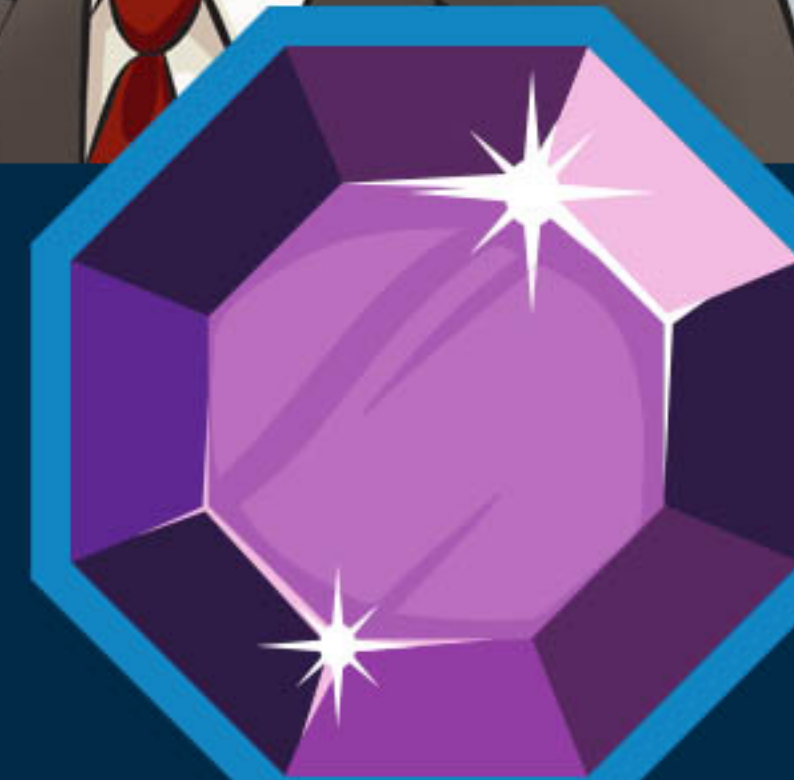
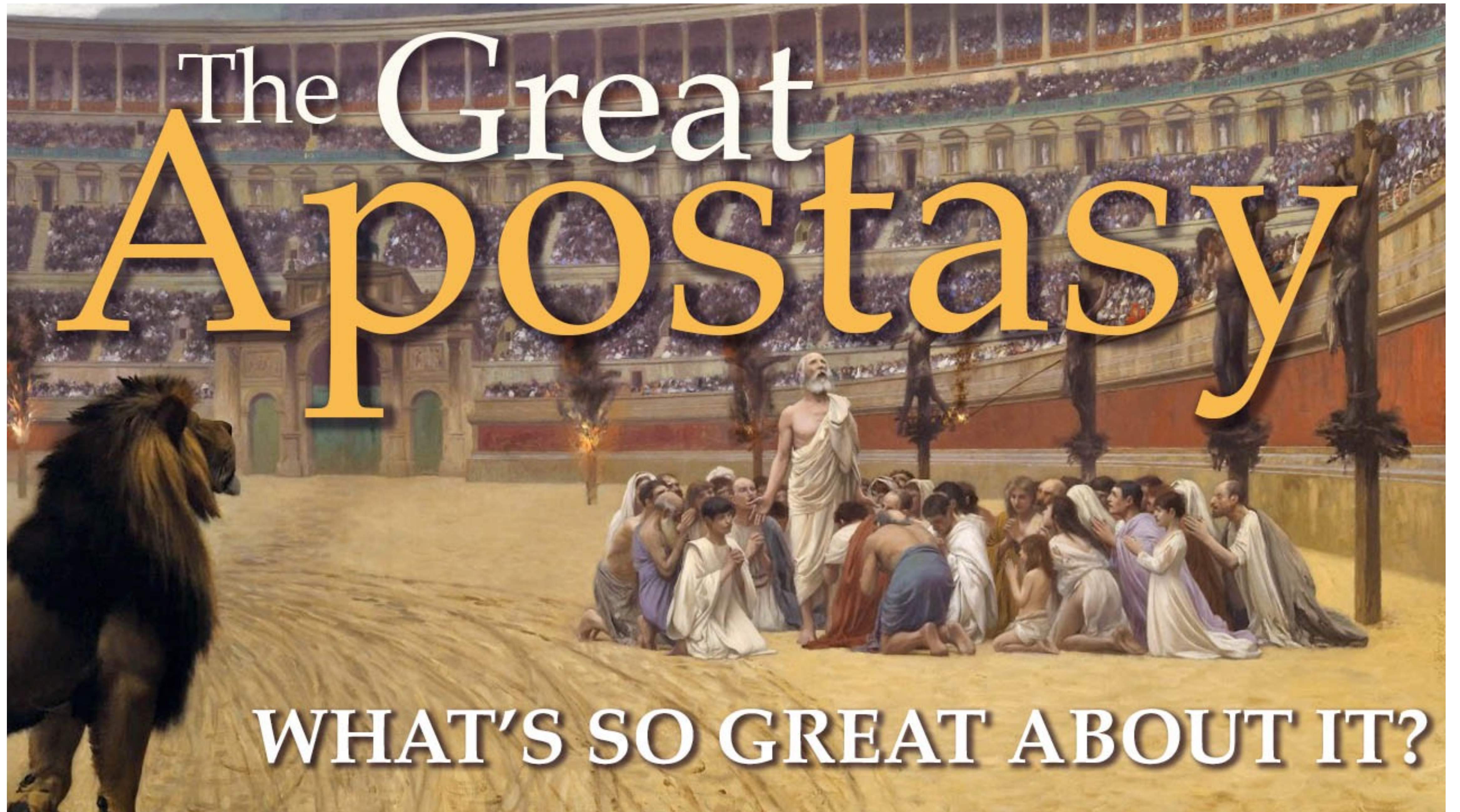




Come Follow Me 2021
JS-History 1:1-26





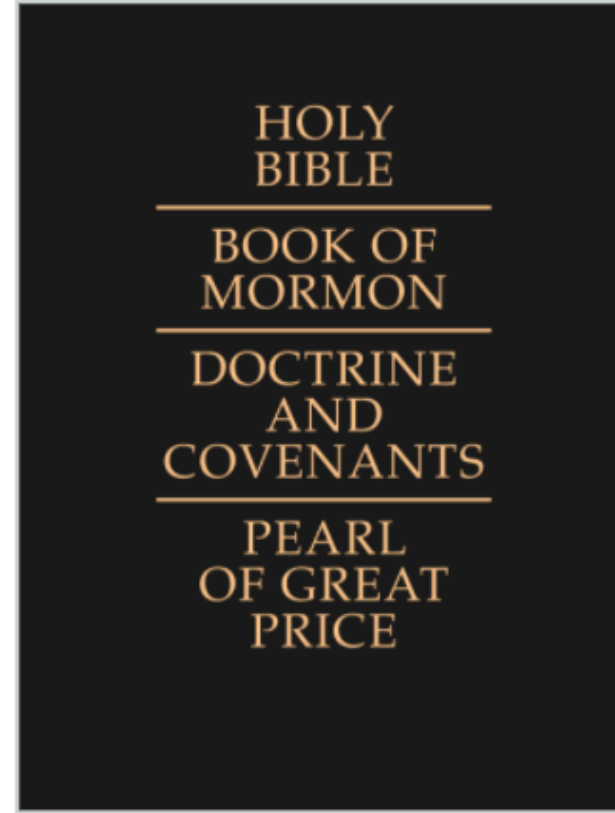
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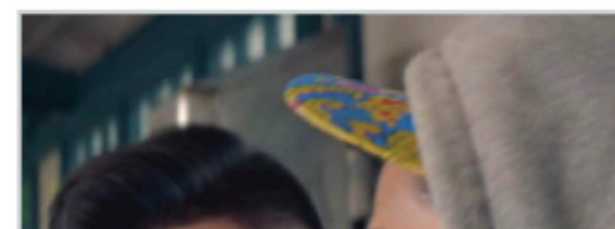
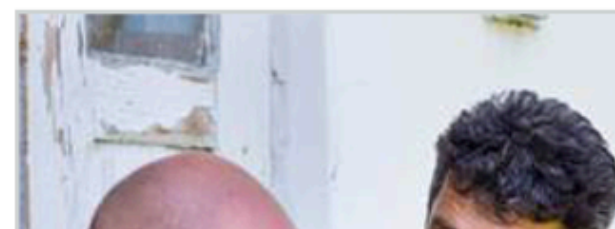
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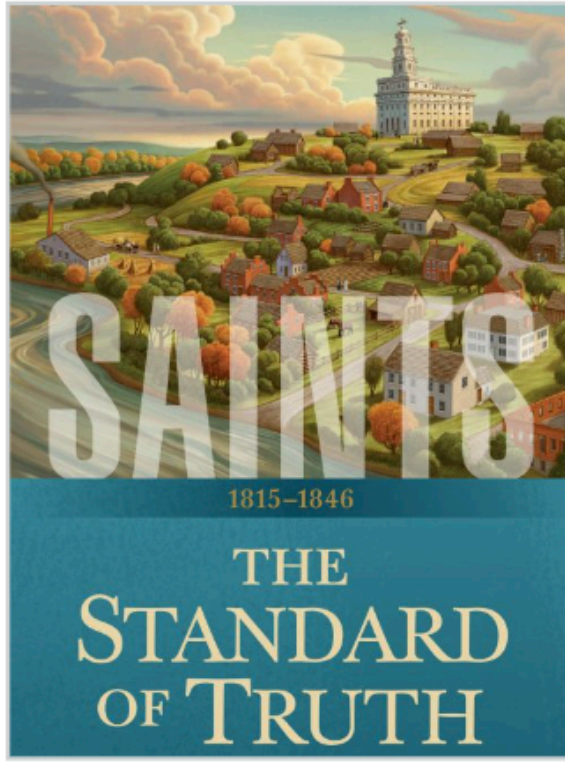


Topics

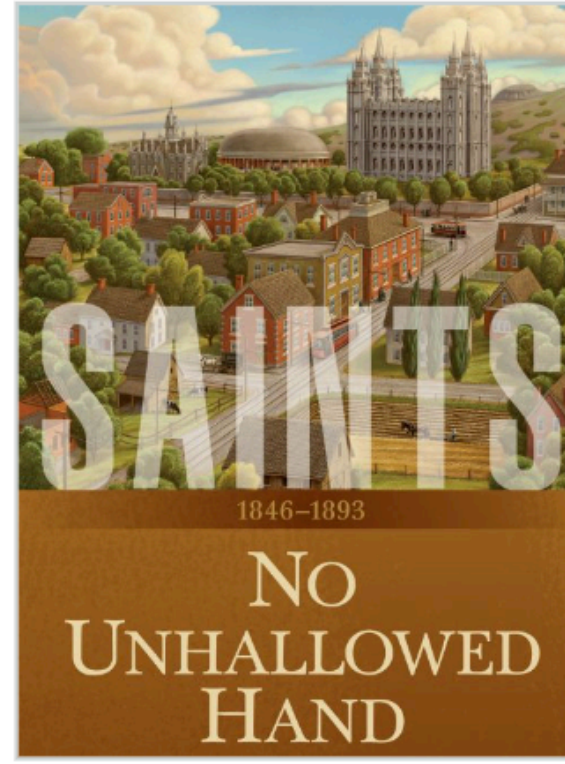




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Saints, Volume 2



Doctrines and Covenants Study



First Vision



Prophets of the Restoration



Church History Topics



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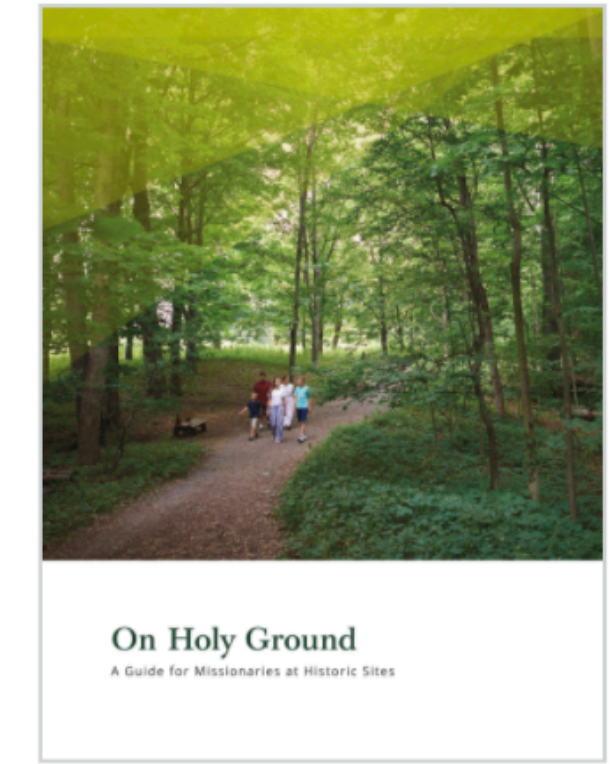
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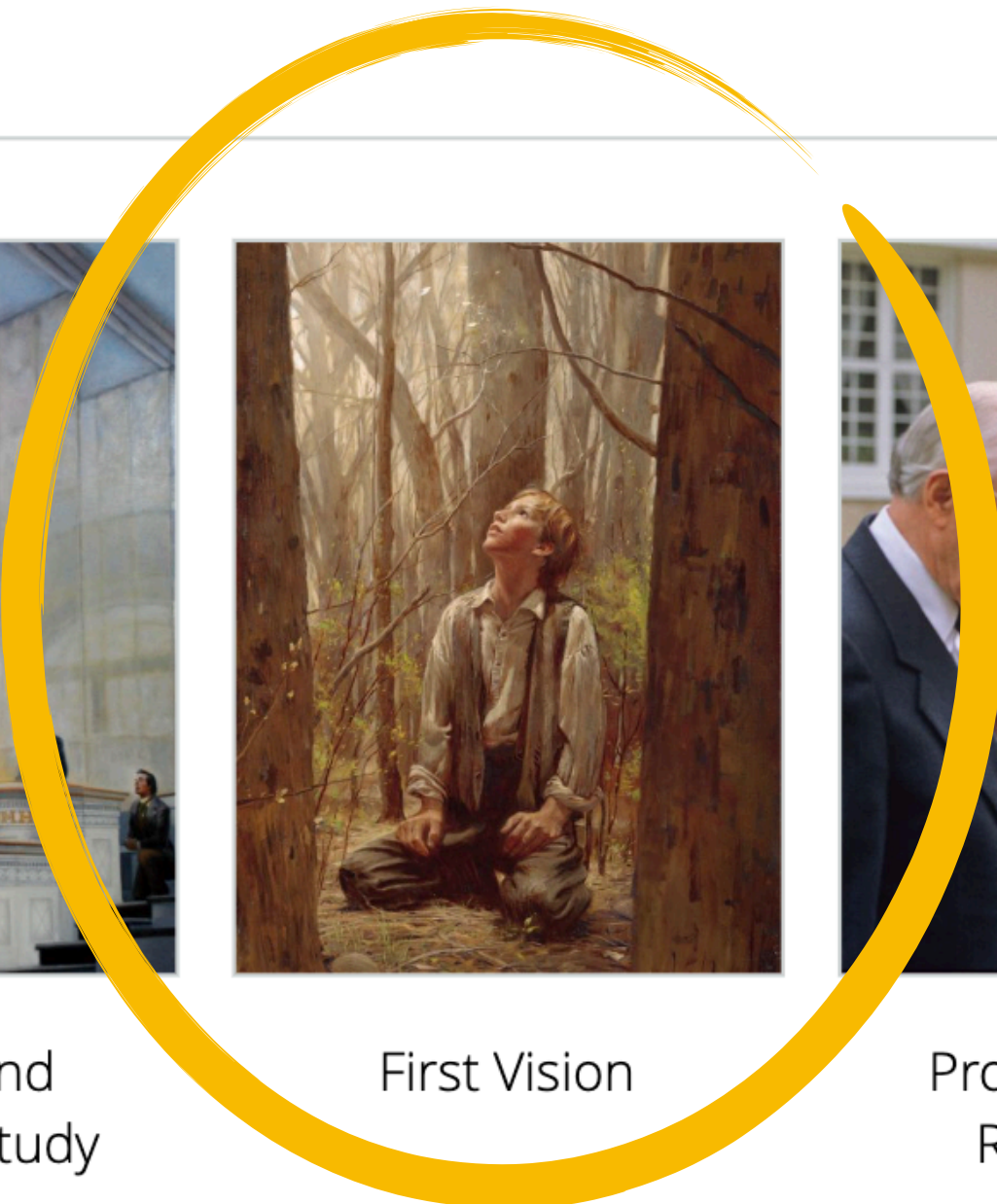
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First Vision

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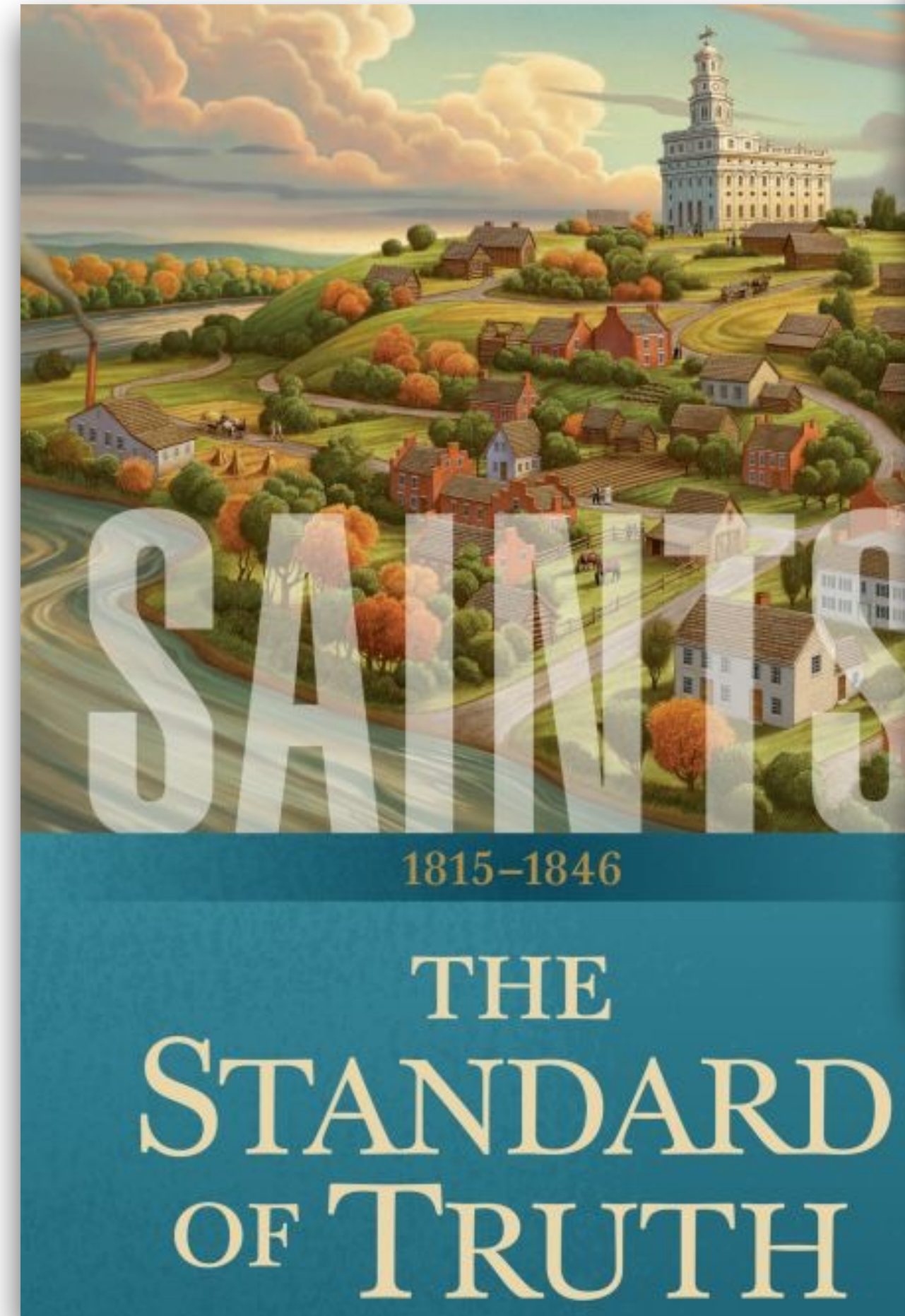
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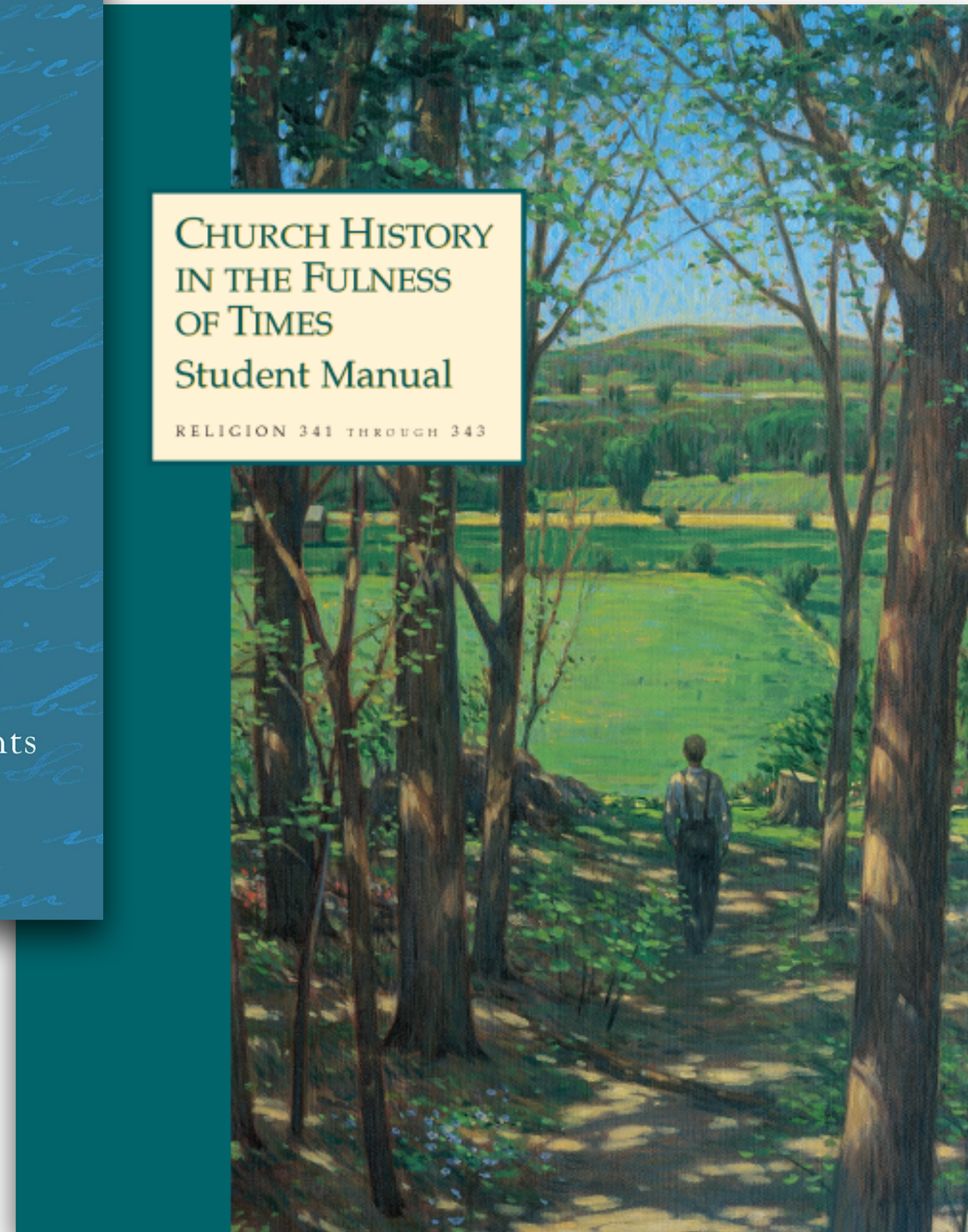
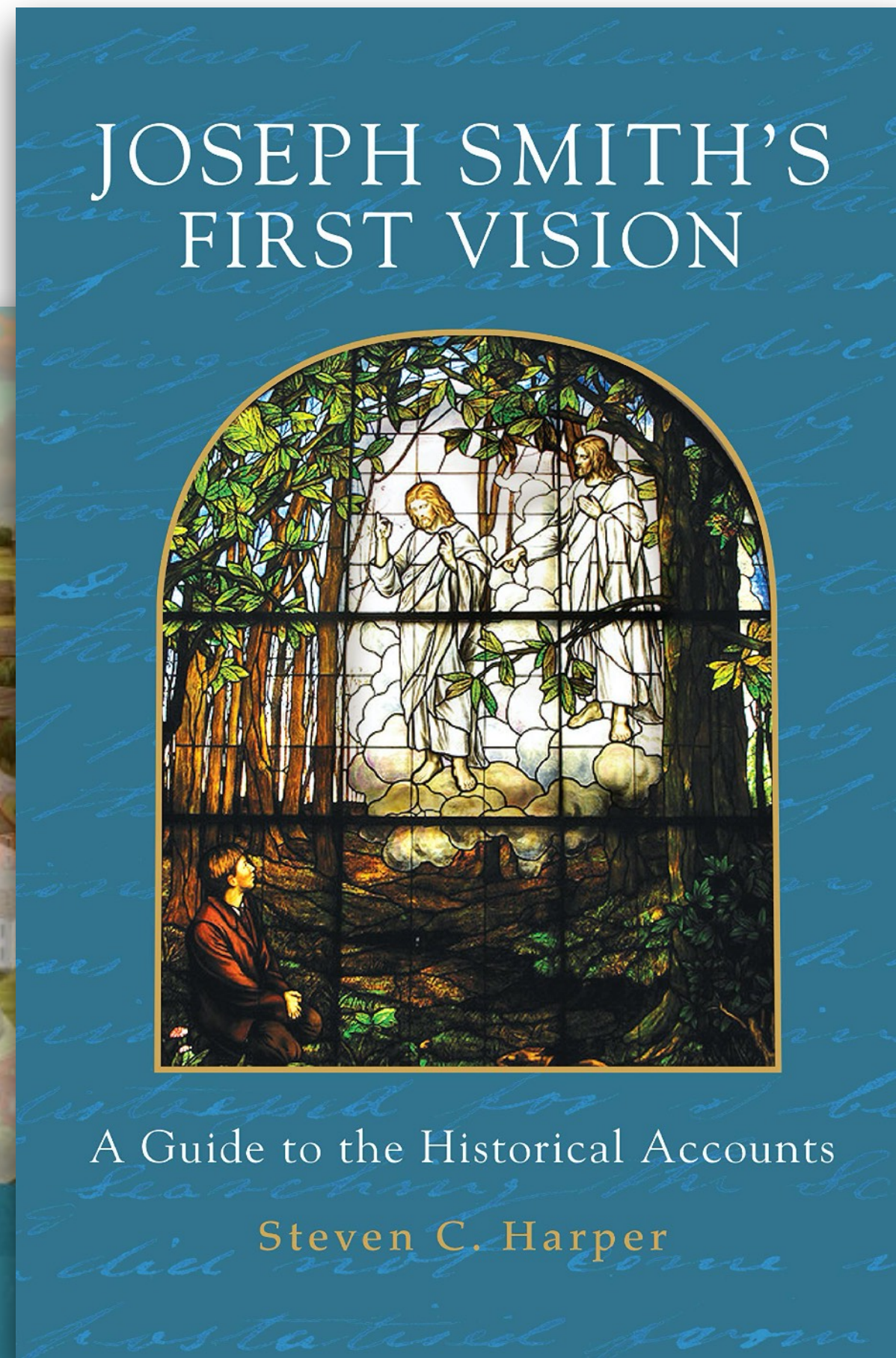
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Chapter 1 and 2



Chapter 3

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Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision



(Detail of stained glass window originally created in 1913 for the Adams Ward chapel, Los Angeles, California)

There are two general categories of accounts of Joseph Smith's first vision of Deity that were written during his lifetime:

The firsthand accounts recorded by Joseph Smith or under his direction are as follows:



1. [JS History, ca. Summer 1832, pp. 1–3](#). This is the earliest and most personal account, and the only one that includes Joseph Smith's own handwriting.

2. [JS, Journal, 9–11 Nov. 1835, pp. 23–24](#). Joseph Smith described his early visionary experiences to a visitor at his home in Kirtland, Ohio, in November 1835. His description was written down, and Warren Parrish later copied it into Joseph Smith's journal.

Page 1.

A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr. an account of his marvilous experiance 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 in the eve of time according as the Lord brought forth and established by his hand ^{firstly} he receiving the testamony from on high secondly the ministering of Angels thirdly the reception of the holy Priesthood by the ministring of Angels to adminster the letter of the Gospel ^{the Law and commandments as they were given unto him} and the ordinances fourthly a confirmation and reception of the high Priesthood up to the holy order of the son of the living God power and ordinance from on high to preach the Gospel in the administration and demonstration of the spirit the Key of the Kingdom of God conferred upon him and the continuation of the blessings of God to him &c

I was born in the town of Chason in the ^{State of} Vermont North America on the twenty third day of December A D 1805 of goodly Parents who spared no pains to instruct me in ^{the} Christian religion at the age of about ten years my Father Joseph Smith Sr. removed to Saluzys Ontario County in the State of New York and being in indigent circumstances was obliged to labour hard for the support of a large Family having nine Children and as it required the exertions of all that were able to render any assistance for the support of the Family therefore we were deprived of the benefit of an education Suffice it to say I was smally instructed in reading and writing and the ground of Arithmetic which constituted my whole literary acquirements. At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously impress

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History, circa Summer 1832

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A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr. an account of his marvilous experience¹ and of all the mighty acts which he doeth in the name of Jesus Ch[r]ist the son of the living God of whom he beareth record and also an account of the rise of the church of Christ in the eve of time according as the Lord brought forth and established by his hand < firstly > he receiving the testamony from on high secondly the ministering of Angels thirdly the reception of the holy **Priesthood** by the ministring of — Angels to adminster the letter of the Law < Gospel — > < — the Law and commandments as they

HISTORY
OF
THE CHURCH

PERIOD 1
JOSEPH SMITH

VOL. I

HISTORY
OF
THE CHURCH

PERIOD 1
JOSEPH SMITH

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INTERREGNUM

VOL. VII.

ROBERTS

I
N
D
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X

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY
OF THE CHURCH

VOL. VIII

B. Y.

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

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glory of the events that should transpire in the last days, on the morning of the 22d 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 in-

TIMES AND SEASONS.

“Truth will prevail.”

Vol. III. No. 9.]

CITY OF NAUVOO, ILL. MARCH, 1, 1842.

[Whole No. 45.]

A FAC-SIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.

NO. 1

THE
PEARL OF GREAT PRICE:

BEING A
CHOICE SELECTION

FROM THE
REVELATIONS, TRANSLATIONS, AND NARRATIONS

OF
JOSEPH SMITH,

FIRST PROPHET, SEER, AND REVELATOR TO THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

LIVERPOOL:
PUBLISHED BY F. D. RICHARDS, 15, WILTON STREET.
1851.

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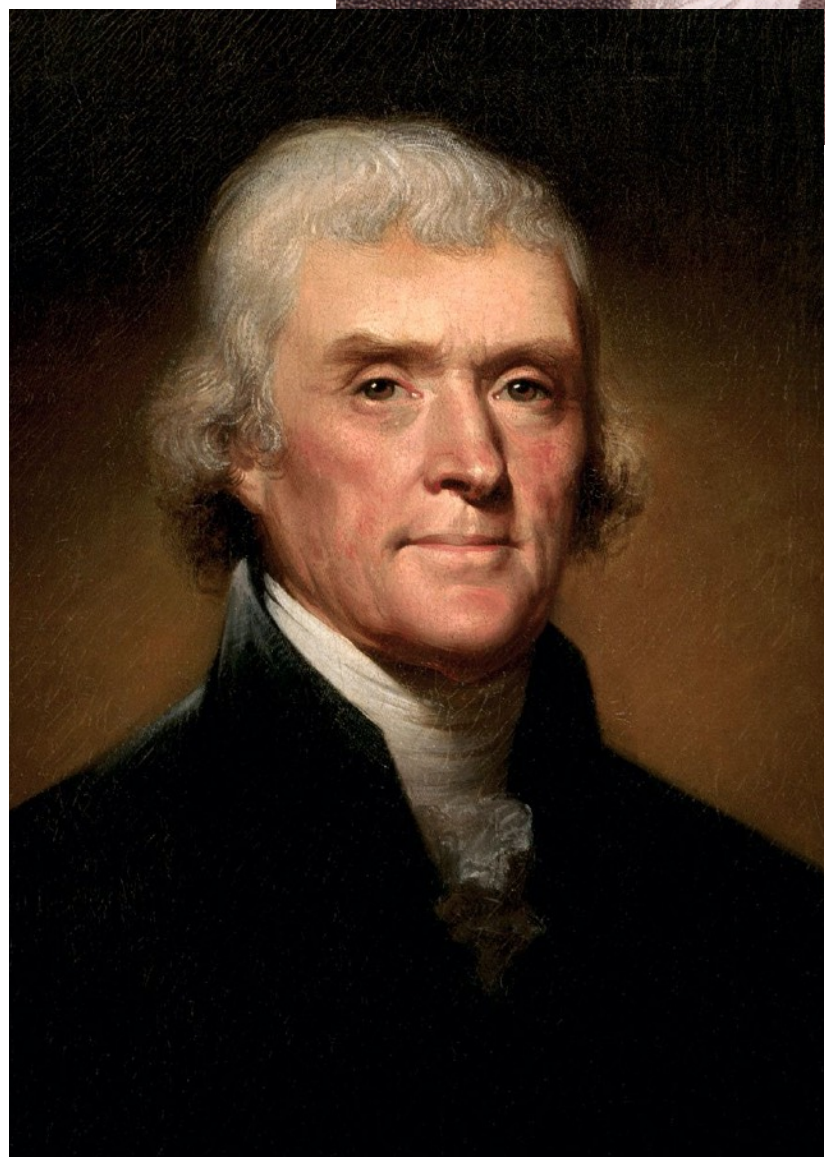
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1851.

*City of
U.S.A.*



“I believe these reformers were inspired to create a religious climate in which God could restore lost truths and priesthood authority. Similarly, God inspired the earlier explorers and colonizers of America and the framers of the Constitution of the United States to develop a land and governing principles to which the gospel could be restored.

“By 1820 the world was ready for the “restitution of all things” spoken of by Peter and “all [God’s] holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).”

(Elder M. Russell Ballard, Oct 1994 GC)

JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY

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OWING to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of ^aThe Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all of which have been designed by the authors thereof to militate against its character as a Church and its progress in the world—I have been induced to write this history, to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the ^bfacts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and the Church,

. . . My father, ^bJoseph Smith, Sen., left the State of Vermont, and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the State of New York, when I was in my tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years after my father's arrival in Palmyra, he moved with his family into Manchester in the same county of Ontario—

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“Latter-day Saint readers should ... be ... sophisticated in their evaluation of what they read. ...

“Our Heavenly Father gave us powers of reason, and we are expected to use them to the fullest. But he also gave us the Comforter, who he said would lead us into truth and by whose power we may know the truth of all things. That is the ultimate guide for Latter-day Saints who are worthy and willing to rely on it”

(Elder Dallin H Oaks, “Reading Church History” [address to CES religious educators, Aug. 16, 1985], 7, LDS.org).



“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).

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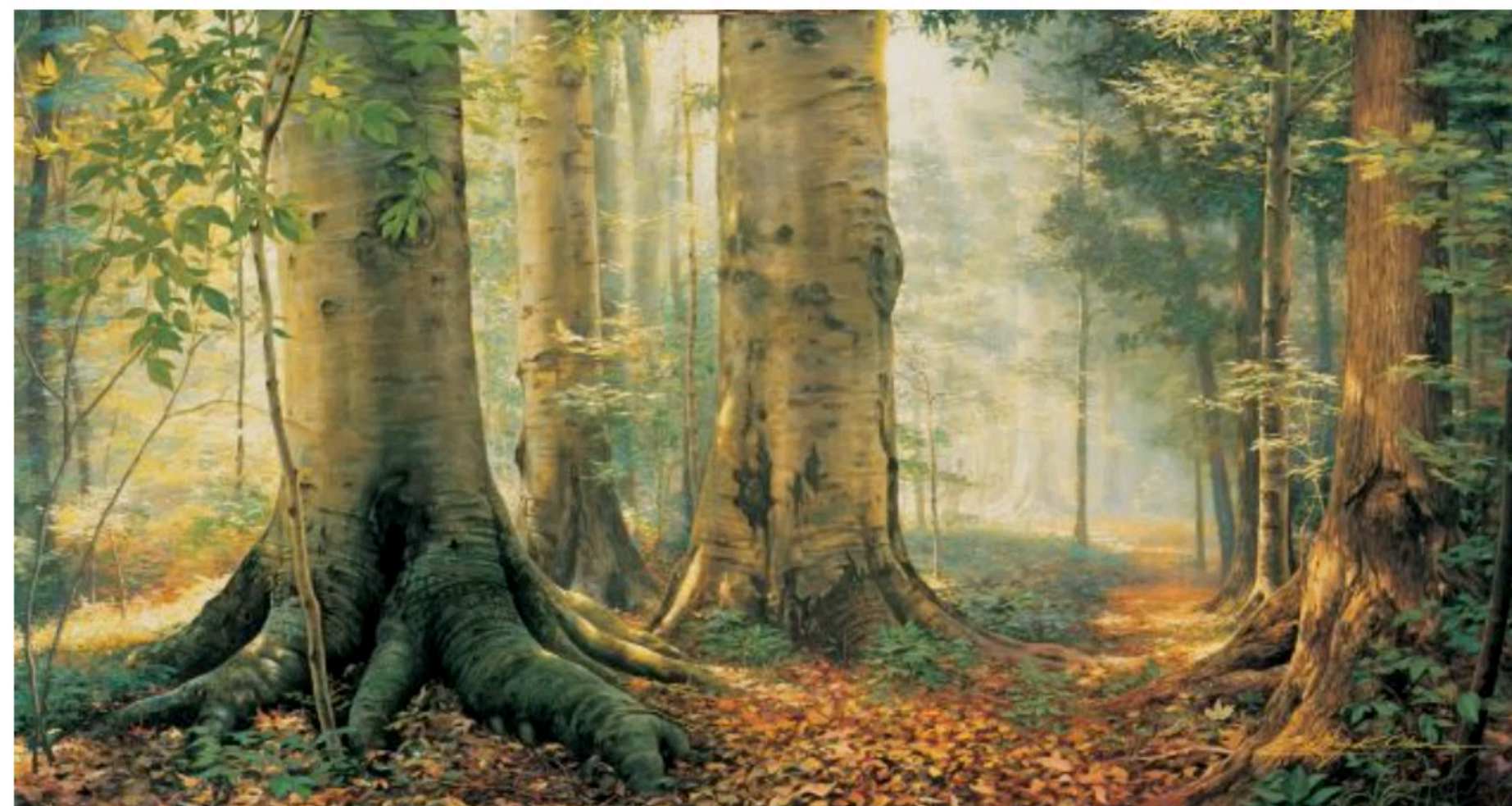
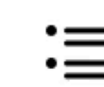
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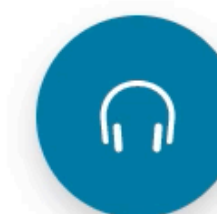
An Unusual Excitement About Religion



Sacred Grove, by Greg K. Olsen

January 4–10

Joseph Smith—History 1:1–26



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Purpose and Joseph's Family History

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An Unusual Excitement About Religion

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. . . My father, ^bJoseph Smith, Sen., left the State of Vermont, and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the State of New York, when I was in my tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years after my father's arrival in Palmyra, he moved with his family into Manchester in the same county of Ontario—

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

5 Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, ^a“Lo, here!” and others, ^b“Lo, there!” Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.

6 For, notwithstanding the great ^alove which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased; yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more ^bpretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued—priest contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.

7 I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely, my mother, Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

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

9 My mind at times was greatly

excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

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

11 While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the ^aEpistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack ^bwisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

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An Unusual Excitement About Religion

Joseph Seeks Wisdom

1 1a TG Restoration of the Gospel.

b Luke 1:4 (1–4).

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c D&C 11:23 (1–30);

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JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY

EXTRACTS FROM THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET

Joseph Smith tells of his ancestry, family members, and their early abodes—An unusual excitement about religion prevails in western New York—He determines to seek wisdom as directed by James—The Father and the Son appear, and Joseph is called to his prophetic ministry. (Verses 1–20.)

Purpose and Joseph's Family History

OWING to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of ^aThe Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all of which have been designed by the authors thereof to militate against its character as a Church and its progress in the world—I have been induced to write this history, to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the ^bfacts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such facts in my possession.

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1835 Account

“I made a fruitless attempt to pray; my tongue seemed to be swollen in my mouth, so that I could not utter. I heard a noise behind me, like some person walking towards me. I strove again to pray but could not. The noise of walking seemed to draw nearer. I sprung up on my feet and looked around but saw no person or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking.”

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The Father and Son Appear to Joseph

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Some preachers and other professors of religion reject the account of the First Vision—Persecution is heaped upon Joseph Smith—He testifies of the reality of the vision. (Verses 21–26.)

21 Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as ^avisions or ^brevelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that

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

24 However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a ^avision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was ^bmad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a

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1832 Account

My mouth was opened and my tongue liberated, and I called on the Lord in mighty prayer. A pillar of fire appeared above my head. It presently rested down upon me and filled me with joy unspeakable.”

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1840 Account

...he, at length, saw a very bright and glorious light in the heavens above; which, at first, seemed to be at a considerable distance. He continued praying, while the light appeared to be gradually descending towards him; and, as it drew nearer, it increased in brightness, and magnitude, so that, by the time that 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; but, perceiving that it did not produce that effect, he was encouraged with the hopes of being able to endure its presence. 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, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in their features or likeness.”

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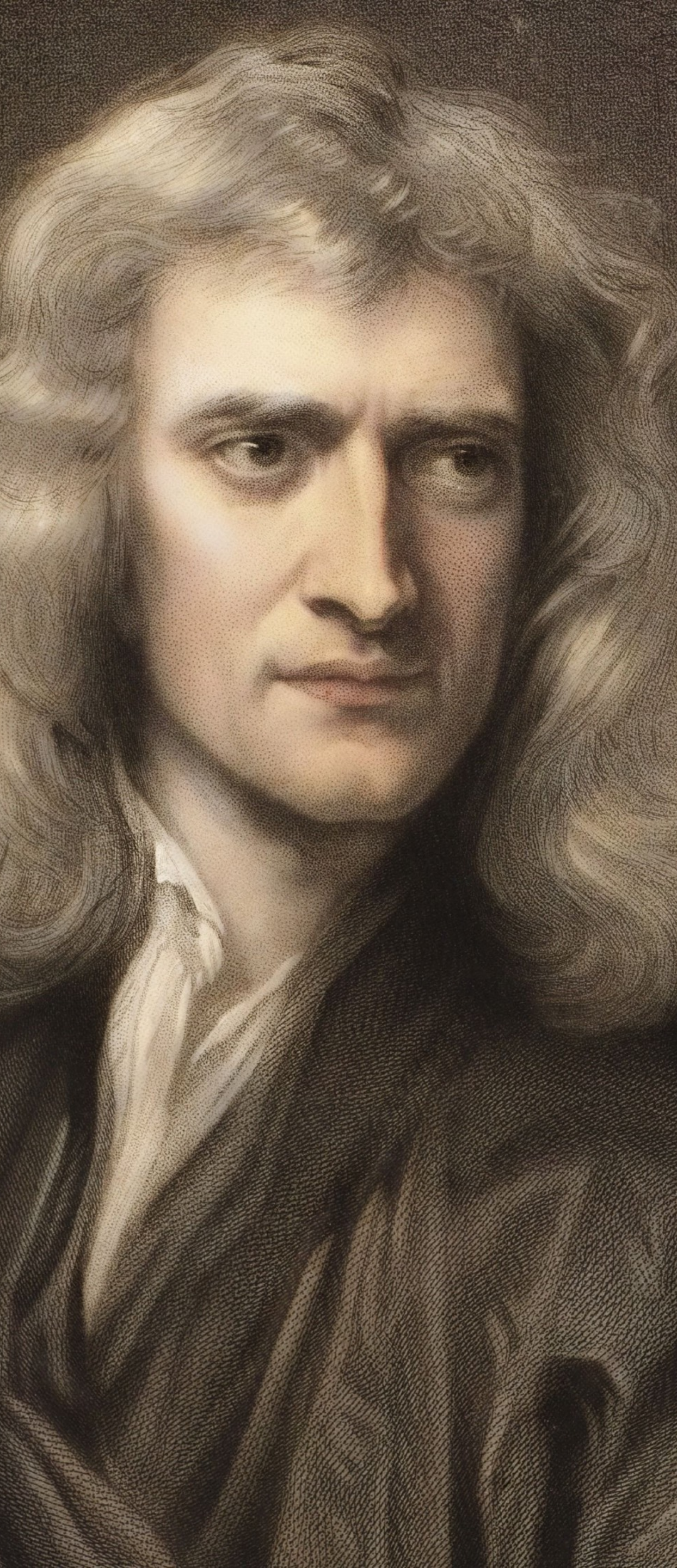
b JS—H 1:4.

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TC History.

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Sir Isaac Newton “saw two major flaws in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity: it was unsupported from the scriptures and it was illogical. Newton used scriptural passages to demonstrate that the Trinitarian doctrine was incorrect, and that the scriptures instead taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are separate and distinct beings, three members of the Godhead.”

(“A Brief Survey of Sir Isaac Newton’s Views on Religion” by Steven E. Jones)





**One of them
spake unto me,
calling me by
name and said,
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Beloved Son.
Hear Him!**

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14 So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the ^awoods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a ^bbeautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to ^cpray ^dvocally.

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

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1832 Account

“I was filled with the spirit of God, and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord.

And he spake unto me, saying, “Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. Behold, I am the Lord of glory. I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have eternal life.”

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“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”

(Elder Boyd K. Packer in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, 8; or Ensign, Dec. 1971, 40).



“at no time did Joseph reveal everything he learned in the First Vision” (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 112).

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Lessons from the First Vision

By Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Presidency of the Seventy

We learn that the scriptures are true and can be taken literally and applied in our lives.

We learn that pondering the scriptures brings power and insight.

We learn that knowledge alone isn't enough; acting on what we know results in God's blessings.

We learn to put our trust in God and look to Him for answers to life's most important questions and not to put our trust in man.

We learn that prayers are answered according to our unwavering faith and according to Heavenly Father's will.

We learn the reality of Satan's existence and that he has actual power to influence the physical world, including us.

We learn that Satan's power is limited and superseded by God's power.



Lessons from the First Vision

By Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Presidency of the Seventy

We learn that Satan will stop at nothing to destroy the work of God and that Satan must have known the importance of Joseph Smith in his role as the prophet of the Restoration.

We learn that we can overcome Satan by calling upon God and putting our complete faith and trust in Him.

We learn that where there is light, darkness must depart.

We learn that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are two separate and distinct beings, resembling each other in features and likeness.

We learn that we are created in God's image.

We learn that Christ is risen.

We learn that God knows us personally and is aware of our needs and concerns. He called Joseph by name.



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We learn of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Jesus defers to His Father, and the Father communicates with mortals here upon the earth through His Son.

We learn that Jesus Christ is beloved of His Father by the Father's designating Jesus as His Beloved Son.

We learn that the true Church of Jesus Christ as He originally organized it was not found upon the earth at the time of Joseph Smith, confirming the reality of the Great Apostasy foretold by Paul the Apostle.

We learn that when we care enough to desire God's input in our life, He will reveal a refining course for us. At Joseph's time all the denominations and sects were wrong.

We learn that every dispensation of time receives the visions, blessings, and glories of God.

We learn insight into how God chooses His prophets.



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We learn that the true Church of Jesus Christ as He originally organized it was not found upon the earth at the time of Joseph Smith, confirming the reality of the Great Apostasy foretold by Paul the Apostle.

We learn that when we care enough to desire God's input in our life, He will reveal a refining course for us. At Joseph's time all the denominations and sects were wrong.

We learn that every dispensation of time receives the visions, blessings, and glories of God.

We learn insight into how God chooses His prophets.

We learn that God chooses the pure in heart who are righteous and have righteous desires to do His work, confirming the teaching from the Bible that God looks upon the heart and does not choose based on outward appearance or social status or standing (see 1 Samuel 16:7).

them that lacked wisdom, and would ^bgive liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

14 So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the ^awoods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a ^bbeautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to ^cpray ^dvocally.

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

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

at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of ^clight exactly over my head, above the brightness of the ^dsun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

17 It no sooner appeared than I found myself ^adelivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I ^bsaw two ^cPersonages, whose brightness and ^dglory defy all description, ^estanding above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My ^fBeloved ^gSon. Hear Him!*

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

19 I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all ^awrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those ^bprofessors were all ^ccorrupt; that: “they ^ddraw near to me with their lips, but their ^ehearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the ^fcommandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the ^gpower thereof.”

The Father and Son Appear to Joseph

20 He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself ^alying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, ^bmother inquired what the matter was. I replied, “Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off.” I then said to my mother, “I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true.” It seems as though the ^cadversary was aware, at a very early period of my life, that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom; else why should the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the ^dopposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy?

Some preachers and other professors of religion reject the account of the First Vision—Persecution is heaped upon Joseph Smith—He testifies of the reality of the vision. (Verses 21–26.)

21 Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as ^avisions or ^brevelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that

there would never be any more of them.

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

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

24 However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a ^avision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was ^bmad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a

13b TG Communication.

14a Matt. 14:23.

b TG Beauty.

c TG Prayer.

d Ps. 77:1.

15a Eph. 6:12 (11–18).

b Gen. 15:12 (1–21).

c TG Darkness. Physical

TG God, Manifestations of; Godhead; God the Father, Elohim; Jesus Christ, Appearances, Postmortal;

Restoration of the

Gospel;

Revelation

D&C 6:11; 46:7.

19a TG Apostasy of the Early Christian Church.

b Jude 1:4.

TG False Prophets.

c TG False Doctrine.

d Isa. 29:13;

Ezek. 33:31 (30, 33).

20a Dan. 10:9; 1 Ne. 1:7;

Moses 1:9.

b IS—H 1:4.

21a 1 Sam. 3:1.

b TG Revelation.

22a James 5:10 (10–11):

Acts 5:38 (38–39).

b TG Industry.

c Jer. 1:19 (6–19).



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).



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“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?”

(Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “A New Witness for the Articles of Faith,” 8–10).

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Others Reject the First Vision and Persecution Follows

vision, he knew he had, and all the ^cpersecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

25 So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two ^aPersonages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was ^bhated and ^cpersecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me ^dfalsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not ^edeny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

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

Moroni continues to instruct the Prophet. (Verses 27–54.)

27 I continued to pursue my common vocations in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to ^aaffirm that I had seen a vision.

28 During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three—having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my ^afriends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me—I was left to all kinds of ^btemptations; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish ^cerrors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of ^dlevity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who

“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.’

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“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.’

“‘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.’

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“‘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).

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Lessons from the First Vision

By Michael Madsen

Priesthood and Family Department (Ensign, April, 2017)

Here are five questions you can ask yourself that can help you hear, understand, and respond to heaven's voice.

1. Have I “studied it out” (see D&C 9:8)? Have I done my homework?

- He speaks of “serious reflection,” of attending “several meetings” of various churches “as often as an occasion would permit,” and of “laboring under the extreme difficulties” of his dilemma

2. Have I looked to see if the Lord already provided the answer?

- He realized “it was impossible” for him “to come to any certain conclusion” on his own (Joseph Smith—History 1:8).

3. Have I searched the scriptures?

4. Have I sought the Lord's answer in a humble, reverent way?

5. Am I willing to act upon the revelation I receive—even if it is not the answer I was expecting?

THE RESTORATION OF THE FULNESS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

A BICENTENNIAL PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

We solemnly proclaim that God loves His children in every nation of the world. God the Father has given us the divine birth, the incomparable life, and the infinite atoning sacrifice of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. By the power of the Father, Jesus rose again and gained the victory over death. He is our Savior, our Exemplar, and our Redeemer.

Two hundred years ago, on a beautiful spring morning in 1820, young Joseph Smith, seeking to know which church to join, went into the woods to pray near his home in upstate New York, USA. He had questions regarding the salvation of his soul and trusted that God

the Western Hemisphere soon after His Resurrection. It teaches of life's purpose and explains the doctrine of Christ, which is central to that purpose. As a companion scripture to the Bible, the Book of Mormon testifies that all human beings are sons and daughters of a loving Father in Heaven, that He has a divine plan for our lives, and that His Son, Jesus Christ, speaks today as well as in days of old.

We declare that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized on April 6, 1830, is Christ's New Testament Church restored. This Church is anchored in the perfect life of its chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ,

Two hundred years ago, on a beautiful spring morning in 1820, young Joseph Smith, seeking to know which church to join, went into the woods to pray near his home in upstate New York, USA. He had questions regarding the salvation of his soul and trusted that God would direct him.

In humility, we declare that in answer to his prayer, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph and inaugurated the “restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21) as foretold in the Bible. In this vision, he learned that following the death of the original Apostles, Christ’s New Testament Church was lost from the earth.

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We affirm that under the direction of the Father and the

Two hundred years have now elapsed since this Restoration was initiated by God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Millions throughout the world have embraced a knowledge of these prophesied events.

We gladly declare that the promised Restoration goes forward through continuing revelation. The earth will never again be the same, as God will “gather together in one all things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10).

With reverence and gratitude, we as His Apostles invite all to know—as we do—that the heavens are open. We affirm that God is making known His will for His

never again be the same, as God will “gather together in one all things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10).

With reverence and gratitude, we as His Apostles invite all to know—as we do—that the heavens are open. We affirm that God is making known His will for His beloved sons and daughters. We testify that those who prayerfully study the message of the Restoration and act in faith will be blessed to gain their own witness of its divinity and of its purpose to prepare the world for the promised Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

President Russell M. Nelson as part of his message at the