, and the blessings of God being finally withdrawn from them as a people, was made known unto me; I was also told where were deposited some plates on which were engraven an abridgment of the records of the ancient Prophets that had existed on this continent. The angel appeared to me three times the same night and unfolded the same things. After having received many visits from the angels of God unfolding the majesty and glory of the events that should transpire in the last days, on the morning of the 22nd of September, A.D. 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into my hands.

“These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold, each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction, and much skill in the art of engraving. With the records was found a curious instrument, which the ancients called ‘Urim and Thummim,’ which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breast plate. Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God.

“In this important and interesting book the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement by a

colony that came from the Tower of Babel, at the confusion of languages to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian Era. We are informed by these records that America in ancient times has been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites, and came directly from the Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country. This book also tells us that our Savior made His appearance upon this continent after His resurrection; that He planted the Gospel here in all its fulness, and richness, and power, and blessing; that they had Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, and Evangelists; the same order, the same priesthood, the same ordinances, gifts, powers, and blessings, as were enjoyed on the eastern continent, that the people were cut off in consequence of their transgressions, that the last of their prophets who existed among them was commanded to write an abridgment of their prophecies, history, &c, and to hide it up in the earth, and that it should come forth and be united with the Bible for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the last days. For a more particular account I would refer to the Book of Mormon, which can be purchased at Nauvoo, or from any of our Traveling Elders.

“As soon as the news of this discovery was made known, false reports, misrepresentation and slander flew, as on the wings of the wind, in every direction; the house was frequently beset by mobs and evil designing persons. Several times I was shot at, and very narrowly escaped, and every device was made use of to get the plates away from me; but the power and blessing of God attended me, and several began to believe my testimony.

“On the 6th of April, 1830, the ‘Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ was first organized in the town of Fayette, Seneca county, state of New York. Some few were called and ordained by the Spirit of revelation and prophecy, and began to preach as the Spirit gave them utterance, and though weak, yet were they strengthened by the power of God, and many were brought to repentance, were immersed in the water, and were filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They saw visions and prophesied, devils were cast out, and the sick healed by the laying on of hands. From that time the work rolled forth with astonishing rapidity, and churches were soon formed in the states of New York, Pennsylvania[,] Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri; in the last named state a considerable settlement was formed in Jackson county: numbers joined the Church and we were increasing rapidly; we made large purchases of land, our farms teemed with plenty, and peace and happiness

were enjoyed in our domestic circle, and throughout our neighborhood; but as we could not associate with our neighbors (who were, many of them, of the basest of men, and had fled from the face of civilized society, to the frontier country to escape the hand of justice,) in their midnight revels, their Sabbath breaking, horse racing and gambling; they commenced at first to ridicule, then to persecute, and finally an organized mob assembled and burned our houses, tarred and feathered and whipped many of our brethren, and finally, contrary to law, justice and humanity, drove them from their habitations; who, houseless and homeless, had to wander on the bleak prairies till the children left the tracks of their blood on the prairie. This took place in the month of November, and they had no other covering but the canopy of heaven, in this inclement season of the year; this proceeding was winked at by the government, and although we had warantee deeds for our land, and had violated no law, we could obtain no redress.

"There were many sick, who were thus inhumanly driven from their houses, and had to endure all this abuse and to seek homes where they could be found. The result was, that a great many of them being deprived of the comforts of life, and the necessary attendances, died; many children were left orphans, wives, widows and husbands, widowers; our farms were taken possession of by the mob, many thousands of cattle, sheep, horses and hogs were taken, and our household goods, store goods, and printing press and type were broken, taken, or otherwise destroyed.

"Many of our brethren removed to Clay county, where they continued until 1836, three years; there was no violence offered, but there were threatenings of violence. But in the summer of 1836 these threatenings began to assume a more serious form, from threats, public meetings were called, resolutions were passed, vengeance and destruction were threatened, and affairs again assumed a fearful attitude, Jackson county was a sufficient precedent, and as the authorities in that county did not interfere they boasted that they would not in this; which on application to the authorities we found to be too true, and after much privation and loss of property, we were again driven from our homes.

"We next settled in Caldwell and Daviess counties, where we made large and extensive settlements, thinking to free ourselves from the power of oppression, by settling in new counties, with very few inhabitants in them; but here we were not allowed to live in peace, but in 1838 we were again attacked by mobs, an exterminating order was issued by Governor Boggs, and under the sanction of law, an organized banditti ranged through the country, robbed us of our cattle, sheep, hogs, &c., many of our people were murdered in cold blood, the chastity of our women was violated, and we were forced to sign away our property at the point of the sword; and after enduring every indignity that could be heaped upon us by an inhuman, ungodly band of marauders, from twelve to fifteen thousand souls,

men[,] women, and children were driven from their own firesides, and from lands to which they had warantee deeds, houseless, friendless, and homeless (in the depths of winter) to wander as exiles on the earth, or to seek an asylum in a more genial clime, and among a less barbarous people. Many sickened and died in consequence of the cold and hardships they had to endure; many wives were left widows, and children, orphans, and destitute. It would take more time than is allotted me here to describe the injustice, the wrongs, the murders the bloodshed, the theft, misery and woe that have been caused by the barbarous, inhuman, and lawless proceedings of the state of Missouri.

"In the situation before alluded to, we arrived in the state of Illinois in 1839, where we found a hospitable people and a friendly home: a people who were willing to be governed by the principles of law and humanity. We have commenced to build a city called 'Nauvoo,' in Hancock county. We number from six to eight thousand here, besides vast numbers in the county around, and in almost every county of the state. We have a city charter granted us, and charter for a Legion, the troops of which now number 1,500. We have also a charter for a University, for an Agricultural and Manufacturing Society, have our own laws and administrators, and possess all the privileges that other free and enlightened citizens enjoy.

"Persecution has not stopped the progress of truth, but has only added fuel to the flame, it has spread with increasing rapidity. Proud of the cause which they have espoused, and conscious of our innocence, and of the truth of their system, amidst calumny and reproach, have the Elders of this Church gone forth, and planted the Gospel in almost every state in the Union; it has penetrated our cities, it has spread over our villages, and has caused thousands of our intelligent, noble, and patriotic citizens to obey its divine mandates, and be governed by its sacred truths. It has also spread into England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, where, in the year 1840, a few of our missionaries were sent, and over five thousand joined the Standard of Truth; there are numbers now joining in every land.

"Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.

"We believe in God the eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

"We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

“We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

“We believe that the first principle[s] and ordinances of the Gospel are: (1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) Repentance; (3) Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; (4) Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“We believe that a man must be called of God by prophecy and by the laying on hands, by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

“We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive Church, viz: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

“We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

“We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

“We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

“We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this [the American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

“We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, in obeying[,] honoring, and sustaining the law.

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to *all men*; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul, ‘We believe all thing[s], we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

“Respectfully, &c., JOSEPH SMITH” (*History of the Church*, 4:536–41).

How Did the Articles of Faith Become Part of the Scriptures?

“In 1851 the Articles of Faith were included in the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price published in the British Mission. After the Pearl of Great Price was revised in 1878 and canonized in 1880, the Articles of Faith became official doctrine of the Church” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 257).

What Is the Significance of the Articles of Faith?

The Articles of Faith can help members of the Church explain and defend many gospel principles. Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“What a great blessing it would be if every member of the Church memorized the Articles of Faith and became knowledgeable about the principles contained in each. We would be better prepared to share the gospel with others. . . .

“ . . . They contain direct and simple statements of the principles of our religion, and they constitute strong evidence of the divine inspiration that rested upon the Prophet Joseph Smith.

“I encourage each of you to study the Articles of Faith and the doctrines they teach. . . . If you will use them as a guide to direct your studies of the Savior’s doctrine, you will find yourselves prepared to declare your witness of the restored, true Church of the Lord. You will be able to declare with conviction, ‘We believe these things’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 28, 30; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 23–24).

ARTICLES OF FAITH 1:1–4 GOD AND HIS PLAN OF SALVATION

Articles of Faith 1:1. Three Separate and Distinct Beings

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“In common with the rest of Christianity, we believe in a Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. However, we testify that these three members of the Godhead are three separate and distinct beings. We also testify that God the Father is not just a spirit but is a glorified person with a tangible body, as is his resurrected Son, Jesus Christ. . . .

“ . . . Many Christians reject the idea of a tangible, personal God and a Godhead of three separate beings. They believe that God is a spirit and that the Godhead is only one God. . . .

“The collision between the speculative world of Greek philosophy and the simple, literal faith and practice of the earliest Christians produced sharp contentions that threatened to widen political divisions in the fragmenting Roman empire. This led Emperor Constantine to convene the first churchwide council in A.D. 325. The action of this council of Nicaea remains the most important single event after the death of the Apostles in formulating the modern Christian concept of deity. The Nicene Creed erased the idea of the separate being of Father and Son by defining God the Son as being of ‘one substance with the Father.’

"Other councils followed, and from their decisions and the writings of churchmen and philosophers there came a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Christian doctrine in which the orthodox Christians of that day lost the fulness of truth about the nature of God and the Godhead. The consequences persist in the various creeds of Christianity, which declare a Godhead of only one being and which describe that single being or God as 'incomprehensible' and 'without body, parts, or passions.' One of the distinguishing features of the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is its rejection of all of these postbiblical creeds. . . .

"... Joseph Smith's first vision showed that the prevailing concepts of the nature of God and the Godhead were untrue and could not lead their adherents to the destiny God desired for them. . . .

"... We can comprehend the fundamentals he has revealed about himself and the other members of the Godhead. And that knowledge is essential to our understanding of the purpose of mortal life and of our eternal destiny" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 112–14; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 84–86).

Articles of Faith 1:1. "God, the Eternal Father"

In a 1916 doctrinal exposition, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: "God the Eternal Father, whom we designate by the exalted name-title 'Elohim,' is the literal Parent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and of the spirits of the human race" ("The Father and the Son," *Improvement Era*, Aug. 1916, 934).

President Brigham Young said:

"I want to tell you, each and every one of you, that you are well acquainted with God our heavenly Father, or the great Eloheim. You are all well acquainted with Him, for there is not a soul of you but what has lived in His house and dwelt with Him year after year; and yet you are seeking to become acquainted with Him, when the fact is, you have merely forgotten what you did know. . . .

"There is not a person here to-day but what is a son or a daughter of that Being [Heavenly Father]. In the spirit world their spirits were first begotten and brought forth, and they lived there with their parents for ages before they came here" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:216).

Articles of Faith 1:1. "His Son, Jesus Christ"

President Heber J. Grant stated: "We believe absolutely that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, begotten of God, the first-born in the spirit and the only begotten in the flesh; that He is the Son of God just as much as you and I are the sons of our fathers" ("Analysis of the Articles of Faith," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, 5 Jan. 1922, 2).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified:

"Whether descriptively designated as Creator, Only Begotten Son, Prince of Peace, Advocate, Mediator, Son of God,

Savior, Messiah, Author and Finisher of Salvation, King of Kings—I witness that Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven whereby one can be saved! (See D&C 18:23.)

"I testify that He is utterly incomparable in what He *is*, what He *knows*, what He has *accomplished*, and what He has *experienced*. Yet, movingly, He calls us His friends. (See John 15:15.)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 9; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 8).

Articles of Faith 1:1. The Holy Ghost

Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

"The Holy Ghost is a revelator. Every worthy soul is entitled to a revelation, and it comes through the Holy Ghost. In Moroni's farewell to the Lamanites, he says:

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.' (Moroni 10:5.) He is a reminder and will bring to our remembrance the things which we have learned and which we need in the time thereof. He is an inspirer and will put words in our mouths, enlighten our understandings and direct our thoughts. He is a testifier and will bear record to us of the divinity of the Father and the Son and of Their missions and of the program which they have given us. He is a teacher and will increase our knowledge. He is a companion and will walk with us, inspiring us all along the way, guiding our footsteps, impeaching our weaknesses, strengthening our resolves and revealing to us righteous aims and purposes" ("The Fourth Article of Faith," *The Instructor*, Apr. 1955, 108–9).

Articles of Faith 1:2. Adam and Eve's Transgression



Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained:

"Because of their transgression, Adam and Eve, having chosen to leave their state of innocence (see 2 Nephi 2:23–25), were banished from the presence of God. This is referred to in Christendom as the Fall, or

Adam's transgression. It is a spiritual death because Adam and Eve were separated from the presence of God and given agency 'to act for themselves and not to be acted upon' (2 Nephi 2:26). They were also given the great power of procreation, so that they could keep the commandment to 'multiply, and replenish the earth' and have joy in their posterity (Genesis 1:28).

"All of their posterity were likewise banished from the presence of God (see 2 Nephi 2:22–26). However, the posterity of Adam and Eve were innocent of the original sin because they had no part in it. It was therefore unfair for all of humanity to suffer eternally for the transgressions of our first parents, Adam and Eve. It became necessary to settle

this injustice; hence the need for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus in His role as the Savior and Redeemer. Because of the transcendent act of the Atonement, it is possible for every soul to obtain forgiveness of sins, to have them washed away and be forgotten” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 13–14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 12).

Articles of Faith 1:2. Punishment for Our Own Sins

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said:

“In order to lay claim upon our Savior’s life-giving triumph over the spiritual death we suffer because of our own sins, we must follow the conditions he has prescribed. As he has told us in modern revelation, ‘I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“‘But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I’ (D&C 19:16–17)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 77; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 65).

Articles of Faith 1:3. “Through the Atonement of Christ”



Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified:

“We believe that Christ came into the world to ransom mankind from the temporal and spiritual death brought into the world by the fall of Adam, that

through the shedding of His innocent blood all mankind are raised in immortality and that those who believe and obey His laws are raised unto eternal life.

“Salvation is administered on the same terms and conditions in all ages. Men must have faith in him, repent of their sins, be baptized in his name, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and remain steadfast to gain life eternal.

“The Lord God has sent his holy prophets among all men in all ages to declare these things, even as he does today (see Mosiah 3:13)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 24–25; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 22).

Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: “There is a distinction between immortality, or eternal existence, and eternal life, which is to have a place in the presence of God. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, immortality comes to all men, just or unjust, righteous or wicked. However, eternal life is ‘the greatest of all the gifts of God’ (D&C 14:7). We obtain this great gift, according to the Lord, ‘if you keep my commandments and endure to the end.’ If we so endure, the promise is, ‘you shall have eternal life’ (D&C 14:7)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 12).

Articles of Faith 1:3. Obedience to God

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “To get salvation we must not only do some things, but everything which God has commanded. Men may preach and practice everything except those things which God commands us to do, and will be damned at last. . . . The object with me is to obey and teach others to obey God in just what He tells us to do. It mattereth not whether the principle is popular or unpopular, I will always maintain a true principle, even if I stand alone in it” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 332).

Articles of Faith 1:3. The Laws and Ordinances of the Gospel

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, who was an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“If we keep the laws and covenants of baptism, and honor the priesthood and its covenants, we are then permitted to enter into the temple of the Lord and there again make covenants with him, which covenants if kept will qualify us for the fulness of joy in our Father’s kingdom; and to become endowed with powers, rights, blessings, and promises of blessings that may embellish our lives and bless us eternally and bring us joy that is beyond our power to comprehend.

“. . . What hope, what assurance, what joy that should bring to the hearts of men!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1955, 30).

Articles of Faith 1:4. The First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Baptism is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that we do the will of God, and there is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved, and enter into the Kingdom of God, except faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and any other course is vain; then you have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 198).

Articles of Faith 1:4. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and of course we are not going to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ without having faith in his Father. Then if we have faith in God the Father and the Son and are guided, as we ought to be, by the Holy Ghost, we will have faith in the servants of the Lord through whom he has spoken” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:303).

Articles of Faith 1:4. Repentance

President Joseph F. Smith taught: “True repentance is not only sorrow for sins, and humble penitence and contrition before God, but it involves the necessity of turning away from them, a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds,

a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light. Not only so, but to make restitution, so far as it is possible, for all the wrongs we have done, to pay our debts, and restore to God and man their rights—that which is due to them from us” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 100).

Elder James E. Talmage, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, warned: “Repentance becomes more difficult as sin is more wilful; it is by humility and contrition of the heart that sinners may increase their faith in God, and so obtain from Him the gift of repentance. As the time of repentance is procrastinated, the ability to repent grows weaker; neglect of opportunity in holy things develops inability” (*Articles of Faith*, 114).

Articles of Faith 1:4. Baptism by Immersion for the Remission of Sins



Elder Joseph F. Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “Baptism means immersion in water, and is to be administered by one having authority, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism without divine authority is not valid. It is a

symbol of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and must be done in the likeness thereof” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:190).

Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “When a repentant soul is baptized, all former sins are forgiven and need not be remembered. When repentance is full and one has been cleansed, there comes a new vision of life and its glorious possibilities. How marvelous the promise of the Lord: ‘Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.’ The Lord is and ever will be faithful to His words” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 102–3; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 77).

Elder James E. Talmage wrote: “The special purpose of baptism is to afford admission to the Church of Christ with remission of sins. What need of more words to prove the worth of this divinely appointed ordinance? What gift could be offered the human race greater than a sure means of obtaining forgiveness for transgression? Justice forbids the granting of universal and unconditional pardon for sins committed except through obedience to ordained law; but means simple and effective are provided whereby the penitent sinner may enter into a covenant with God, sealing that covenant with the sign that commands recognition in heaven, that he will submit himself to the laws of God; thus he places himself within the reach of Mercy, under whose protecting influence he may win eternal life” (*Articles of Faith*, 122).

Articles of Faith 1:4. The Laying on of Hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost

The Lord said that one of the duties of the elders of the Church was “to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures” (D&C 20:41). Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “There is no greater gift that a person can earn and enjoy for himself, in mortality, than the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gift is the right to the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead, and which gift is actually enjoyed only on condition of individual righteousness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1953, 76). Elder Richard G. Scott, then a member of the Seventy, stated that “through this gift we can receive pure truth to guide our lives, divine counsel to resolve our problems, and even the power of God to overcome obstacles” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 102; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 70).

Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: “This powerful gift entitles the leaders and all worthy members of the Church to enjoy the gifts and companionship of the Holy Ghost, a member of the Godhead whose function is to inspire, reveal, and teach ‘all things’ (see John 14:26). The result of this endowment is that . . . the leadership and membership of this church have enjoyed, and now enjoy, continuous revelation and inspiration directing them in what is right and good” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 15; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 12). Elder Dallin H. Oaks testified: “That Spirit—the Holy Ghost—is our comforter, our direction finder, our communicator, our interpreter, our witness, and our purifier—our infallible guide and sanctifier for our mortal journey toward eternal life” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 61).

ARTICLES OF FAITH 1:5–13

THE RESTORED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

Articles of Faith 1:5. “Called of God, by Prophecy”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “The right to nominate [members to callings within the Church] rests with the superior officer or officers at whatever the level. But that nomination must be sustained—that is, accepted and confirmed—by the membership of the Church. The procedure is peculiar to the Lord’s church. There is no seeking for office, no jockeying for position, no campaigning to promote one’s virtues. Contrast the Lord’s way with the way of the world. The Lord’s way is quiet; it is a way of peace; it is without fanfare or monetary costs. It is without egotism or vanity or ambition. Under the Lord’s plan, those who have responsibility to select officers are governed by one overriding question: ‘Whom would the

Lord have?’ There is quiet and thoughtful deliberation. And there is much of prayer to receive the confirmation of the Holy Spirit that the choice is correct” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 73; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 53).

Regarding callings made in the Church, Elder Boyd K. Packer said: “Each member of the Church, in prayer, can receive confirmation that the fifth article of faith has been honored” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 45; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 35).

Articles of Faith 1:5. Called of God by the Laying on of Hands

Elder Boyd K. Packer said: “The priesthood cannot be conferred like a diploma. It cannot be handed to you as a certificate. It cannot be delivered to you as a message or sent to you in a letter. It comes only by proper ordination. An authorized holder of the priesthood has to be there. He must place his hands upon your head and ordain you” (*“That All May Be Edified”* [1982], 28).

Articles of Faith 1:5. “By Those Who Are in Authority”

President Joseph F. Smith taught: “It is necessary that every act performed under this authority shall be done at the proper time and place, in the proper way, and after the proper order. The power of directing these labors constitutes the *keys* of the Priesthood. In their fulness, the keys are held by only one person at a time, the prophet and president of the Church. He may delegate any portion of this power to another, in which case that person holds the keys of that particular labor” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 136).

Concerning the power and the authority of the priesthood, Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

“The *power* you receive will depend on what you do with this sacred, unseen gift.

“Your authority comes through your ordination; your power comes through obedience and worthiness” (*“That All May Be Edified,”* 29).

Articles of Faith 1:6. “The Same Organization That Existed in the Primitive Church”

Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

“It is a common belief of all sects professing Christianity that Jesus the Christ established his divine Church here on the earth during his ministry among men. . . .

“... He brought a higher law, a law of love, the gospel of love, and he established his Church. He selected officers. We read of the apostles, the seventies, bishops, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons, and one of the members of that body of leaders later said that these officers should remain in the Church for the purpose of ‘... the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

“‘Till we all come in the unity of the faith.’ (Eph. 4:12–13.) . . .

“... But even during this period there was evidence that an apostasy was beginning. . . .

“... The corrupting of the simple principles of the gospel, the introduction of pagan philosophies, the unwarranted and unauthorized addition of certain man-made ceremonies, changes in organization and in government—all these and more were in evidence. . . .

“There remained then, only human churches, without authority, which had excommunicated each other. Surely the apostasy was now complete.

“As the restored Church, we affirm that with the passing of the apostolic age, the Church drifted into a condition of apostasy, that succession in the priesthood was broken, and that the Church, as an earthly organization operating under divine direction and having authority to officiate in spiritual ordinances, ceased to exist” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 23–26).

Elder David B. Haight said: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims to the world that this church is a restoration of Christ’s church. A restoration was necessary because prophets and Apostles, who were the foundation of the Lord’s original church, were put to death or otherwise taken. The Church today is built on a foundation of prophets and Apostles, with Jesus Christ as its chief cornerstone. It is therefore not a reformation, a revision, a reorganization, or a mere sect. It is the Church of Jesus Christ restored in these latter days” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 7; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 7).

Articles of Faith 1:6. Apostles

President Gordon B. Hinckley explained:

“The word *apostle*, in its origin, literally means ‘one sent forth.’ If that definition were stated to say ‘one sent forth with certain authority and responsibility,’ it would properly describe the calling as it was given at the time our Lord walked the earth, and as it has been given in our time. . . .

“... When [the first Apostles of this dispensation] were selected, they were convened in a meeting held in Kirtland on February 27, 1835. Oliver Cowdery served as clerk in that meeting and wrote this in the minutes:

“President Smith proposed the following question: What importance is there attached to the calling of the Twelve Apostles, different from the other callings or officers of the Church?

“After the question was discussed, . . . President Joseph Smith, Jun. gave the following decision:

“They are the Twelve Apostles, who are called to the office of the Traveling High Council, who are to preside over the churches of the Saints, among the Gentiles, where there is no presidency established; and they are to travel and preach among the Gentiles, until the Lord shall command them to go to the Jews. They are to hold the keys of this ministry, to

unlock the door of the Kingdom of heaven unto all nations, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. This is the power, authority, and virtue in their apostleship' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 74).

"As set forth in the further revelations, they are to work under the direction of the First Presidency and to go forth as 'special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world' (D&C 107:23).

"When they need assistance in this duty they are to call upon the Seventy and then upon others as circumstances dictate" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 73–75; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 50–51).

Articles of Faith 1:6. Prophets

Elder Hugh B. Brown, then an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, gave the following "profile of a prophet":

"The following characteristics should distinguish a man who claims to be a prophet.

"A. He will boldly claim that God had spoken to him.

"B. Any man so claiming would be a dignified man with a dignified message; no table-jumping, no whisperings from the dead, no clairvoyance, but an intelligent statement of truth.

"C. Any man claiming to be a prophet of God would declare his message without any fear, and without making any weak concessions to public opinion.

"D. If he were speaking for God he could not make concessions although what he taught would be new and contrary to the accepted teachings of the day. A prophet bears witness to what he has seen and heard and seldom tries to make a case by argument. His message and not himself is important.

"E. Such a man would speak in the name of the Lord saying, 'Thus said the Lord,' as did Moses, Joshua and others.

"F. Such a man would predict future events in the name of the Lord and they would come to pass, as did Isaiah and Ezekiel.

"G. He would have not only an important message for his time, but often a message for all future time, such as Daniel, Jeremiah, and others had.

"H. He would have courage and faith enough to endure persecution and to give his life, if need be, for the cause he espoused, such as Peter, James, Paul and others did.

"I. Such a man would denounce wickedness fearlessly. He would generally be rejected or persecuted by the people of his time, but later generations and descendants of his persecutors, would build monuments in his honor.

"J. He would be able to do superhuman things, things that no man could do without God's help. The consequence or result of his message and work would be

convincing evidence of his prophetic calling. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'

"K. His teachings would be in strict conformity with scripture and his words and his writings would become scripture" (*The Profile of a Prophet*, 5–6).

Articles of Faith 1:6. Pastors (Bishops)



Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: "Bishops are the overseers, shepherds, pastors, and judges of their flocks" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 352).

Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "All members of the Church can turn to their bishops

when they are in need of help and can feel secure in his love for them and can have confidence in following his counsel. Bishops learn not to judge people against a standard of perfection. A bishop learns that he will rejoice with those over whom he presides in any progress they make" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 36; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 29).

Articles of Faith 1:6. Teachers

Elder David O. McKay, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "No greater responsibility can rest upon any man, than to be a teacher of God's children" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 57).

Articles of Faith 1:6. Evangelists (Patriarchs)

President Thomas S. Monson, a counselor in the First Presidency, explained:

"The same Lord who provided a Liahona to Lehi provides for you and for me today a rare and valuable gift to give direction to our lives, to mark the hazards to our safety, and to chart the way, even safe passage—not to a promised land, but to our heavenly home. The gift to which I refer is known as your patriarchal blessing. Every worthy member of the Church is entitled to receive such a precious and priceless personal treasure.

"'Patriarchal blessings,' wrote the First Presidency in a letter to stake presidents, 'contemplate an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient and, when so moved upon by the Spirit, an inspired and prophetic statement of the life mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give for the accomplishment of such life's mission, it being always made clear that the realization of all promised blessings is conditioned upon faithfulness to the gospel of our Lord, whose servant the patriarch is' (First Presidency letter to stake presidents, 28 June 1958).

“Who is this man, this patriarch, through whom such seership and priesthood power flow? How is he called? The Council of the Twelve Apostles has special responsibility pertaining to the calling of such men. From my own experience I testify that patriarchs are called of God by prophecy. How else could our Heavenly Father reveal those to whom such prophetic powers are to be given? A patriarch holds an ordained office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. The patriarchal office, however, is one of blessing—not of administration. I have never called a man to this sacred office but what I have felt the Lord’s guiding influence in the decision” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 81–82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 65).

Articles of Faith 1:7. Gifts of the Spirit

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“By the grace of God—following devotion, faith, and obedience on man’s part—certain special spiritual blessings called *gifts of the Spirit* are bestowed upon men. Their receipt is always predicated upon obedience to law, but because they are freely available to all the obedient, they are called gifts. . . .

“Their purpose is to enlighten, encourage, and edify the faithful so that they will inherit peace in this life and be guided toward eternal life in the world to come. Their presence is proof of the divinity of the Lord’s work” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 314).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Paul says, ‘To one is given the gift of tongues, to another the gift of prophecy, and to another the gift of healing;’ and again: ‘Do all prophesy? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?’ evidently showing that all did not possess these several gifts; but that one received one gift, and another received another gift—all did not prophesy, all did not speak in tongues, all did not work miracles; but all did receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; sometimes they spake in tongues and prophesied in the Apostles’ days, and sometimes they did not. The same is the case with us also” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 243).

Articles of Faith 1:7. The Gift of Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues “are of two kinds: (1) learning to speak foreign tongues, to understand the words spoken by aliens, and to translate what is written in other languages; and (2) speaking or understanding alien and unknown languages without premeditation. The first kind is by far the more important and more commonly conferred; the second type is more dramatic and may involve languages spoken by others now living or dead languages long unknown among men. Some have spoken, for instance, in the pure Adamic language.

“Both the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues are given primarily for the preaching of the gospel. Missionaries learn the languages of those among whom they labor, and sometimes they are given power, for a short

time, to preach and understand without the labor of study and the struggle for understanding. . . .

“Tongues and their interpretation are the most dangerous and most easily imitated of all the gifts of God. Men can speak and interpret by intellectual power and thus use their abilities to teach lies and foster heresies. Lucifer can cause his disciples to give forth nonsensical gibberish in tongues known to devils” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 374).

Articles of Faith 1:7. Prophecy

Elder James E. Talmage explained: “To prophesy is to receive and declare the word of God, and the statement of His will to the people. The function of prediction, often regarded as the sole essential of prophecy, is but one among many characteristics of this divinely given power. The prophet may have as much concern with the past as with the present or the future; he may use his gift in teaching through the experience of preceding events as in foretelling occurrences. The prophets of God are entrusted with His confidences, being privileged to learn of His will and designs” (*Articles of Faith*, 228).

Articles of Faith 1:7. Healing

Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said; “We believe in the gift of healing. To me, this gift extends to the healing of both the body and the spirit. The Spirit speaks peace to the soul. This spiritual solace comes by invoking spiritual gifts, which are claimed and manifested in many ways. They are rich, and full, and abundant in the Church today. They flow from the proper and humble use of a testimony. They also come through the administering to the sick following an anointing with consecrated oil. Christ is the great Physician, who rose from the dead ‘with healing in his wings’ (2 Nephi 25:13), while the Comforter is the agency of healing” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 6; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 7).

Articles of Faith 1:7. Other Spiritual Gifts

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained:

“In a priesthood blessing a servant of the Lord exercises the priesthood, as moved upon by the Holy Ghost, to call upon the powers of heaven for the benefit of the person being blessed. Such blessings are conferred by holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which has the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the Church (see D&C 107:18, 67).

“There are many kinds of priesthood blessings. As I give various examples, please remember that priesthood blessings are available for all who need them, but they are only given on request.

“. . . Patriarchal blessings are conferred by an ordained patriarch.

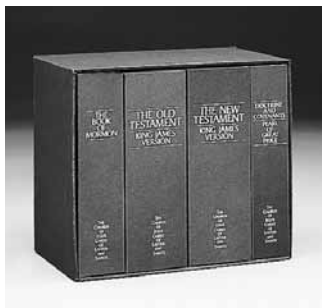
“Persons desiring guidance in an important decision can receive a priesthood blessing. Persons who need extra spiritual power to overcome a personal challenge can receive a blessing. Expectant mothers can be blessed before they give birth. Many LDS families remember a sacred occasion where a worthy

father gave a priesthood blessing to a son or daughter who was about to be married. Priesthood blessings are often requested from fathers before children leave home for other purposes, such as school, service in the military, or a long trip. . . .

"Newly called missionaries often request a father's blessing before they depart. . . .

"Blessings given in circumstances such as I have just described are sometimes called blessings of comfort or counsel. They are usually given by fathers or husbands or other elders in the family. They can be recorded and kept in family records for the personal spiritual guidance of the persons blessed" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 44; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 36).

Articles of Faith 1:8. Scripture



Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the Seventy, wrote: "Thanks be to the scriptures. Thanks be to the Lord for his words that are so imbued with his Spirit. You will face nothing in life for which the basic principles are not found in the scriptures. The key is to understand

them and to share them with your family. Nephi taught the value of the scriptures when he said: 'Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do' (2 Nephi 32:3). It is evident that the Lord does provide the answers in the scriptures if we will but seek them out" (*Raising Up a Family to the Lord* [1993], 47).

Articles of Faith 1:8. The Bible Is "the Word of God As Far As It Is Translated Correctly"

Approximately six hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, the prophet Nephi foresaw the coming forth of the collection of sacred writings that we know as the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:20–25). However, Nephi also prophesied the partial corruption of the biblical text. These changes in the Bible, according to what Nephi saw in vision, would be the result of the work of the "great and abominable church," which would take away "many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord. . . .

"And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men" (1 Nephi 13:26–27; see also vv. 28–29).

Although we know that the Bible has suffered some textual corruption and perhaps other inadvertent additions, deletions, or changes through the centuries, we can still have confidence that the Lord's guiding hand has been upon its preservation and that it has great value for us today. President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

"I love the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. It is a source of great truth. It teaches us about the life and ministry of the Master. From its pages we learn of the hand of God in directing the affairs of His people from the very beginning of the earth's history. It would be difficult to underestimate the impact the Bible has had on the history of the world. Its pages have blessed the lives of generations.

"But as generation followed generation, no additional scripture came forth to the children of men. Without additional revelation to guide them, men began to interpret the Bible differently. Numerous churches and creeds developed, each using the Bible as its authoritative source.

"But this in no way lessens the worth of the Bible. That sacred and holy book has been of inestimable worth to the children of men. In fact, it was a passage from the Bible that inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to a grove of trees near his home and kneel in prayer. What followed was the glorious vision that commenced the restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. That vision also began the process of bringing forth new scripture to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Bible in bearing witness to a wicked world that Jesus is the Christ and that God lives and loves His children and is still intimately involved in their salvation and exaltation" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 100–101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 78).

Articles of Faith 1:8. The Book of Mormon

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "I thank the Almighty for my testimony of the Book of Mormon, this wonderful companion to the Holy Bible. . . . The test of the book is in its reading. I speak as one who has read it again and again and tasted of its beauty and depth and power. Could Joseph Smith, I ask you, the young man reared in rural New York largely without schooling, have dictated in so short a time a volume so complex in its nature and yet so harmonious in its whole, with so large a cast of characters and so extensive in its scope? Could he of his own abilities have created the language, the thought, the moving inspiration that has caused millions over the earth to read and say, 'It is true?'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 71; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 51–52).

Articles of Faith 1:9. Continuing Revelation

Elder David B. Haight said:

"A distinguishing feature of the Church is the claim to continuous revelation from the Lord. . . . Today, the Lord's Church is guided by the same relationship with Deity that existed in previous dispensations.

"This claim is not made lightly. I know there is revelation, as I am a witness to sacred things also experienced by others who administer His work.

"The principle of revelation by the Holy Ghost is a fundamental principle of the Lord's Church. Prophets of God receive revelation by this process. Individual members of the Church may also receive revelation to

confirm truth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 7; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 7–8).

Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stated:

“This process of continuous revelation comes to the Church very frequently. President Wilford Woodruff stated, ‘This power is in the bosom of Almighty God, and he imparts it to his servants the prophets as they stand in need of it day by day to build up Zion’ (in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:33). This is necessary for the Church to fulfill its mission. Without it, we would fail. . . .

“We make no claim of infallibility or perfection in the prophets, seers, and revelators. Yet I humbly state that I have sat in the company of these men, and I believe their greatest desire is to know and do the will of our Heavenly Father. Those who sit in the highest councils of this church and have participated as inspiration has come and decisions have been reached know that this light and truth is beyond human intelligence and reasoning. These deep, divine impressions have come as the dews from heaven and settled upon them individually and collectively. So inspired, we can go forward in complete unity and accord” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1989, 10, 12; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 10–11).

Elder James E. Talmage wrote: “The canon of scripture is still open; many lines, many precepts, are yet to be added; revelation, surpassing in importance and glorious fulness any that has been recorded, is yet to be given to the Church and declared to the world” (*Articles of Faith*, 311).

Articles of Faith 1:10. The Gathering of Israel

Speaking of the house of Israel in ancient times, Elder James E. Talmage wrote:

“The Israelites have been so completely dispersed among the nations as to give to this scattered people a place of importance as a factor in the rise and development of almost every large division of the human family. This work of dispersion was brought about by many stages, and extended through millenniums. . . .

“Though smitten of men, a large part of them gone from a knowledge of the world, Israel are not lost unto their God. He knows whither they have been led or driven; toward them His heart still yearns with paternal love; and surely will He bring them forth, in due time and by appointed means, into a condition of blessing and influence befitting His covenant people. . . . As complete as was the scattering, so shall be the gathering of Israel” (*Articles of Faith*, 316, 328–29).

Speaking of the house of Israel today, President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “Every person who embraces the gospel becomes of the house of Israel. In other words, they become members of the chosen lineage, or Abraham’s children through Isaac and Jacob unto whom the promises were made” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:246; see also Abraham 2:10).

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “Now, the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true church and their coming to a knowledge of the true God. . . . Any person, therefore, who has accepted the restored gospel, and who now seeks to worship the Lord in his own tongue and with the Saints in the nations where he lives, has complied with the law of the gathering of Israel and is heir to all of the blessings promised the Saints in these last days” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 439).

Articles of Faith 1:10. The Restoration of the Ten Tribes

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: “In the coming Millennial day, Israel—which, since the death of Solomon, had been divided into two divisive, warring, rebellious kingdoms: the Kingdom of Israel, with its Ten Tribes, and the Kingdom of Judah, with the residue; two kingdoms long since destroyed and taken captive, with their municipalities scattered in all the earth—Israel shall again become one nation, upon the mountains of Israel, in the Palestinian home of their fathers. . . . They shall once again believe the gospel and receive the blessings of baptism, even as these were theirs in the day when the Risen Lord ministered among them. These blessings and the blessings of the temple will be administered to them” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 641–42).

Articles of Faith 1:10. “Zion . . . Will Be Built upon the American Continent”



President John Taylor declared: “We are here to build up the church of God, the Zion of God, and the kingdom of God, and to be on hand to do whatever God requires—first to purge ourselves from all iniquity, from covetousness and evil of every kind, to forsake sin of every sort, cultivate the Spirit of God, and help to

build up his kingdom; to beautify Zion and have pleasant habitations, and pleasant gardens and orchards, until Zion shall be the most beautiful place there is on the earth. . . . Zion shall yet become the praise and the glory of the whole earth” (*The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham [1964], 221).

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “When Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, he learned that America is the land of Zion which was given to Joseph and his children and that on this land the City Zion, or New Jerusalem, is to be built. He also learned that Jerusalem in Palestine is to be rebuilt and become a holy city. These two cities, one in the land of Zion and one in Palestine, are to become capitals for the kingdom of God during the millennium” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:71).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: “The stakes of Zion that now are must be strengthened and perfected before they can uphold and sustain that Zion which is destined to be. When Zion is fully established, it will be by obedience to the law of the celestial kingdom, which law is operative in the stakes of Zion only in part” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 592).

The Lord revealed that the “center place” of the latter-day city of Zion will be Independence, Missouri, (see D&C 57:1–3). The Lord also revealed that this Zion, which will be built before His Second Coming (see D&C 29:7–8; 49:24–25) will be “the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God;

“And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion. . . .

“ . . . And it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another. . . .

“And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion” (D&C 45:66–67, 69, 71).

Articles of Faith 1:10. “Christ Will Reign Personally upon the Earth”



Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “As the King of the whole earth, [Jesus Christ] shall make a full end of all nations, and they, combining under one head, shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. There will be no law but his law when he comes, and he shall

restore his judges and rulers as at the first” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 642).

Articles of Faith 1:10. “The Earth Will Be Renewed and Receive its Paradisiacal Glory”

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

“The great change which shall come when Christ our Savior begins his Millennial reign, is to be a restoration to the conditions which prevailed before the fall of man. . . .

“This new heaven and earth which will come into existence when our Lord comes to reign, is this same earth with its heavens renewed or restored to its primitive condition and beauty. Everything is to be brought back as nearly as it is possible to its position as it was in the beginning” (*The Restoration of All Things* [1945], 294–95).

Articles of Faith 1:11. “The Privilege of Worshiping Almighty God”

In a 1979 statement, the First Presidency declared:

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recognizes that a vital cornerstone of a free society is the principle of religious liberty. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution forbids any ‘law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.’ Ours has been a society which encourages religious liberty and toleration. . . .

“We, thus, deplore the growing efforts to establish irreligion, such as atheism or secularism, as the official position of the United States of America, thus obscuring and eroding the rich and diverse religious heritage of our nation. . . .

“From its beginning The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has accepted the constitutional principle that government will neither establish a state religion nor prohibit the free exercise of religion. . . .

“But the constitutional principle of neutrality toward religion does not call for our nation to ignore its religious heritage, including the religious motivations of its founders and the powerful religious beliefs of generations of its people and its leaders. . . .

“As the ruling principle of conduct in the lives of many millions of our citizens, religion should have an honorable place in the public life of our nation, and the name of Almighty God should have sacred use in its public expressions. We urge our members and people of good will everywhere to unite to protect and honor the spiritual and religious heritage of our nation and to resist the forces that would transform the public position of the United States from the constitutional position of neutrality to a position of hostility toward religion” (“First Presidency Warns Against ‘Irreligion,’” *Ensign*, May 1979, 108–9).

Articles of Faith 1:11. “Let Them Worship How, Where, or What They May”

Elder Carlos E. Asay, who was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, cautioned: “Do not contend or debate over points of doctrine. The Master warned that ‘the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil.’ (3 Ne. 11:29.) We are inconsistent if we resort to Satanic tactics in attempting to achieve righteous ends. Such inconsistency results only in frustration, loss of the Spirit, and ultimate defeat” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 68).

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“I attended a ‘laboratory of tolerance’ some months ago when I had the privilege of participating in the Parliament of the World’s Religions. There I conversed with good men

and women representing many religious groups. Again I sensed the advantages of ethnic and cultural diversity and reflected once more on the importance of religious freedom and tolerance.

"I marvel at the inspiration of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he penned the eleventh article of faith. . . .

"That noble expression of religious tolerance is particularly poignant in light of the Prophet's personal persecution. On one occasion he wrote, 'I am at this time persecuted the worst of any man on the earth, as well as this people, . . . and all our sacred rights are trampled under the feet of the mob.'

"Joseph Smith endured incessant persecution and finally heartless martyrdom—at the hands of the intolerant. His brutal fate stands as a stark reminder that we must never be guilty of *any* sin sown by the seed of intolerance. . . .

". . . Not long ago the First Presidency and the Twelve approved a public statement from which I quote:

"It is morally wrong for any person or group to deny anyone his or her inalienable dignity on the tragic and abhorrent theory of racial or cultural superiority.

"We call upon all people everywhere to recommit themselves to the time-honored ideals of tolerance and mutual respect. We sincerely believe that as we acknowledge one another with consideration and compassion we will discover that we can all peacefully coexist despite our deepest differences" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 90, 93; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 69, 71).

Articles of Faith 1:12. Being Subject to Governmental Authority

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "We urge all Latter-day Saints to be good neighbors and to be good citizens, loyal to their flag and country" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 105; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 78).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: "The Church maintains a policy of strict political neutrality, favoring no party or candidate, but every member should take an active part in the political process. We should study the issues and the candidates to be sure our votes are based on knowledge rather than hearsay. We need to pray for our public officials and ask the Lord to help them in making momentous decisions that affect us. Our beliefs regarding earthly governments and laws are summarized in section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants and the twelfth article of faith. We should support public policy that coincides with these moral beliefs" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 122; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 87–88).

Articles of Faith 1:12. "Obeying, Honoring, and Sustaining the Law"

Elder L. Tom Perry said: "All members of the Church should be committed to obeying and honoring the laws of the land in which they live. We should be exemplary in our

obedience to the governments that govern us. The Church, to be of service to the nations of the world, must be a wholesome influence in the lives of individuals who embrace it, in temporal as well as spiritual affairs" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 86; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 71).

Elder James E. Talmage explained: "It is the duty of the saints to submit themselves to the laws of their country. Nevertheless, they should use every proper method, as citizens or subjects of their several governments, to secure for themselves and for all men the boon of freedom in religious service. It is not required of them to suffer without protest imposition by lawless persecutors, or through the operation of unjust laws; but their protests should be offered in legal and proper order" (*Articles of Faith*, 423).

Articles of Faith 1:13. Characteristics of True Christianity

Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

"Honesty, truth, virtue, and kindness are hallmarks of true Christianity. If we lack them, we can hardly say that we follow Christ. . . .

". . . Professions of piety, without the works of piety, are sheer hypocrisy and are dead—even 'as the body without the spirit is dead.' (James 2:26.)" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 19; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 15).

Elder James E. Talmage wrote: "Religion without morality, professions of godliness without charity, church-membership without adequate responsibility as to individual conduct in daily life, are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. . . . Honesty of purpose, integrity of soul, individual purity, freedom of conscience, willingness to do good to all men even enemies, pure benevolence—these are some of the fruits by which the religion of Christ may be known, far exceeding in importance and value the promulgation of dogmas and the enunciation of theories" (*Articles of Faith*, 429).

Articles of Faith 1:13. Being Honest

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

"It is a sin to lie. It is a tragedy to be the victim of lies. Being trapped in the snares of dishonesty and misrepresentation does not happen instantaneously. One little lie or dishonest act leads to another until the perpetrator is caught in the web of deceit. . . . Those who become victims of this entrapment often struggle through life bearing their heavy burden because they are unwilling to acknowledge their problem and make the effort to change. Many are unwilling to pay the price to be free from the chains of lies. Some individuals may be very aware of the value of honesty and yet be unable to come up with the down payment. . . .

"Honesty is basic. It is true that lying is an accomplice to every other form of vice. Or, as someone has said, 'Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all.'

(O. W. Holmes, in *The Home Book of Quotations*, p. 1111.)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 11, 13; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 9–11).

Articles of Faith 1:13. Being True

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, then a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, said:

“The practice of truth, the acid test of our commitment, is known by many terms—for example, *honesty*, *integrity*, *uprightness*, and *probity*. I especially like *probity*. It is taken from the Latin *probus*, meaning good, and *probare*—to prove, signifying tried and confirmed integrity. A person who has mastered probity by discipline, until it has become part of his very nature, is like a moral compass which automatically points ‘true north’ under all circumstances. This individual strives for instinctive honesty, acting on impulse toward the right, without having to weigh the merits of advantage or disadvantage. . . .

“ . . . Wouldn’t it be a great idea if we had a Mormon credit card? A card-carrying Mormon could be depended on to keep his word, to be honest with his employers, and to pay his bills as agreed. Then our professionals, tradesmen, and business people would perform without compromising their ethics for profit, each putting his signature on his work with pride; all of us striving for excellence in every way. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to be a ‘peculiar’ people known for our honesty and the quality of our services? The Mormon standard of integrity should be the highest standard in all the world, for we are the covenant people of God. The Lord makes no special concessions for culture, race, or nationality; He expects all His Saints to live according to gospel standards” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 84–85; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 62–63)

Articles of Faith 1:13. Being Chaste

President Spencer W. Kimball declared: “So many of the difficulties which beset the family today stem from the breaking of the seventh commandment (see Ex. 20:14). Total chastity before marriage and total fidelity after are still the standard from which there can be no deviation without sin, misery, and unhappiness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 3–4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4).

Elder Richard G. Scott taught that intimate, physical acts outside of marriage “cause serious emotional and spiritual harm. Even though participants do not realize that is happening now, they will later.

“Sexual immorality creates a barrier to the influence of the Holy Spirit with all its uplifting, enlightening, and empowering capabilities. It causes powerful physical and emotional stimulation. In time, that creates an unquenchable appetite that drives the offender to ever more serious sin. It engenders selfishness and can produce aggressive acts such as brutality, abortion, sexual abuse, and violent crime. Such stimulation can lead to acts of homosexuality, and they are evil and absolutely wrong.

“Sexual transgression would defile the priesthood you now hold, sap your spiritual strength, undermine your faith in Jesus Christ, and frustrate your ability to serve Him. . . .

“ . . . Any sexual intimacy outside of the bonds of marriage—I mean any intentional contact with the sacred, private parts of another’s body, with or without clothing—is a sin and is forbidden by God. It is also a transgression to intentionally stimulate these emotions within your own body.

“Satan tempts one to believe that there are allowable levels of physical contact between consenting individuals who seek the powerful stimulation of emotions they produce, and if kept within bounds, no harm will result. As a witness of Jesus Christ, I testify that is absolutely false. Satan particularly seeks to tempt one who has lived a pure, clean life to experiment through magazines, videocassettes, or movies with powerful images of a woman’s body. He wants to stimulate appetite to cause experimentation that quickly results in intimacies and defilement. Powerful habits are formed which are difficult to break. Mental and emotional scars result” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 50–51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 38).

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said: “Those who would have us forfeit virtue and chastity to prove our love in sexual participation out of wedlock are neither friends nor eternally family-oriented” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 30; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 23).

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “In the context of lawful marriage, the intimacy of sexual relations is right and divinely approved. There is nothing unholy or degrading about sexuality in itself, for by that means men and women join in a process of creation and in an expression of love” (*President Kimball Speaks Out* [1981], 311).

Articles of Faith 1:13. Being Benevolent

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Seventy, taught: “The enduring strength of the kingdom is not to be found in the number of its members, the rate of its growth, or the beauty of its buildings. In God’s kingdom, power is not equated with body count nor with outward routine compliance with prescribed performances. It is found in those quiet uncharted acts of love, obedience, and Christian service which may never come to the attention of official leadership, but which emulate the ministry of the Lord himself” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 38; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 27).

Elder Antoine R. Ivins, who was a member of the Seventy, said: “I once heard a young man as he addressed a seventies’ convention in Barratt Hall say, ‘There is no measure to the good that a man may do if he does not worry as to who gets the credit for it’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1946, 42).

Articles of Faith 1:13. Being Virtuous

Speaking in the priesthood session of general conference, President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“Virtuous behavior implies that he has pure thoughts and clean actions. He will not lust in his heart, for to do so is to ‘deny the faith’ and to lose the Spirit (D&C 42:23). . . .

“Virtue is akin to holiness, an attribute of godliness. A priesthood holder should actively seek for that which is virtuous and lovely and not that which is debasing or sordid. Virtue will garnish his thoughts unceasingly (see D&C 121:45). How can any man indulge himself in the evils of pornography, profanity, or vulgarity and consider himself totally virtuous?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 60; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 46).

Articles of Faith 1:13. “Doing Good to All Men”



Elder David O. McKay, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “There is no one great thing that we can do to obtain eternal life, and it seems to me that the great lesson to be learned in the world today is to apply in the little acts and duties of life the glorious principles of the Gospel. . . . The great sun is

a mighty force in the universe, but we receive the blessings of his rays because they come to us as little beams, which, taken in the aggregate, fill the whole world with sunlight. The dark night is made pleasant by the glimmer of what seem to be little stars; and so the true Christian life is made up of little Christ-like acts performed this hour, this minute, in the home, in the quorum, in the organization, in the town, wherever our life and acts may be cast” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1914, 87–88).

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom” (“Small Acts of Service,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 5).

Articles of Faith 1:13. Paul’s Admonition to Believe, Hope, and Endure

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, then a member of the Seventy, said: “Only the pure love of Christ will see us through. It is Christ’s love which suffereth long, and is kind. It is Christ’s love which is not puffed up nor easily provoked. Only his pure love enables him—and us—to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things (see Moroni 7:45)” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1989, 32–33; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 26).

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said: “Shun discouragement. One of Satan’s most powerful tools is discouragement. Whisperings

of ‘you can’t do it,’ ‘you’re no good,’ ‘it’s too late,’ ‘what’s the use?’ or ‘things are hopeless’ are tools of destruction. Satan would like you to believe that because you’ve made one mistake it’s all over. He wants you to quit trying. It is important that discouragement is cast out of the lives of those who are waiting. This may take a decided amount of work and energy, but it can be accomplished” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 73; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 63).

Articles of Faith 1:13. Paul’s Admonition to Seek after Things That Are Virtuous, Lovely, of Good Report, or Praiseworthy

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained:

“The word *seek* means to go in search of, try to discover, try to acquire. It requires an active, assertive approach to life. For example, Abraham ‘sought for the blessings of the fathers . . . and to be a greater follower of righteousness’ (Abraham 1:2). It is the opposite of passively waiting for something good to come to us with no effort on our part.

“We can fill our lives with good, leaving no room for anything else. We have so much good from which to choose that we need never partake of evil. Elder Richard L. Evans declared: ‘There is evil in the world. There is also good. It is for us to learn and choose between the two; to increase in self-discipline, in competence, in kindness; to keep going—putting one foot in front of the other—one day, one hour, one moment, one task at a time’ (*Thoughts for One Hundred Days*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1966–72], 4:199).

“If we seek things that are virtuous and lovely, we surely will find them” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 120; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 86).

Elder Russell M. Nelson taught: “To those with an interest in the fulness of the restored gospel—regardless of nationality or religious background—we say as did Elder Bruce R. McConkie: ‘Keep all the truth and all the good that you have. Do not abandon any sound or proper principle. Do not forsake any standard of the past which is good, righteous, and true. Every truth found in every church in all the world we believe. But we also say this to all men—Come and take the added light and truth that God has restored in our day. The more truth we have, the greater is our joy here and now; the more truth we receive, the greater is our reward in eternity. This is our invitation to men [and women] of good will everywhere’ [in Conference Report, Tahiti Area Conference 1976, 31]” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 92; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 70).

A HARMONY OF THE CREATION ACCOUNTS

The First Day of Creation

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Moses 2

1 And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven, and this earth; write the words which I speak. I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep; and my Spirit moved upon the face of the water; for I am God.

3 And I, God, said: Let there be light; and there was light.

4 And I, God, saw the light; and that light was good. And I, God, divided the light from the darkness.

5 And I, God, called the light Day; and the darkness, I called Night; and this I did by the word of my power, and it was done as I spake; and the evening and the morning were the first day.

Abraham 4

1 And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth.

2 And the earth, after it was formed, was empty and desolate, because they had not formed anything but the earth; and darkness reigned upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of the Gods was brooding upon the face of the waters.

3 And they (the Gods) said: Let there be light; and there was light.

4 And they (the Gods) comprehended the light, for it was bright; and they divided the light, or caused it to be divided, from the darkness.

5 And the Gods called the light Day, and the darkness they called Night. And it came to pass that from the evening until morning they called night; and from the morning until the evening they called day; and this was the first, or the beginning, of that which they called day and night.

The Second Day of Creation

Genesis 1

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

Moses 2

6 And again, I, God, said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and it was so, even as I spake; and I said: Let it divide the waters from the waters; and it was done;

Abraham 4

6 And the Gods also said: Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and it shall divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

7 And I, God, made the firmament and divided the waters, yea, the great waters under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so even as I spake.

7 And the Gods ordered the expanse, so that it divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so, even as they ordered.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

8 And I, God, called the firmament Heaven; and the evening and the morning were the second day.

8 And the Gods called the expanse, Heaven. And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day; and this was the second time that they called night and day.

The Third Day of Creation

Genesis 1

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

Moses 2

9 And I, God, said: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and it was so; and I, God, said: Let there be dry land; and it was so.

Abraham 4

9 And the Gods ordered, saying: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the earth come up dry; and it was so as they ordered;

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

10 And I, God, called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, called I the Sea; and I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good.

10 And the Gods pronounced the dry land, Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, pronounced they, Great Waters; and the Gods saw that they were obeyed.

<p>11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.</p>	<p>11 And I, God, said: Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, the fruit tree yielding fruit, after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself upon the earth, and it was so even as I spake.</p>	<p>11 And the Gods said: Let us prepare the earth to bring forth grass; the herb yielding seed; the fruit tree yielding fruit, after his kind, whose seed in itself yieldeth its own likeness upon the earth; and it was so, even as they ordered.</p>
<p>12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.</p>	<p>12 And the earth brought forth grass, every herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself, after his kind; and I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good;</p>	<p>12 And the Gods organized the earth to bring forth grass from its own seed, and the herb to bring forth herb from its own seed, yielding seed after his kind; and the earth to bring forth the tree from its own seed, yielding fruit, whose seed could only bring forth the same in itself, after his kind; and the Gods saw that they were obeyed.</p>
<p>13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.</p>	<p>13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.</p>	<p>13 And it came to pass that they numbered the days; from the evening until the morning they called night; and it came to pass, from the morning until the evening they called day; and it was the third time.</p>
<p>The Fourth Day of Creation</p>		
<p>Genesis 1</p> <p>14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:</p>	<p>Moses 2</p> <p>14 And I, God, said: Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years;</p>	<p>Abraham 4</p> <p>14 And the Gods organized the lights in the expanse of the heaven, and caused them to divide the day from the night; and organized them to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years;</p>
<p>15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.</p>	<p>15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so.</p>	<p>15 And organized them to be for lights in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so.</p>

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.	16 And I, God, made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the greater light was the sun, and the lesser light was the moon; and the stars also were made even according to my word.	16 And the Gods organized the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; with the lesser light they set the stars also;
17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,	17 And I, God, set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,	17 And the Gods set them in the expanse of the heavens, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to cause to divide the light from the darkness.
18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.	18 And the sun to rule over the day, and the moon to rule over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good;	18 And the Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed.
19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.	19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.	19 And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that it was night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that it was day; and it was the fourth time.

The Fifth Day of Creation

<p>Genesis 1</p> <p>20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.</p>	<p>Moses 2</p> <p>20 And I, God, said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl which may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.</p>	<p>Abraham 4</p> <p>20 And the Gods said: Let us prepare the waters to bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that have life; and the fowl, that they may fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven.</p>
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<p>21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.</p>	<p>21 And I, God, created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind; and I, God, saw that all things which I had created were good.</p>	<p>21 And the Gods prepared the waters that they might bring forth great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters were to bring forth abundantly after their kind; and every winged fowl after their kind. And the Gods saw that they would be obeyed, and that their plan was good.</p>
<p>22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.</p>	<p>22 And I, God, blessed them, saying: Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the sea; and let fowl multiply in the earth;</p>	<p>22 And the Gods said: We will bless them, and cause them to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas or great waters; and cause the fowl to multiply in the earth.</p>
<p>23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.</p>	<p>23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.</p>	<p>23 And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day; and it was the fifth time.</p>
<p>The Sixth Day of Creation</p>		
<p>Genesis 1</p> <p>24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.</p>	<p>Moses 2</p> <p>24 And I, God, said: Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind, and it was so;</p>	<p>Abraham 4</p> <p>24 And the Gods prepared the earth to bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind; and it was so, as they had said.</p>
<p>25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.</p>	<p>25 And I, God, made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything which creepeth upon the earth after his kind; and I, God, saw that all these things were good.</p>	<p>25 And the Gods organized the earth to bring forth the beasts after their kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind; and the Gods saw they would obey.</p>

<p>26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.</p>	<p>26 And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so. And I, God, said: Let them have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.</p>	<p>26 And the Gods took counsel among themselves and said: Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness; and we will give them dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.</p>
<p>27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.</p>	<p>27 And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them.</p>	<p>27 So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.</p>
<p>28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.</p>	<p>28 And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.</p>	<p>28 And the Gods said: We will bless them. And the Gods said: We will cause them to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.</p>
<p>29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.</p>	<p>29 And I, God, said unto man: Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which shall be the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.</p>	<p>29 And the Gods said: Behold, we will give them every herb bearing seed that shall come upon the face of all the earth, and every tree which shall have fruit upon it; yea, the fruit of the tree yielding seed to them we will give it; it shall be for their meat.</p>
<p>30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.</p>	<p>30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein I grant life, there shall be given every clean herb for meat; and it was so, even as I spake.</p>	<p>30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, behold, we will give them life, and also we will give to them every green herb for meat, and all these things shall be thus organized.</p>

<p>31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.</p>	<p>31 And I, God, saw everything that I had made, and, behold, all things which I had made were very good; and the evening and the morning were the sixth day.</p>	<p>31 And the Gods said: We will do everything that we have said, and organize them; and behold, they shall be very obedient. And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day; and they numbered the sixth time.</p>
The Seventh Day of Creation		
<p>Genesis 2</p> <p>1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.</p>	<p>Moses 3</p> <p>1 Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.</p>	<p>Abraham 5</p> <p>1 And thus we will finish the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them.</p>
<p>2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.</p>	<p>2 And on the seventh day I, God, ended my work, and all things which I had made; and I rested on the seventh day from all my work, and all things which I had made were finished, and I, God, saw that they were good;</p>	<p>2 And the Gods said among themselves: On the seventh time we will end our work, which we have counseled; and we will rest on the seventh time from all our work which we have counseled.</p>
<p>3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.</p>	<p>3 And I, God, blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it I had rested from all my work which I, God, had created and made.</p>	<p>3 And the Gods concluded upon the seventh time, because that on the seventh time they would rest from all their works which they (the Gods) counseled among themselves to form; and sanctified it. And thus were their decisions at the time that they counseled among themselves to form the heavens and the earth.</p>
<p>4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,</p>	<p>4 And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth,</p>	<p>4 And the Gods came down and formed these the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were formed in the day that the Gods formed the earth and the heavens,</p>

<p>5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.</p>	<p>5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air;</p>	<p>5 According to all that which they had said concerning every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Gods had not caused it to rain upon the earth when they counseled to do them, and had not formed a man to till the ground.</p>
<p>6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.</p>	<p>6 But I, the Lord God, spake, and there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.</p>	<p>6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.</p>
<p>7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.</p>	<p>7 And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless, all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word.</p>	<p>7 And the Gods formed man from the dust of the ground, and took his spirit (that is, the man's spirit), and put it into him; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.</p>
<p>8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.</p>	<p>8 And I, the Lord God, planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there I put the man whom I had formed.</p>	<p>8 And the Gods planted a garden, eastward in Eden, and there they put the man, whose spirit they had put into the body which they had formed.</p>
<p>9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.</p>	<p>9 And out of the ground made I, the Lord God, to grow every tree, naturally, that is pleasant to the sight of man; and man could behold it. And it became also a living soul. For it was spiritual in the day that I created it; for it remaineth in the sphere in which I, God, created it, yea, even all things which I prepared for the use of man; and man saw that it was good for food. And I, the Lord God, planted the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and also the tree of knowledge of good and evil.</p>	<p>9 And out of the ground made the Gods to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life, also, in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.</p>

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.	10 And I, the Lord God, caused a river to go out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.	10 There was a river running out of Eden, to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads.
11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;	11 And I, the Lord God, called the name of the first Pison, and it compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where I, the Lord God, created much gold;	
12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.	12 And the gold of that land was good, and there was bdellium and the onyx stone.	
13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.	13 And the name of the second river was called Gihon; the same that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.	
14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.	14 And the name of the third river was Hiddekel; that which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river was the Euphrates.	
15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.	15 And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.	11 And the Gods took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.
16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:	16 And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,	12 And the Gods commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,
17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.	17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.	13 But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the time that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Now I, Abraham, saw that it was after the Lord's time, which was after the time of Kolob; for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning.

18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.	18 And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it was not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make an help meet for him.	14 And the Gods said: Let us make an help meet for the man, for it is not good that the man should be alone, therefore we will form an help meet for him.
[see vv. 21–25]	[see vv. 21–25]	15 And the Gods caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and he slept, and they took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof;
		16 And of the rib which the Gods had taken from man, formed they a woman, and brought her unto the man.
		17 And Adam said: This was bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; now she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man;
		18 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.
		19 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.
19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.	19 And out of the ground I, the Lord God, formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and commanded that they should come unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and they were also living souls; for I, God, breathed into them the breath of life, and commanded that whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof.	20 And out of the ground the Gods formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof.
20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.	20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but as for Adam, there was not found an help meet for him.	21 And Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, to every beast of the field; and for Adam, there was found an help meet for him.

21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;	21 And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and he slept, and I took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof;	[see vv. 15–19]
22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.	22 And the rib which I, the Lord God, had taken from man, made I a woman, and brought her unto the man.	
23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.	23 And Adam said: This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.	
24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.	24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.	
25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.	25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.	

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Promises	Explanatory Notes
Land	
<p>“A strange land . . . I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession” (Abraham 2:6; see also Genesis 12:7; 13:14–15; JST, Genesis 15:9–12; Genesis 15:18; 17:8).</p>	<p>This blessing specifically refers to the land “from the river of Egypt [not the Nile, but a river that separates Egypt from Israel] unto . . . the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18), which actually goes beyond the boundaries of what we usually call Canaan (or Israel, or Palestine). Since the time of Abraham, some or all of that extended area has been inhabited by Abraham’s posterity through Ishmael, Isaac, and the sons of Keturah. When the Lord renewed the covenant with Abraham’s grandson Jacob, he indicated that the children of Israel would have the land of Canaan as an inheritance but would also spread “to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south” (Genesis 28:14).</p> <p>For example, the posterity of Jacob’s (Israel’s) son Joseph were promised a special land beyond Canaan where they would “push the people together to the ends of the earth” (Deuteronomy 33:17; see vv. 13–17; see also Genesis 49:22–26). This prophecy refers to the Western Hemisphere, where the people of the Book of Mormon—who were descendants of Joseph—settled and where the gospel was restored in the latter days to those of the tribe of Ephraim who were mixed among the Gentiles. (Ephraim was Joseph’s birthright son; Brigham Young said that “Joseph Smith was a pure Ephraimite” [<i>Discourses of Brigham Young</i>, 322].) Furthermore, Joseph Smith taught that “the whole of America is Zion itself from north to south” (<i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i>, 362), where it is prophesied that others of the lost tribes gather to receive their blessings of the Abrahamic covenant “by the hands of . . . the children of Ephraim” (D&C 133:32; see vv. 26–34). The Lord even designated a place in North America for the city of Zion (see D&C 57:1–3), the place of the New Jerusalem (see D&C 84:2–5).</p> <p>All of the tribes, or families, of Israel will yet receive inheritances in the land of Canaan, but the land has been noted especially as a gathering place for the tribe of Judah (see D&C 109:62–64).</p> <p>Ultimately, this promise of an “everlasting” inheritance of land is fulfilled when the righteous inherit the earth in its glorified state (see JST, Genesis 15:9–12; D&C 45:57–59; 63:20; 88:17–20).</p>

Priesthood and Gospel Blessings

1. “I will take thee, to put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood” (Abraham 1:18).	1. As he desired (see Abraham 1:2–4), Abraham received the priesthood, which is the authority to act in the name of God. He received the priesthood from Melchizedek (see D&C 84:14).
2. “Through thy ministry my name shall be known in the earth forever” (Abraham 1:19; see also Abraham 2:9).	2. In addition to preaching the gospel as the Lord’s representatives, this blessing is fulfilled when priesthood bearers administer ordinances, such as baptism, the sacrament, or temple ordinances, that make known the name of the Lord by requiring individuals to take upon them that name (see D&C 20:37, 77; 109:22, 26).
3. “I will . . . make thy name great among all nations” (Abraham 2:9; see also Genesis 12:2).	3. We know that there is “no other name given . . . whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ” (Mosiah 3:17). Because Abraham’s posterity have Christ’s name put upon them and the people of the world know his name because of them (see Abraham 1:18–19), the name of Abraham becomes “great,” or very important and prominent, to all in the whole world who seek eternal life. In other words, Abraham’s name is great because he presides over his posterity who administer the blessings of eternal life to all the world. These blessings are called the “dispensation of the gospel of Abraham” (D&C 110:12) and were restored by Elias on 3 April 1836 in the Kirtland temple. Because these keys were restored, all mankind has access to the blessings of exaltation for themselves and their posterity.
4. “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee” (Abraham 2:11; see also Genesis 12:3).	4. This is a promised blessing for those who bear the priesthood and are righteously representing the Savior.
5. “This right [of the priesthood] shall continue in thee, and in thy seed” (Abraham 2:11).	5. See “Posterity,” number 5, in this chart.

Posterity

1. “I will make of thee a great nation” (Abraham 2:9).	1. In this case, <i>great</i> seems to mean “mighty” or “prominent” and refers to the quality of life the Lord gives to his people (or “nation”) by allowing them to have the gospel and live its principles. The gospel makes all people “great” who live it. Abraham’s seed are also prominent because they bear the authority to perform saving ordinances
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	<p>and bind families together for eternity (see “Priesthood and Gospel Blessings,” no. 3; “Posterity,” no. 5; and “Salvation and Eternal Life,” no. 1, in this chart).</p>
<p>2. “Thou shalt be a father of many nations” (Genesis 17:4; see also Genesis 17:5–6, 16).</p>	<p>2. <i>Abraham</i> means “father of a multitude” or “father of nations.” Abraham has become the “father of nations” through the posterity of Isaac (Israel), Ishmael (see Genesis 17:20), and the sons of Keturah (see Genesis 25:1–4) and through the house of Israel being scattered and becoming numerous in all the nations of the earth (see Amos 9:9; 1 Nephi 22:3–5).</p>
<p>3. “I will multiply thee, and thy seed after thee, . . . and if thou canst count the number of sands, so shall be the number of thy seeds” (Abraham 3:14).</p>	<p>3. This promise refers to Abraham’s mortal posterity (see no. 2 above) and to the opportunity through eternal or celestial marriage to continue to have posterity throughout eternity (see D&C 132:30; see also “Salvation and Eternal Life,” no. 2, in this chart).</p>
<p>4. “Kings shall come out of thee” (Genesis 17:6; see also Genesis 17:16).</p>	<p>4. The kings of Israel and Judah were all descendants of Abraham, as were many other non-Biblical kings who descended from Ishmael, the sons of Keturah, and remnants of the lost tribes of Israel living in the lands of the Gentiles. The most important descendant of Abraham was the King of kings, Jesus Christ, who came through the royal lineage of Judah (see Matthew 1:1). In addition, those who receive the Abrahamic covenant and are faithful to it are promised they will become kings and priests (or queens and priestesses) unto God (see Revelation 1:6; D&C 76:56).</p>
<p>5. “Thy seed . . . shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; . . . “ . . . This right [of the priesthood] shall continue in thee, and in thy seed” (Abraham 2:9, 11; see also Genesis 17:7, 19; Abraham 1:4).</p>	<p>5. Bearing the priesthood is both a blessing and a responsibility. Abraham’s descendants are “lawful heirs” of the priesthood and its blessings (see D&C 86:8–9), meaning they have a right to it. They must, however, prove worthy of the blessings (see Alma 13:4). Those who were foreordained to the priesthood (see Alma 13:3; Abraham 3:23) are sent to the earth in times and places where they can fulfill their foreordained callings and administer the ordinances of salvation to all nations. This blessing not only refers to the right to <i>hold the priesthood</i>, but also the right to <i>receive saving priesthood ordinances</i>, so it applies to both male and female descendants of Abraham.</p>

6. "As many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father" (Abraham 2:10; see also Isaiah 51:1–2).

6. Before Abraham, the saving ordinances of the gospel were administered through fathers, in a patriarchal order (see D&C 107:40–56). Abraham's father apostatized and did not have authority to administer these ordinances to Abraham as Abraham desired (see Abraham 1:2–5). Because of Abraham's great desire, faith, and obedience, he received the blessings of the priesthood from those who had authority to give them as well as the right to administer them to his posterity. This opened a new dispensation of the gospel—with Abraham set up as the "father"—wherein all who desired these same blessings for themselves and their posterity could receive them in the way Abraham did. Because Abraham received the promise that his posterity would have the right to the priesthood from his day until the end of the world, all who desire the blessings of the saving priesthood ordinances receive them at the hand of Abraham and his descendants. In this way, regardless of whether the blood of Abraham literally flows in their veins, all who accept the gospel become the children of Abraham. We should note that the Prophet Joseph Smith said that "the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150), so all who are baptized and receive the Holy Ghost are actually sons and daughters of Abraham.

Furthermore, Christ was a descendant of Abraham and is the one who made possible the fulfillment of all the blessings promised to Abraham (see JST, Genesis 15:9–12). When individuals receive the gospel and are born again, they become sons and daughters of Christ (see Mosiah 5:7) and, consequently, his heirs. Christ was the first to fully obtain all of the blessings promised to Abraham. Only by first becoming sons and daughters of Christ may we qualify as heirs of all that the Father has (see D&C 84:38), which is what was promised to Abraham and his seed (see Galatians 3:27–29; see also "Salvation and Eternal Life," no. 3, in this chart). Taking upon oneself the name of Christ is the most important way to be a son or daughter of Abraham. If an individual is of the literal posterity of Abraham but never accepts the gospel of Christ, he or she becomes disinherited with regards to the covenant and its blessings (see 2 Nephi 30:2). This is why the Book of Mormon emphasizes that the children of Abraham must not only come to know who they are as a people, but they must be gathered to Christ and restored to their covenant relationship with him (see 2 Nephi 30:4–5).

<p>7. “He [Abraham] will command his children . . . and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment” (Genesis 18:19).</p>	<p>7. From the beginning of his record, Abraham expressed a desire to not only receive the blessings of the gospel in this life and eternal life in the world to come but to administer these blessings to his posterity (see Abraham 1:2–4). Those who claim Abraham as their father will “do the works of Abraham” (John 8:39), which include bringing up children “in light and truth” (D&C 93:40).</p>
<p>Salvation and Eternal Life</p>	
<p>1. “In thy seed after thee . . . shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Abraham 2:11; see also Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).</p>	<p>1. The families of the earth are blessed through Abraham because his posterity gives them the blessings of the gospel, which bring “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23)</p> <p>Families are even more specifically blessed through the Abrahamic covenant because the crowning blessing of this covenant is eternal marriage (see “Posterity,” no. 3, in this chart). Through this sacred ordinance, parents are bound to their posterity for eternity. In addition, because of keys restored by the prophet Elijah (see D&C 110:13–16), the posterity of Abraham may also perform ordinances in temples for their deceased ancestors and others. Through these priesthood ordinances performed by the seed of Abraham, which include celestial marriage for the living and the dead, families can be eternally bound together. Those who do not accept these ordinances and covenants “remain separately and singly [meaning without marriage and family], without exaltation . . . to all eternity” (D&C 132:17).</p> <p>Ultimately, the greatest way in which families of the earth are blessed through Abraham’s seed is through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, a son of Abraham in the flesh. Blessings of the Atonement come to <i>all</i> the families of the earth (see 1 Corinthians 15:21–22; Mormon 9:12–23).</p>
<p>2. “I will bless thee above measure . . .</p> <p>“ . . . And in thy seed after thee . . . shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:9, 11; see also Genesis 12:2).</p>	<p>2. Through Jesus Christ it is possible to have all of the blessings of eternal life. Abraham knew of Christ, saw the work He performed, and believed in Him. This knowledge brought rest to his soul and faith to do all things required in mortality (see JST, Genesis 15:9–12; Hebrews 11:8–19).</p> <p>The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that the crowning blessing Abraham received was that of celestial marriage, which qualified him for exaltation and enabled him to become like God (see D&C 131:1–4; 132:29–32, 37). Elder Bruce R.</p>

	<p>McConkie wrote that when we are “married in the temple for time and for all eternity, each worthy member of the Church enters personally into the same covenant the Lord made with Abraham” (<i>A New Witness for the Articles of Faith</i>, 508).</p>
<p>3. “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1).</p>	<p>3. The words <i>shield</i> and <i>reward</i> describe the blessings that come from our covenants with God in this life and for eternity. Through covenants the Lord shields, or protects, us from the power of the adversary that would prevent us from obtaining eternal life. Also through covenants the Lord gives us promises concerning our eternal reward and the power to obtain it. This reward “is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7). If we recognize that the Lord has power to fulfill the promises He makes like He did with Abraham (see Genesis 15), we will put Him and His covenants above all other things in our lives and receive these promised blessings.</p>
<p>4. “Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” (Genesis 22:17).</p>	<p>4. Because of the power of the gospel, priesthood ordinances, and the Atonement of Christ, all of Abraham’s seed (those who accept all of the ordinances and covenants of the Abrahamic covenant) “overcome all things,” because God subdues “all [their] enemies under his feet,” and they may “dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever” (D&C 76:60–62). The enemies God subdues include the devil, “who is an enemy to all righteousness” (Alma 34:23; see also Moroni 7:12).</p>