

a long wait to end. I have not yet found that person. But I have found again the assurance that a loving God sends help in answer to prayer in this sacred work of redeeming our families, which is His work and His glory and to which we have pledged our hearts. I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Malachi 4:5–6.

2. Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16.
3. See Doctrine and Covenants 138.
4. See “Discourse by President Wilford Woodruff,” *Millennial Star*, May 28, 1894, 339–40.
5. See Luke 12:48.

The choir sang “We Ever Pray for Thee.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Remembering the Prophet Joseph

My brothers and sisters, as we have been reminded, we will commemorate next December the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. In the meantime, many things will occur in celebration of this significant occasion.

Books will be published, symposia participated in by various scholars, pageants, a new motion picture, and a great many other things.

In anticipation of this, I have felt, as 15th in succession from his great pinnacle of achievement, to offer my testimony of his divine calling.

The great things which God has revealed

I hold in my hand a precious little book. It was published in Liverpool, England, by Orson Pratt in 1853, 152 years ago. It is Lucy Mack Smith’s narrative of her son’s life.

It recounts in some detail Joseph’s various visits with the angel Moroni and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

The book tells that upon hearing of Joseph’s encounter with the angel, his brother Alvin suggested that the family get together and listen to him as he detailed “the great things which God has revealed to you” (*Biographical Sketches of Joseph*

Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors of Many Generations [1853], 84).

I take that statement as the subject of my talk—the great things which God has revealed through Joseph the Prophet. Permit me to name a few of many doctrines and practices which distinguish us from all other churches, and all of which have come of revelation to the youthful Prophet. They are familiar to you, but they are worth repeating and reflecting on.

The nature of Deity

The first of these, of course, is the manifestation of God Himself and His Beloved Son, the risen Lord Jesus Christ. This grand theophany is, in my judgment, the greatest such event since the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord in the meridian of time. We have no record of any other event to equal it.

For centuries men gathered and argued concerning the nature of Deity. Constantine assembled scholars of various factions at Nicaea in the year 325. After two months of bitter debate, they compromised on a definition which for generations has been the doctrinal statement among Christians concerning the Godhead.

I invite you to read that definition and compare it with the statement of the boy Joseph. He simply says that God stood be-

fore him and spoke to him. Joseph could see Him and could hear Him. He was in form like a man, a being of substance. Beside Him was the resurrected Lord, a separate being, whom He introduced as His Beloved Son and with whom Joseph also spoke.

I submit that in the short time of that remarkable vision, Joseph learned more concerning Deity than all of the scholars and clerics of the past.

In this divine revelation there was reaffirmed beyond doubt the reality of the literal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This knowledge of Deity, hidden from the world for centuries, was the first and great thing which God revealed to His chosen servant.

And upon the reality and truth of this vision rests the validity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Book of Mormon

I speak next of another very important thing which God revealed.

The Christian world accepts the Bible as the word of God. Most have no idea of how it came to us.

I have just completed reading a newly published book by a renowned scholar. It is apparent from information which he gives that the various books of the Bible were brought together in what appears to have been an unsystematic fashion. In some cases, the writings were not produced until long after the events they describe. One is led to ask, "Is the Bible true? Is it really the word of God?"

We reply that it is, insofar as it is translated correctly. The hand of the Lord was in its making. But it now does not stand alone. There is another witness of the significant and important truths found therein.

Scripture declares that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1).

The Book of Mormon has come forth by the gift and power of God. It speaks as a voice from the dust in testimony of the Son of God. It speaks of His birth, of His ministry, of His crucifixion and resurrection, and of His appearance to the righteous in the land Bountiful on the American continent.

It is a tangible thing that can be handled, that can be read, that can be tested. It carries within its covers a promise of its divine origin. Millions now have put it to the test and found it to be a true and sacred record.

It has been named by those not of our faith as one of 20 books ever published in America that have had the greatest influence upon those who have read them.

As the Bible is the testament of the Old World, the Book of Mormon is the testament of the New. They go hand in hand in declaration of Jesus as the Son of the Father.

In the past 10 years alone, 51 million copies have been distributed. It is now available in 106 languages.

This sacred book, which came forth as a revelation of the Almighty, is indeed another testament of the divinity of our Lord.

I would think that the whole Christian world would reach out and welcome it and embrace it as a vibrant testimony. It represents another great and basic contribution which came as a revelation to the Prophet.

The priesthood

Another is the restored priesthood. Priesthood is the authority to act in the name of God. That authority is the keystone of any religion. I have read another book recently. It deals with the Apostasy of the primitive Church. If the authority of that Church was lost, how was it to be replaced?

Priesthood authority came from the only place it could come, and that is from

heaven. It was bestowed under the hands of those who held it when the Savior walked the earth.

First, there was John the Baptist, who conferred the Aaronic, or lesser priesthood. This was followed by a visitation of Peter, James, and John, Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, who conferred upon Joseph and Oliver Cowdery the Melchizedek Priesthood, which had been received by these Apostles under the hands of the Lord Himself when in life He said:

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

How beautiful is the unfolding of the pattern of restoration which led to the organization of the Church in the year 1830, 175 years ago this week. The very name of the Church came of revelation. Whose church was it? Was it Joseph Smith’s? Was it Oliver Cowdery’s? No, it was the Church of Jesus Christ restored to earth in these latter days.

The potential for families to be eternal

Another great and singular revelation given to the Prophet was the plan for the eternal life of the family.

The family is a creation of the Almighty. It represents the most sacred of all relationships. It represents the most serious of all undertakings. It is the fundamental organization of society.

Through the revelations of God to His Prophet came the doctrine and authority under which families are sealed together not only for this life but for all eternity.

I think that if we had the capacity to teach effectively this one doctrine, it would capture the interest of millions of husbands and wives who love one another and who love their children, but whose marriage is in effect only “until death do you part.”

Innocence of children; method of baptism

The innocence of little children is another revelation which God has given through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph. The general practice is the baptism of infants to take away the effects of what is described as the sin of Adam and Eve. Under the doctrine of the Restoration, baptism is for the remission of one’s individual and personal sins. It becomes a covenant between God and man. It is performed at the age of accountability, when people are old enough to recognize right from wrong. It is by immersion, in symbolism of the death and burial of Jesus Christ and His coming forth in the Resurrection.

Salvation for the dead

I go on to mention another revealed truth.

We are told that God is no respecter of persons, and yet in no other church of which I am aware is provision made for those beyond the veil of death to receive every blessing which is afforded the living. The great doctrine of salvation for the dead is unique to this Church.

Men boast that they are “saved” and in the same breath admit that their forebears have not been and cannot be saved.

Jesus’s Atonement in behalf of all represents a great vicarious sacrifice. He set the pattern under which He became a proxy for all mankind. This pattern under which one man can act in behalf of another is carried forward in the ordinances of the house of the Lord. Here we serve in behalf of those who have died without a knowledge of the gospel. Theirs is the option to accept or reject the ordinance which is performed. They are placed on an equal footing with those who walk the earth. The dead are given the same opportunity as the living. Again, what a glorious and wonderful provision the Almighty has made through His revelation to His Prophet.

The eternal nature of man

The eternal nature of man has been revealed. We are sons and daughters of God. God is the Father of our spirits. We lived before we came here. We had personality. We were born into this life under a divine plan. We are here to test our worthiness, acting in the agency which God has given to us. When we die, we shall go on living. Our eternal life is comprised of three phases: one, our premortal existence; two, our mortal existence; and three, our postmortal existence. In death we die to this world and step through the veil into the sphere we are worthy to enter. This, again, is a unique, singular, and precious doctrine of this Church which has come through revelation.

Modern revelation

I offer this brief summary of the tremendous outpouring of knowledge and authority from God upon the head of His prophet. Were there time, I could speak of others. There is one more that I must mention. This is the principle of modern revelation. The article of faith which the Prophet wrote declares:

“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” (Articles of Faith 1:9).

A growing church, a church that is spreading across the earth in these complex times, needs constant revelation from the throne of heaven to guide it and move it forward.

With prayer and anxious seeking of the will of the Lord, we testify that direction is received, that revelation comes, and that the Lord blesses His Church as it moves on its path of destiny.

Go forward in faith

On the solid foundation of the Prophet Joseph’s divine calling and the revelations

of God which came through him, we go forward. Much has been accomplished in bringing us to this present day. But there is much more to be done in the process of taking this restored gospel to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).

I rejoice in the opportunity of association with you as we go forward in faith. The burden is at times heavy, as you well know. But let us not complain. Let us walk in faith, each doing our part.

An incomparable outpouring

In this year of celebration, through our own performance, let us honor the Prophet, through whom God has revealed so much.

The sun rose on Joseph’s life on a cold day in Vermont in 1805. It set in Illinois on a sultry afternoon in 1844. During the brief 38½ years of his life, there came through him an incomparable outpouring of knowledge, gifts, and doctrine. Looked at objectively, there is nothing to compare with it. Subjectively, it is the substance of the personal testimony of millions of Latter-day Saints across the earth. You and I are honored to be among these.

As a boy I loved to hear a man who, with a rich baritone voice, sang the words of John Taylor:

The Seer, the Seer, Joseph, the Seer! . . .
 I love to dwell on his memory dear;
 The chosen of God and the friend of
 man,
 He brought the priesthood back again;
 He gazed on the past and the future,
 too, . . .
 And opened the heavenly world to view.
 [“The Seer, Joseph, the Seer,” *Hymns*
 (1948), no. 296]

He was truly a seer. He was a revelator. He was a prophet of the living God who has spoken to his own and all future generations.

To this I add my solemn witness of the divinity of his calling, of the virtue of his life, and of the sealing of his testimony with his death, in the sacred name of our Redeemer, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Praise to the Man."
Elder Shirley D. Christensen offered the benediction.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 175th Annual General Conference convened in the Conference Center at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 3, 2005. President Thomas S. Monson conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session. Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg directed the choir, and Linda Margetts was the organist.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began.

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this afternoon to the fifth and concluding session of the 175th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Gordon B. Hinckley, who presides at this conference, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this session.

We extend our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, the Internet, or satellite transmission.

The music for this session will be provided by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg, with Linda Margetts at the organ.

The choir will open these services by singing "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Carlos H. Amado of the Seventy.

Following the invocation, the choir will sing "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" At the conclusion of the singing, Elders L. Tom Perry and Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will address us. They will be followed by Elder Robert J. Whetten of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty."

Elder Carlos H. Amado offered the invocation.

The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder L. Tom Perry

What seek ye?

It is always difficult to follow this magnificent choir. Thank you, choir, again for your beautiful music.

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?" (John 1:35–38).

We find a world today looking for answers to the question "What seek ye?" in so many different ways. Too many are