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## Lesson 51 - Joseph Smith's First Vision

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# Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets.

## LESSON 51.—JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST VISION.

TIME.—*Early Spring, 1820.* PLACE.—*Near Manchester, Ontario Co., N. Y.*

TEXT.—*Luke 9: 35.*

And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear him.

### LESSON STATEMENT.

The parents of Joseph remained in Sharon for some time after his birth, struggling with poverty, and striving in every possible way to accumulate means sufficient for the education of their children. When Joseph was ten years of age the family removed to New York, settling at first in Palmyra, and four years later in Manchester, Ontario County.

The father still followed the calling of a farmer, and the older boys, Joseph included, rendered valuable assistance to him in his labor.

Though of an extremely religious disposition, the elder Joseph could not see anything of a satisfactory character in the teachings of the religious sects of the day, and consequently had not attached himself to any of them. Some of the members of the family had joined the Presbyterian church, and Joseph rather inclined towards the Methodist belief, though, like his father, he had not become a member of any of the churches.

In the early part of the year 1820, Joseph being then in his 15th year, a religious revival swept over the section of the country where the Smith family lived, various denominations holding their meetings, and each striving to gain the greatest number of members. Joseph was made a special object of concern by the various ministers, and their contradictory teachings left him in a state of great perplexity. In spite

however, of all the pressure brought to bear upon him, he did not connect himself with any church; principally because he could not decide which sect was most likely to lead him to salvation.

While pondering upon this important subject, he read in James' Epistle, 1: 5, "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." Deeply impressed with these words, Joseph determined to carry them into effect.

One morning in early spring, Joseph retired to the woods near his home and knelt down before his Maker. As he was about to begin his prayer, a strange power seized him, and it seemed for a moment that he would be destroyed. He struggled against the evil one, and poured out his soul to God, although unable to utter a word. Suddenly, above him in the heavens, a most brilliant light appeared, which, gradually descending, shone upon him. He was immediately freed from the evil power, and felt a joyous and holy influence such as he could not describe.

Two glorious personages made their appearance in the midst of the light, and one, the Father, pointing to the other, said, with a look of divine love, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON: HEAR HIM!" As soon as he could command his voice, Joseph asked which of the different churches he should join. Imagine his surprise when Jesus told him that he should join neither of them, for all had departed from the true way. Said the

Savior: "They draw near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of Godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

Having repeated with great earnestness the command that Joseph should not unite with any of the religious denominations, the Father and the Son, together with the beautiful light which had accompanied them, disappeared from his sight, leaving him lying upon his back, and gazing upward.

Filled with an intense feeling of joy and satisfaction, Joseph hastened to communicate the glad tidings to his relatives and friends. The members of his father's family, almost without exception, accepted the message he brought to them; but the religious ministers, who had professed so much regard for him, scoffed at the idea of his receiving a revelation, stating that the visitation was from Satan, for the time of vision and revelation had long since gone. When he still insisted that he knew it to be of God, they turned against him, and even circulated the most absurd and untruthful statements concerning his character. From that time Joseph's trials and persecutions commenced. So is God's truth always rejected by an unbelieving world.

#### NOTE.

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON.—These words have been used by our Heavenly Father when referring to our Lord Jesus Christ on many important occasions; the baptism of our Savior; His transfiguration; His visit to the Nephites; and on the occasion related above.—*Mark 1: 11; 9: 7. Luke 9: 35. III. Nephi 11: 6, 7.*

#### WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That Joseph's youth was spent in hard labor. 2. That neither he nor his father could be satisfied with the creeds of men. 3. That Joseph's faith was great. 4. That he asked God for the wisdom he needed. 5. That God answers the prayer of faith. 6. That Satan is always trying to prevent us from worshipping God. 7. That none

of the sectarian churches have the true Gospel. 8. That men are always persecuted by the world for testifying of the Gospel. 9. That the importance of this dispensation is shown by its having been opened or inaugurated by the appearance of both the Father and the Son. 10. That God the Father acknowledged and testified to Jesus being His well beloved Son.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What is the subject of this lesson? 2. What is a vision? 3. What are the benefits of visions? 4. When did the event occur referred to in this lesson? 5. Where is Manchester? 6. What do you know of New York? 7. How old was Joseph when his father moved there? 8. What was the financial condition of the family? 9. Why had Joseph's father not joined any church? 10. To what church did some of the members of the family belong? 11. To what faith did Joseph incline? 12. What do you know of Presbyterians and Methodists? 13. In what year did a noted religious revival occur near Joseph's home? 14. What is the nature of a religious revival? 15. What caused Joseph's perplexity? 16. Why did he not join any church? 17. What passage from the Bible particularly impressed him at this time? 18. What did he determine to do? 19. As he was praying what power seized him? 20. What did he do to escape from this evil power? 21. What came in answer to his prayer? 22. What happened as soon as the light rested upon him? 23. What were his feelings then? 24. Who appeared to him? 25. Who is the Father? 26. Who is the Son? 27. What did the Father say? 28. What question did Joseph ask? 29. What was the answer of Jesus? 30. What did he command Joseph not to do? 31. When they left him in what position was Joseph? 32. What were his feelings? 33. What did he hasten to do? 34. How did his relatives receive his message? 35. How was he treated by the religious ministers? 36. What did they say about visions? 37. How is God's truth always treated by the world? 38. On what other occasions has God called Jesus His Beloved Son?