



Type: Manual Lesson

Lesson 40 - The Ancestry and Birth of Joseph Smith

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Manual: *Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets*

Published: Salt Lake City; George Q. Cannon & Sons Company, 1898

Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets.

LESSON 40.—THE ANCESTRY AND BIRTH OF JOSEPH SMITH.

TEXT.—II. Nephi iii : 14, 15.

And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him, shall be confounded; for this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins, shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of the fulfilling of this promise.

And his name shall be called after me: and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation.

LESSON STATEMENT.

For several generations, previous to the birth of the Prophet, his forefathers had been honest, industrious farmers in New England. The first of his ancestors to come to America, from England, was Robert Smith, who emigrated to this country about the middle of the seventeenth century. He settled in New England, and there his descendants lived for five generations. Joseph Smith, who was the fourth in descent from Robert, married Lucy Mack, Jan. 24, 1796. Her ancestors had also been husbandmen, and therefore all of the sturdy qualities attaching to that class were inherited by the Prophet.

During the early part of their married life Joseph and Lucy (who had settled in the town of Tunbridge, Vermont,) were prosperous in a wordly sense, but through the treachery of a friend they were deprived of all their property. Soon afterward they removed to Sharon, in the same State, where they lived under very unfavorable circumstances until after the birth of their son Joseph, which occurred at Sharon, Windsor Co., Vermont, December 23, 1805.

The poverty, ill health and other chastenings of the parents of Joseph were effectual in teaching the family to be humble and dependent upon their Heavenly Father. Had

it been otherwise—had Joseph and his parents been successful in obtaining wealth, the young man's spirit might have been less perfectly moulded to suit the purposes of his Heavenly Father. Pride might have taken the place of humility, and self-conceit, of faith and trust.

It is a significant fact that Joseph's grandfather, Asael Smith, possessed sufficient of the spirit of prophecy to declare that one of his descendants should exert a great influence on the religious belief of his associates. Said he, "It has been borne in upon my soul that one of my descendants will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith."

How literally has this been fulfilled! How completely is the faith established by our Heavenly Father through the Prophet Joseph revolutionizing the religious belief of this day!

And Asael Smith lived to witness the commencement of the fulfillment of his prediction, for a short time before his death he was permitted to behold a copy of the Book of Mormon; and as he was about to depart from this earth, he warned his descendants to take heed of this work and to accept the ministry of Joseph, for that which he was about to bring forth was of God.

The birth of Joseph Smith marks an important era in the world's history. Thousands can testify at the present time that he was one of the greatest prophets the world has ever known. To him were intrusted the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of times. His work will yet be known and his praises sung in all nations under heaven. And yet the man destined to such high honor was

born of humble parents, in poverty, in an obscure town among the backwoods of Vermont.

Truly the ways of God are past the comprehension of feeble, mortal man.

NOTES.

ROBERT SMITH.—Date of birth not known. Emigrated from England to America about the middle of the seventeenth century.

SAMUEL SMITH.—Son of Robert Smith and his wife Mary. Born Jan. 26, 1666. Married to Rebecca Curtis Jan. 25, 1707.

SAMUEL SMITH, JUN.—Born Jan. 26, 1714. Married Priscilla Gould.

ASAEI SMITH.—Son of Samuel Smith, Jr., and Priscilla Gould, and grandfather of the Prophet. Born March 1, 1744. Married Mary Duty.

JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.—Son of Asael Smith and father of the Prophet. Born July 12, 1771. Married Jan. 24, 1796, to Lucy Mack, at Tunbridge, Vermont.

LUCY MACK.—Mother of the Prophet. Daughter of Solomon and Lydia Mack, and granddaughter of Ebenezer Mack. Born July 8, 1776. The Prophet was the fourth child of Joseph and Lucy, and they had six children after him.

VERMONT.—One of the New England States. Bounded on the east by New Hampshire, on the west by New York, on the north by Canada and on the south by Massachusetts. Sharon was situated in the eastern part of the State, and was a small farming settlement.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. Though one of the greatest of prophets, Joseph Smith was born in the most humble circumstances. 2. That his parents, though poor, were upright and God-fearing people. 3. That one of Joseph's ancestors predicted the Prophet's mission. 4. That this predic-

tion was literally fulfilled. 5. That through ill-health and poverty, Joseph and his parents were taught lessons of humility and faithfulness. 6. That Joseph Smith was one of the greatest prophets of any dispensation. 7. That he holds the keys of the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times. 8. That we cannot judge the ways of God by man's standard.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. Who was the first of Joseph's ancestors to come to America? 2. What was the date of his emigration? 3. In what part of the United States did he live? 4. What occupation did he and his descendants follow? 5. What was his son's name? 6. When was he born? 7. When did he marry? 8. Who was his son? 9. What do you know of this son's birth and marriage? 10. Who was his son? 11. What relation did Asael bear to the prophet? 12. What did he say concerning his descendants? 13. How did he see the fulfillment of his prediction? 14. When was the father of the prophet born? 15. Whom did he marry? 16. How many children were born to them before the birth of Joseph? 17. How many children had they in all? 18. When and where was their son Joseph born? 19. How had they previously lost their property? 20. What great lesson did their trials teach them? 21. Where was Sharon? 22. What do you know of Vermont? 23. What can you say of the importance of Joseph's mission? 24. What honor will yet be done him?