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Lesson 49 - Why the Boy Joseph Was Chosen

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LESSON 49.—WHY THE BOY JOSEPH WAS CHOSEN.

TEXT.—*James 2: 5.*

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

LESSON STATEMENT.

In attempting to prove that Joseph Smith was not a true prophet, his enemies point to the fact that he was a young, ignorant boy at the time he claimed to have received his first vision. They ask how it is that God would choose an unlearned boy for His work, when there was so many thousands of men who had spent their entire time from early youth in teaching the people, who were well versed in the Scriptures, having given up the best part of their lives to their study. "Would it not have been better," say these persons, "for God to choose one already educated to the ministry, rather than one whom He would have to instruct in the principles of the Gospel?"

In answer to this question and these objections, we can say that God showed His infinite wisdom in making choice of so humble an instrument as Joseph Smith to perform the great labor of restoring the Gospel. In the first place, it was necessary that a person should be chosen who had not been taught in the sectarian doctrines of the day, which God Himself has declared to be false. What advantage would it have been, to select a man who had been

engaged all his life in teaching false doctrine, to introduce the true Gospel? You can see at once that the idea is absurd?

Joseph had not been taught in the religious notions of his time. His mind was a blank, so far as doctrine was concerned, prepared to receive such impressions as God should see fit to make upon it. He was humble, and would willingly receive and treasure up God's word to him. Besides all this he was comparatively innocent of the sins so prevalent in the world, and God delights in innocence and purity. What wonder is it, then, that He should have chosen the humble boy, Joseph, for the great latter-day work? Again, prophets in ancient times have foretold the work which Joseph has performed, and the instrument chosen to carry it out. One of these was Joseph, who was sold into Egypt. Lehi tells us (11. Nephi 3: 14, 15) that Joseph, in speaking of the latter times, said, "Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him, shall be confounded * * * *. 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 to salvation."

Here Joseph not only points out the fact that a prophet should be raised up, but he even declares that the name of that prophet should be the same as his, and that he should be named after his father. All these predictions were fulfilled in Joseph Smith, the prophet.

Nor is it a new thing for God to select a boy for an important labor. The boy David, the youngest son of Jesse, was chosen to be king of Israel. The boy Samuel was called to succeed Eli in his important position, and in his more advanced age, he became one of the greatest prophets Israel had ever known.

All evidences point to the fact that God showed His supreme wisdom in the selection of the boy Joseph to be His latter-day prophet.

NOTES.

THE GOSPEL.—The Gospel is the revealed plan of salvation, given for men to follow, that they may obtain eternal life. It has been revealed to men in different periods of the world's history, whenever God has had a dispensation upon the earth. It is everlasting and unchangeable. Whenever it has been entrusted to men, they have had power and authority to officiate in its ordinances, certain signs always following their administrations. Jesus speaks of these signs (Mark, 16: 17, 18,) where He promises that many mighty works shall be performed by those who accept the Gospel. The creeds taught in the various sectarian churches can not be properly called the Gospel, for they are impure, being a mixture of Gospel truths with the false ideas of men. The divine plan of salvation has been revealed again to Joseph Smith in these days, and the Latter-day Saints can justly claim to possess the true Gospel.

DAVID.—The second king of the Israelites. He was the youngest son of Jesse, and was chosen while yet a boy to succeed Saul upon the throne, after that king had transgressed the law of God. David was a prophet, as well as a king and a warrior, and he did much to establish the power and glory of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. He reigned from 1055 to 1015 B. C. A full account of his life is given in the Book of Samuel.

SAMUEL.—A great prophet over Israel during the latter part of the reign of the judges, and the greater part of Saul's reign. He was consecrated to the Lord by his mother, Hannah, when he was a little child, and

was appointed to act in the duties of a deacon in the temple. When the family of Eli, the High Priest, fell into sin, Samuel, then a boy of about twelve years, was told of Eli's impending fall. Samuel succeeded Eli as judge over Israel, and became the prophet to the Israelites. He proved himself faithful in all the positions he occupied, and died at the advanced age of 100 years.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That God often chooses humble instruments to perform His work.
2. That He is pleased with the purity of His children.
3. That Joseph Smith's mission was foretold by many ancient prophets.
4. That he was a prophet called of God.
5. That the Gospel is the plan of salvation.
6. That it is believed in and observed by the Latter-day Saints.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What great objection have Joseph Smith's enemies raised to the divinity of his mission?
2. What kind of a person do they say could better have been chosen?
3. Why would such a choice as they suggest have been really unwise?
4. Why was it better to select an unlearned boy than a learned minister?
5. By whom was Joseph Smith's work predicted?
6. What did Joseph of ancient times say about him?
7. Where do you find this passage?
8. Show evidence that this remark refers to Joseph Smith.
9. In what other cases have boys been chosen to perform God's labor?
10. What do you know of David?
11. Of Samuel?
12. To what fact do all the above evidences point?

ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES.

HUMBLE INSTRUMENTS.—Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.—*Matt. 18: 4.*

Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.—*Psalms 131: 1.*