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We Latter-day Saints believe the Bible to be the word of God. It is a faithful record of the Lord's dealing with men down through the ages. It shows that the Lord desires that mankind should worship him intelligently, not as some incomprehensible being, but as their loving Father in heaven.

To accomplish this, God revealed himself to men from time to time so that they could see him and hear him and know him. He revealed himself personally, actually appearing to his prophets, and he talked with them face to face, even as a man "speaketh to his friend." (See Ex. 33:11.)

These appearances of God to man, and by this I mean personal visitations, for that is what the Bible describes, came periodically through the generations of the past. The Lord was not content to give one and only one mighty revelation of himself to serve as a foundation for faith through all time to come. He knew that men are changeable, often drifting into by- and forbidden paths, and that a constant reminder is necessary to keep them in the right way.

The Bible shows how true that is, for even though the Lord did appear time and again anciently, the people still drifted toward other religions, at times going into what seemed to be complete apostasy from the truth, even setting up false gods of their own making.

But the Lord loved his children and desired to save them. He knew they could not be saved in ignorance nor in the false religions of their contemporaries. Only the truth could save. So to bring them back into line as they strayed away, he repeatedly gave new revelations of himself, restoring the true knowledge of the nature of God and pointing to the right way of salvation. By revealing himself to his living prophets, he showed the people the difference between their own false gods and the true and Living God.

This became a pattern with him, as

is shown so clearly in the scriptures. It is a well-marked pattern, which is: that as men fell away and lost the truth, God in turn restored his truth to them again by means of new revelations of himself.

There is only one way to combat error, and that is with the truth. If men lost the truth, they could only find it by receiving it again from the Lord, and that would entail new revelation from the heavens.

As such revelation was required in the past, God gave it, and when there was no prophet on the earth to receive his revelation because of the apostasy of the people, he raised up new prophets, spoke through them, and appeared personally to them, thus restoring the knowledge of his true nature so that men could worship him intelligently in spirit and in truth.

Let us point to a few Bible examples of what we say. God walked and talked with Adam and Eve. They knew what he was like, and they received commandments from him, but many of their descendants were not true to the faith. By the time of Noah, all mankind was apostate and as a result was destroyed in the flood, all except Noah and his family. God raised up Noah as a prophet and talked with both him and his sons, revealing himself to them. Therefore they knew God and worshiped him as a result of obtaining that knowledge.

Surely, as Jesus said, this is life eternal, "that they might know thee the only true God. . . ." (See John 17:3.)

Noah and his family knew the Lord, but as time went on their descendants went astray until the days of Abraham when there was much wickedness in the earth. But the Lord followed his pattern, and as men fell away from the truth he revealed himself to them again, this time to Abraham, with whom he talked personally, and then to Isaac and to Jacob.

But the believers were few in that day. When Jacob took his family into

Egypt to escape the famine, the whole house of Israel numbered only seventy people. In Egypt the Israelites multiplied and became numerous. Then tragedy came again. They left the teachings of their fathers, and began worshipping like the Egyptians, who were idolaters. They became so involved that later on they made a golden calf of their own and worshiped before it.

The Lord determined to bring his people out of Egypt and restore the truth to them. This would entail another new revelation, but to whom would he reveal himself? To Pharaoh on his throne? To the doubting elders of Israel?

He kept to his pattern and raised up an unspoiled man to become his prophet—a shepherd whose name was Moses. To him he spoke. To him he appeared. To him he gave power to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

When they reached Sinai, God came down upon the Mount and talked again face to face with Moses. Seventy of the elders of Israel went into the Mount with Moses, and there they saw the God of Israel, and "he laid not his hand upon them," the scripture says, but "they saw God, and did eat and drink." (See Ex. 24:9-10.)

Those seventy elders with Moses were now qualified to preach to the people and testify of the true nature of the Deity, for they had seen him themselves and visited with him and heard his voice.

For a time the people were faithful after this new revelation, but then wickedness came among them. Doubt returned, many drifted into the forbidden religions of their neighbors, and apostasy came upon them as a people. Do you recall the difficulties of Elijah, the prophet, with the wicked King Ahab who led his whole nation astray? Do you remember the influence of Jezebel, and do you recall the problems which faced Elisha and Isaiah?

In the days of Jeremiah the apostasy was so great that this prophet was cast into a dungeon. When John the Baptist ministered among the people, they were so far astray that he referred to them as a generation of vipers.

Then came the ministry of the

Savior. He was a manifestation of the true nature of God. He told the people that he resembled the Father. Paul said Jesus was in the express image of the Father's person.

But he was also in the likeness of other men about him—his disciples and others. He was so much like them that the crucifiers could not identify him in a crowd. They had to bribe Judas to point him out with a betrayer's kiss so that they would not arrest the wrong man. That was the whole point of the betrayal.

But Jesus was also in the express image of God's person, so by his physical ministry among them the people learned of the nature of his eternal Father in heaven.

Many followed him. At one time there was a multitude of five thousand; at another time, four thousand. But even in his own day a falling away came, as is recorded in the sixth chapter of John. When Jesus preached doctrine contrary to the traditional beliefs, many turned away.

John wrote of this, saying: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:66-68.)

How unfortunate for those who could not stand true doctrine. They turned away, preferring their own darkness to the light of Christ.

By the time of his crucifixion his faithful followers were scattered. After his resurrection and ascension into heaven the Saints gathered to resume their work on the day of Pentecost, but how many came? Only 120 souls. That is all, according to the scriptures. Indeed there had been a falling away.

But now came another revelation. The Holy Ghost descended upon them in great power. They resumed their ministry, and thousands joined the Church. But persecution arose in its severest form. Many died as martyrs. The apostles lost their lives. Error then crept in. Philosophers from Greece added to the difficulty as they theorized about the previously simple doctrines of

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Christ. Disputations developed between the members of the Church. Differences multiplied. One historian says that a hundred years after Christ there were thirty different Christian sects.

This has gone on until our own day, when the various denominations of Christendom number in the hundreds. They have many different creeds and sharply contrasting interpretations and views pertaining to the nature of God.

But can a misunderstanding of the truth bring salvation? The Savior taught there is but one straight and narrow way. One of his great disciples wrote: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, . . ." (Eph. 4:5.) Conditions today are much as they were anciently, but in times of old when they reached this point, God clarified the issues by giving new revelation of himself, even to the point of raising up new prophets through whom to speak.

Would he do that in modern times? Are modern people as precious in the sight of God as ancient men and women? Would he make repeated efforts to save his ancient people in their times of confusion and not do the same for his modern children?

God is the same today as yesterday. He will do as much for modern men as he did for ancient peoples. But does that mean a modern revelation of himself? Would modern men accept such a revelation?

Again the Bible points the way. Not only does it emphasize that a falling away would occur, but it also says that in the latter-days God indeed would reveal himself again, this time to modern men to restore the truth and to save his people.

But to whom would he appear? To kings or potentates?

As in the days of Moses, so in our day, he would raise up a new prophet not previously known to man. This modern Prophet was Joseph Smith. As God appeared to Moses, so he appeared to Joseph Smith and for the same purpose—to restore the true knowledge of God so that mankind could worship the Lord intelligently.

And has this come to pass? It has. This is how it happened. In western New York State religious revivals were being held. One faith said, "Here is

Christ." Another, "No, here is Christ." Confusion spread. In the home of Joseph Smith there was deep concern. The family desired to know which Church was right that they might join it. Some were inclined toward one, some to another. The serious-minded boy, Joseph Smith, searched the Bible. In it he found the writings of James, who said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . ." (James 1:5.)

This he determined to do. Going to a little grove of trees by his father's farm near Palmyra, New York, he knelt in prayer. In response he received a visitation from the Almighty, even as did Moses. There appeared to him the Eternal Father of heaven and earth and his Beloved Son, the Savior of the world, Jesus the Christ.

Think of it! God came to the United States of America, together with his divine Son, and they appeared personally to that boy whom they had chosen to raise up as an American Prophet, even as Moses had been raised up in his day. So it was that Joseph Smith learned about the true nature of God.

But that was not enough. The Lord had determined to restore more than this knowledge gained in that brief visitation. He sent angels to earth with more light, this in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. He gave Joseph Smith divine authority for this modern ministry, even as he had given the divine authority anciently, permitting men to serve as his duly appointed agents.

A church was to be organized, the ancient one to be restored. Baptism was required for salvation, but who had the power to baptize? The Lord sent the authority to earth. John the Baptist, who baptized the Savior, came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and gave to them by ordination the divine power to baptize by immersion for the remission of sin.

Then came Peter, James, and John of the ancient twelve, conferring upon these same two men the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, including the apostleship which they themselves held. Thus empowered, Joseph and Oliver were now commanded of the Lord to organize his Church on the earth with all the gifts and powers of the ancient Church.

This they did. The Lord continued to give them revelation for their guidance, even as he had given it to the ancient prophets for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

But Jesus came again and yet again. When church headquarters were established in Kirtland, Ohio, the Saints built a temple there. To it came the Savior of the world. As he appeared to Joseph and Oliver, they saw his face and his figure, and they heard his voice as he said, "I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father." (D&C 110:4.)

At another time when Joseph was accompanied by Sidney Rigdon, another glorious revelation of the Savior was experienced. They wrote of it:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; . . ." (*Ibid.*, 76:22-23.)

So what is Mormonism, so-called? It

is a new revelation of God, given to modern men through modern prophets for the salvation of all who will hear. We invite all mankind to give ear to its teachings, for it is the divine truth of God restored in our day. Of this we solemnly testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve. The Tabernacle Choir will now sing, "O Great Is the Depth," from the Saint Paul Oratorio by Mendelssohn.

The Tabernacle Choir sang an anthem, "O Great Is The Depth," from the St. Paul Oratorio by Mendelssohn.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our concluding speaker.

ELDER BOYD K. PACKER

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I wish to speak to young people everywhere. I confess to being partial to those of you who are in your teens. The very qualities that cause some of us who are a bit older to worry about you—youthful exuberance, resistance to restraint and domination—when matured a little will be your great strength.

When we hear the question, and we often do, "What is wrong with our teenagers?" I want to thunder out, "The only thing wrong with teenagers is that there aren't enough of them." I wish, earnestly wish, that this could be a private conversation, for I am prompted to talk to you about a very personal and sacred matter. But I have such faith in you to be willing to talk to you about this subject when your fathers and mothers are present. In fact, I think you will come to know how important it is to have them present.

I take my text from the Book of Mormon. Jacob, a great Book of Mormon

prophet, was teaching his people in the temple, and we find this descriptive verse: "Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord." (Jacob 1:17.) I repeat, "having first obtained mine errand from the Lord." It is about this errand, your errand, that I would speak.

Not too long ago I rode for several hundred miles with a group which included a boy named Henry. Though Henry was just in his early teens I was impressed with his inquisitive nature, with his searching, intelligent questions, and I thought, "Here is a young man with whom I can talk man to man about things spiritual." Henry has already obtained part of his errand. He is planning years ahead for service in the mission field. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there is not only room for young men and women, but you are needed here. The majority