

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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God called [Joseph Smith] to occupy the position that he did. How long ago? Thousands of years ago . . . Prophets prophesied about his coming, that a man should arise whose name should be Joseph, and that his father's name should be Joseph, and also that he should be a descendant of that Joseph who was sold into Egypt [JD 26:106].

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JAMES R. CLARK

SEED OF JOSEPH

The Book of Mormon teaches that Joseph, son of Jacob, "obtained a promise of the Lord" that his seed would become a "righteous branch unto the house of Israel" (2 Ne. 3:5) and that a latter-day descendant also named Joseph would have a rôle in bringing Joseph's seed and all the house of Israel "unto salvation" (2 Ne. 3:15).

While many of Joseph's posterity were among the ten tribes of Israel taken into captivity about 722 B.C. (2 Kgs. 17:5–6), a few descendants had settled in Jerusalem some 200 years earlier (cf. 2 Chr. 15:9–10). From those came the Book of Mormon leaders LEHI and ISHMAEL, who, about 600 B.C., led their families to the Western Hemisphere. Their descendants were later called "a remnant of the seed of Joseph" (Alma 46:23–24). Lehi reported that Joseph's prophecies concerning his seed included the following: (1) they would become a righteous people; (2) the Messiah would manifest himself to them; (3) a latter-day SEER like Moses, raised up by God from Joseph's seed, would himself be called Joseph (2 Ne. 3:1–25); and (4) the righteous seed of the ancient Joseph who accept the gospel will help in building the NEW JERUSALEM and will participate in events of the LAST DAYS (3 Ne. 20:10–28; 21:2–26).

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LIESEL C. MCBRIDE

JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY

The account called Joseph Smith—History, as it appears in the Pearl of Great Price, tells of the Prophet's experiences from his early years through May 1829. Franklin D. Richards, an early apostle, extracted this part of Joseph SMITH's history from the much longer HISTORY OF THE CHURCH printed in the TIMES AND SEASONS (T&S 3:726), and published the extract in 1851. In the preface of the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price, Richards expressed a hope that this collection of precious truths would increase the members' ability to defend the faith. Joseph Smith—History, the name now given to the historical extract, became canonized scripture to the members of the Church when they accepted the Pearl of Great Price by vote at the October 10, 1880, General Conference (see PEARL OF GREAT PRICE: CONTENTS AND PUBLICATION).

This account in the Pearl of Great Price was not the first attempt to record the Prophet's early experiences. From the organization of the Church in 1830, he understood the importance of keeping records but his efforts were hindered by lawsuits, imprisonments, poverty, and mobs. John Whitmer kept a history between 1830 and 1832 that was lost for many years but is now available again, and Oliver COWDERY wrote eight letters about Joseph Smith's early visions that were published in MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE in 1834–1835. Joseph Smith began work on a history between July and November 1832; it opened with the words "A History of the life of Joseph Smith, Jr., an account of his marvilous [sic] experience," and described his early visions. Various clerks and historians made three more beginnings between 1834 and 1836. In the trying years 1837 and 1838, Joseph Smith and the First Presidency worked on the history of the Church, sometimes taking a grammar lesson before the writing sessions. Finally, in June 1839, Joseph undertook the work again. Materials from the previous efforts were assimilated into this new history, which eventually was published in the *Times and Seasons*, beginning March 1, 1842 (T&S 3:706). Joseph Smith—History, as we now have it in the Pearl of Great Price, was part of this 1839 version of the history of the Church.

The history introduces Joseph by giving a brief record of his ancestry and his own birth on December 23, 1805, in the township of Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, one of eleven children

of Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith. It tells of the religious conditions that led to Joseph Smith's FIRST VISION and describes what he saw and heard when the Father and Son appeared, in a direct, first-person account that makes no effort to adorn the events it relates. Oliver Cowdery, Joseph's close associate in these early years, wrote a much more ornate narrative of the early experiences. Joseph Smith simply described what happened to him, from the First Vision, through the visitation of MORONI₂, the visits to the hill CUMORAH, the translation of the gold plates, and to the visit of John the Baptist to restore the Aaronic Priesthood (see AARONIC PRIESTHOOD: RESTORATION).

For many years the Church published Joseph Smith—History as a pamphlet with the title *Joseph Smith's Own Story*. Missionaries carried it to all parts of the world to help explain Joseph Smith's part in the restoration of the gospel in modern times.

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JOSEPH GRANT STEVENSON

JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW

Joseph Smith—Matthew is an extract from the JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (JST), as revealed to the Prophet Joseph SMITH in 1831, and comprises a revision of Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives recorded in Matthew 23:39 through chapter 24. First published in Ohio in the mid-1830s as a broadside, Joseph Smith—Matthew was republished in 1851 as part of the original PEARL OF GREAT PRICE (Matthews, p. 52).

On March 7, 1831, Joseph Smith was directed to begin a translation of the New Testament "that ye may be prepared for the things to come" (D&C 45:60–61). In Matthew 24, Jesus foretold the impending destruction of Jerusalem. He also spoke of his own SECOND COMING and the destruction of the wicked.

The following are some of the significant additions and clarifications of Joseph Smith—Matthew to the King James text:

1. Jesus' disciples clearly understood that he would come again in glory "in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him" (JS—M 1:1).
2. Verses 4–22 of the King James text refer to "things I have spoken unto you concerning the Jews" (JS—M 1:21).
3. Verses 6, 7, and 14 of KJV are repositioned from the early part of the chapter, which deals with the Jews of New Testament times, to the latter part of the chapter, which concerns the second coming.
4. The end of the world is not the end of the earth, but the "destruction of the wicked" (JS—M 1:4, 55).
5. The parable in KJV verse 28 is completed to read, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together; so likewise shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth" (JS—M 1:27).
6. The "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," applies both to conditions at the destruction of Jerusalem and to Jesus' second coming (JS—M 1:12, 32).

The plainness and clarity of Joseph Smith—Matthew eliminate much of the confusion that has surrounded Matthew 24. It states that the gospel must be preached in all the world and the elect gathered before the second coming (JS—M 1:31). Finally, the elect will know the signs of the times and will be prepared and preserved during the events of the last days.

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DAVID T. GILES

JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (JST)

Joseph SMITH, the first PROPHET of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, made a "new translation" of the Bible, using the text of the King James Version (KJV). This work differs from the KJV in at least 3,410 verses and consists of additions, deletions, rearrangements, and other alterations that cause it to vary not only from the KJV