

As you partake of the sacrament, you witness that you are willing to take the name of Jesus Christ, the Son, upon you. This means that you are willing to be baptized, to proclaim gospel truths in his name, and to represent him in doing his work here on earth. You also witness that you will always remember him and keep his commandments. Those are serious, sacred commitments. And in return, as you keep your promises, you are blessed that you may always have his Spirit to be with you.

We read in 2 Nephi chapter 25, verse 29, "The right way is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; and Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore ye must bow down before him, and worship him with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul."

That we may make sacrament meeting a joyful time for worshipping our Savior, I pray.

I believe with all my soul in Jesus Christ, our elder brother. May we

understand his teachings and follow him, via a spiritual sacrament meeting, prayer, and reading of the scriptures. This is his divine church. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord ushered in the fulness of the gospel in this last dispensation of time. President Ezra Taft Benson is our true and living prophet, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### **President Hinckley**

Elders Rulon G. Craven and W. Mack Lawrence of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

The congregation will now join with the choir in singing "High on the Mountain Top."

Elder Francis M. Gibbons of the Seventy will then address us.

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The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

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## **Elder Francis M. Gibbons**

### **Similarities between the Savior and Joseph Smith**

One hundred and forty-seven years ago next June, the Prophet Joseph Smith was murdered in the Carthage Jail by a volley of shots fired by a mob with blackened faces. With him in the cell was a disciple, John Taylor, who shared the terror of this assault and who was gravely wounded but who did not share a martyr's fate with Joseph and his brother Hyrum.

Sometime after the martyrdom, John Taylor, who would become the third President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, wrote this:

"Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in

this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (D&C 135:3).

This mortal linkage between Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer, invites comparisons of their lives and their characters.

They both came out of a working-class environment. Jesus was the stepson of a carpenter. Joseph Smith's father was a farmer. Neither had wealthy, powerful, or influential relatives or friends. Both experienced the trauma arising from economic stress.

Both came from solid homes of high spirituality. Mary and Joseph had both conversed with beings from the spiritual world. Joseph Smith's father received a remarkable series of visions when Joseph Smith, Jr., was a boy; and

his mother had had an unusual spiritual experience not long before his birth.

Neither Jesus nor Joseph Smith had significant formal schooling; and neither of them, therefore, was a graduate of a great university nor a fellow in a distinguished academic society.

Both of them were highly precocious. At age twelve, Jesus was found teaching the learned rabbis in the temple, who were astonished to find one so young possessed of such vast wisdom and knowledge. In his fifteenth year, Joseph had an experience which enabled him to instruct his family, and others who would listen, about the nature, the power, and the purposes of God, the Eternal Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Both were provincials. Jesus never ventured beyond the environs of the Holy Land during his earthly ministry, while Joseph Smith spent his entire life in a relatively small area in the United States and Canada.

Both were highly controversial figures, boldly attacking the existing order of things. Jesus condemned the scribes, the Pharisees, and the hypocrites, while Joseph condemned a misguided ministry.

Both attracted strong disciples and powerful enemies. It is through the disciples of Jesus and Joseph that their fame and present influence are largely known. Both of them attracted opposition of such bitterness that both were killed by their enemies.

While both had kind and loving natures, both were fearless in enforcing the right. Jesus, for instance, angered by the merchants in the temple, drove them away with a whip. And on more than one occasion, Joseph engaged in physical combat to assert the right.

Both completed their missions at an early age. Jesus was crucified at age 33, while Joseph died as a martyr at age 38½.

Both were killed as the result of betrayals by erstwhile disciples.

Both were prayerful by nature. Before his earthly ministry began, the Savior spent forty days in the wilderness engaged in fervent fasting and prayer. And on the Mount of Transfiguration, in Gethsemane, on the cross, and on other occasions he engaged in fervent prayers to his Heavenly Father, pleading for guidance or assistance.

Joseph Smith's ministry actually began with the fervent prayer he offered in the Sacred Grove, which resulted in the Father and the Son appearing to him. Thereafter, his life was marked by repeated prayers offered for divine help in solving the problems he faced, whether great or small.

Their births were foreseen long in advance. The Savior, according to the scriptures, was "Beloved and Chosen from the beginning" (Moses 4:2), even him whom God declared "should come in the meridian of time, who was prepared from before the foundation of the world" (Moses 5:57). Joseph of old, the son of Jacob, or Israel, prophesied that in the latter days a choice seer would be raised up: "And his name shall be called after me," he prophesied, "and it shall be after the name of his father" (2 Nephi 3:15), which is an ancient prophetic reference to Joseph Smith and his father, Joseph Smith, Sr.

### **Differences between the Savior and Joseph Smith**

While the Savior and Joseph Smith shared these and many other qualities, they were very different in basic ways. The main difference lay in the Savior's unusual nature and identity. He functioned on a plane which was beyond the Prophet Joseph Smith's comprehension. Jesus is a member of the Godhead, chosen be-

fore the creation of the world to become the Savior and the Redeemer of mankind. He was the active force in the Creation, and he is the head of the Church. Through the Atonement, he has, in a sense, purchased us so that we are his children. And by becoming members of the Church, we have taken his name upon us.

The various roles he played and the various names by which he is known in the holy scriptures give a hint of the preeminent status of the Savior, compared to Joseph Smith or to any other man. He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Creator. He is our Advocate with the Father. He is our Exemplar. He is often called the Good Shepherd or the Great Judge. He is sometimes referred to as our King, or as the King of Kings; as the Lamb of God; as the Light of the World; as the Lawgiver; or as the Mediator. Sometimes he is called the Messenger of the Covenant, or the Rock of our Salvation; the Chief Cornerstone; the Son of Man; the Anointed One, the Deliverer, or the Man of Sorrows; or the Only Begotten of the Father.

Not only does he fill these varied roles, but with the Father he shares characteristics unknown to mortal men like the Prophet Joseph Smith. He knows all things, and therefore he is omniscient; he has all power, and therefore he is omnipotent; and through the Light of Christ he is omnipresent.

No wonder then that John the Baptist, who up until his time was the greatest prophet of all, said of the Savior that he, John, was not worthy to unloose his shoe's latchet (see John 1:27).

While the Savior's spiritual status is beyond compare, his role as the Only Begotten of the Father does create a common physical ground upon which he meets with the Prophet Joseph

Smith and other men. The Savior was born of a mortal mother but was sired by the Eternal Father. Therefore, he shared an element of mortality with the Prophet Joseph Smith because of his mother, Mary. Yet he also had within him the power to lay down his life, or to take it up again, because of his Eternal Father.

While we honor and revere Joseph Smith as the prophet of the Restoration and seek to emulate his qualities of character, we adore and worship the Savior. That adoration is shown at each sacrament service when we covenant to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, to always remember him, and to keep the commandments which he has given to us, that we may always have his Spirit to be with us (see Moroni 4:3).

The supernal status of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the preeminent place which he occupies in the eternal scheme of things cause us to stand in awe at what has been called the condescension of Christ, meaning his willingness to step down from his exalted place and to go forth, as the scripture says, "suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; . . . that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities . . . , that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance" (Alma 7:11-13).

### Testimony

I bear testimony, obtained through the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. I testify that the Savior is a resurrected being, having a tangible body of flesh and bones, and that his Heavenly

Father, who is also the Father of the spirits of us all, similarly has a tangible body of flesh and bones. I also testify that Jesus Christ is the head of the church to which we belong, and which bears his holy name, and that Joseph Smith, of whom I have spoken, was the prophet through whom the true church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth by the ministering of angels many centuries after the Apostasy, and to whom was given the priesthood keys and authority necessary to direct the Savior's earthly church.

Finally, I testify that through an unbroken chain, the prophetic keys and authority received by the Prophet Joseph Smith have been transmitted through intervening generations and

are held intact by today's prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, who stands as the earthly head of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, possessing all the keys and authority necessary to help bring about the exaltation of God's children. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder Francis M. Gibbons of the Seventy has spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve, who will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also of the Council of the Twelve.

## Elder Richard G. Scott

### Counsel to young men and women

I speak primarily to the young men and women of the Church throughout the world. Your circumstances and personal challenges vary tremendously, yet each of you is in that period of life when you make decisions that will affect the entire course of your life. I come to you as a friend with a sincere desire to help each one of you obtain the greatest and most lasting benefit from this critical period of testing. I speak as I would to a son or daughter to communicate what I *know* to be true.

I pray that you will understand the importance of three principles we will discuss. May there come promptings to you from the Lord through the Holy Ghost regarding their application in your life.

I recognize that many of you will understand what I say because of decisions already made. I pray that others will be prompted to make the same personal commitments, for this counsel

will have limited value until that is done. I will explain with an example.

### Be like an automatic watch

My parents gave me a beautiful watch for high school graduation. I looked at it frequently because of the love it communicated. Each night I carefully cleaned and wound it. As years passed, I often neglected to wind the watch. Consequently, it stopped being useful, often when I most needed it.

Today I use an automatic watch. It is consistent and always gives me the correct time. It is totally dependable. I never need to worry whether I can count on it or not.

I realize that as with watches, there are differences in youth. Some need to be wound up, while others are automatic because of important decisions already made.

I commend you who are automatic, who have committed to be true to the Lord and to live by faith when you cannot see the end from the begin-