

neighbors and debtors; who actually sustain the authorities of the Church; and who teach the gospel to their children in such a way that the children will love the Lord.

Need for exemplary parents

We need parents with courage, who will stand up and speak up for the right, who are actively involved in government of all levels; parents who are modest in dress, speech, and conduct; parents who are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ; parents who teach their children that we do have a Father in heaven, that we are his spirit children, that he has placed us here on earth for a great and glorious purpose, that he loves us, that he has given us commandments along with our

free agency, that we will receive rewards and judgments based on our own actions; parents who accept all of the commandments as having come from God, to be obeyed for that reason if for no other; parents who have no other gods before the Lord, who do not commit adultery, who do not steal, who do not covet their neighbor's wife or husband, who do not bear false witness against their neighbor; parents who love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind, and who love their neighbor as themselves.

It is my conviction, and I bear my witness, that this is the only pathway to the salvation of mankind, in this life as well as the life to come, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

Elder Loren C. Dunn

Of the First Council of the Seventy

● You were born on the 23rd of December, 1805, in the town of Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont.

Your father was a farmer, a respectable farmer but of somewhat humble circumstances.

You spent the early years of your life on your father's farm, which was nestled in the rolling, green hills of the state of Vermont. When you were nearly ten years old, your family moved to what is now called Wayne County in upstate New York, where your family again pursued the occupation of farming; and to help supplement the family income, you worked for other farmers in the nearby area.

Great religious revival

Some five years after you moved to New York, there commenced a great religious revival in your area; and great multitudes united themselves to different religious parties as a result of this religious fervor.

At first there was unity between the different sects, but as time went on

they contended against each other in hopes of winning additional converts.

You are in your fifteenth year now, and your father's family, along with all of the families in the area, is proselyted by the religious faiths.

The confusion it creates leads you to say, "Who of all these parties is right?"

While seeking an answer, you come across a passage of scripture in the Bible that says, "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." (Jas. 1:5.)

Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to yours.

The first vision

In compliance with the biblical admonition, you retire to the woods not far from your home on the morning of a beautiful, clear spring day in 1820;

Saturday, April 4

First Day

and you pour out your heart to your Father in heaven in prayer.

To your astonishment, you see a pillar of light exactly over your head above the brightness of the sun, and it descends gradually until it falls upon you. When the light is rested upon you, you see two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above you in the air.

One of them speaks, calling you by name, saying, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith 2:17.) You are in the presence of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

As you gain your composure, you ask the question as to which of all the sects you should join.

You are instructed to join none of them. You are given other instructions before the great vision closes.

Great persecution

A few days later you recount this vision to a minister, and to your surprise, he treats the whole thing not only lightly but with great contempt. Word of the vision spreads, and you undergo great persecution.

A few who know you, such as the farmer for whom you work, stand by you and refer to your experience as "the sweet dream of a pure-minded boy." (*BYU Studies*, Spring 1969, p. 235.)

But for the most part you undergo great persecution and are astonished that an obscure boy like you between 14 and 15 years of age could be the object of such bitter persecution and especially from men of high standing. This causes you to say in your heart, Why persecute me for telling the truth?

For you had seen a vision, you knew it, and you knew that God knew it, and you could not deny it, neither dared you deny it without coming under the condemnation of God. Nonetheless, the persecution continued.

Appearance of Moroni

It is on the evening of the 21st of September, 1823, that you are given further divine instructions as an answer

to your prayers. An angel appears, identifying himself as the Angel Moroni.

He tells you the Lord has a work for you to do, and he proceeds to describe the location of gold plates that are buried in a nearby hill. You are told these plates contain a record of God's dealings with a generation that once lived and flourished on the American continent. These gold plates are ultimately entrusted to you, and by the gift and power of God you translate them into a volume that becomes known as the Book of Mormon.

You discover that this book verifies the truths of the Bible. It establishes the reality of the death, burial, resurrection, and teachings of Jesus Christ. It spells out in detail what a man must do to gain salvation, and it offers all men a simple test to determine whether or not the volume is true—even a test of faith and prayer and reading.

The priesthood restored

The sacred record speaks of baptism, and it becomes evident that divine authority is necessary to carry out divine ordinances. In order to fulfill this part of the restoration, you are visited by a personage who identifies himself as John the Baptist, who bestows upon you this authority to baptize and perform other ordinances of the priesthood of Aaron.

It is shortly after this that Peter, James, and John, angelic beings sent from God, confer upon you the priesthood of Melchizedek in order that the full and complete authority to act in the name of God might be restored to the earth.

The Church organized

It is on April 6, 1830, at Fayette, Seneca County, State of New York, that you organize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints under divine direction.

In 1830 you count six original members of the Church. One year later over 2,000 members attend the second annual conference.

As the Church grows, persecution grows. You organize in New York, but persecution soon causes you to remove the headquarters of the Church to Kirtland, Ohio. Finally, as persecution still follows your beleaguered Saints, you push further toward the frontiers of the growing country, and the Church is moved to Missouri.

Building of Nauvoo

Ultimately you direct the Saints to drain a swamp on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River and build a city, which at the time is to become larger than the city of Chicago—Nauvoo is its name.

You enjoy peace for a time, and the worldwide missionary work goes on; yet the storms of persecution begin to gather again. Charges and counter-charges are made. Through the evil designs of men, you have already been arrested 37 times and acquitted each time.

You are asked to come to Carthage to stand trial but are fearful because of the ruthless, unlawful nature of the mobs. Nevertheless, on June 24, 1844, you and several associates set out for Carthage. You mention that you are going like a lamb to the slaughter, but you are calm as a summer's morning.

You arrive in Carthage, and you are immediately arrested. The governor of the state promises you protection, but this does not materialize.

The martyrdom

And now it is a hot, sultry, summer afternoon, June 27, 1844. A mob assembles and storms the jail, bursting past the jailer, firing shots through the door and through the window.

Your brother Hyrum is shot dead in your sight, and one other person is wounded. You spring to the window and are struck immediately by three shots. You utter your last mortal

words, "Oh Lord, my God," and fall dead.

Yes, your name is Joseph Smith, Jr., Prophet of the living God, and though you seal your testimony with your blood, the Church of Jesus Christ goes on. Today nearly three million revere you as a prophet, seer, revelator; and thousands each year are added to that number. You restored the Church and kingdom of God under the direction of Jesus Christ.

Testimony of Savior

Your message concerning the Savior can be summarized best in your own words: "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; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God." (D&C 76:22-24.)

I bear my witness to you that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God. I bear sacred witness that the power and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ remain in this church. I bear sacred witness that Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God today. The Lord has spoken, and we have a new prophet, seer, and revelator. I bear witness that the Church of Jesus Christ is led by Jesus Christ. I bear sacred witness that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ live. I know they live. I know God lives, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Joseph Fielding Smith

Elder Alvin R. Dyer will be our concluding speaker.