

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure  
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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nation in Carthage, Hyrum refused to leave him, even though Joseph requested that Hyrum flee with his family to Cincinnati. He went with Joseph to Carthage in June 1844 and was charged with riot and treason, along with his brother. When a mob stormed the jail where they were confined awaiting trial, Hyrum, standing to hold the door shut, was the first to die from gunfire through the door. Joseph and Hyrum became dual martyrs. Like many of “the Lord’s anointed in ancient times,” they sealed their works with their own blood; “in life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated” (D&C 135:3; *see also* CARTHAGE JAIL; MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH AND HYRUM SMITH).

Hyrum Smith is credited in Church history with being an astute organizer who gave ecclesiastical leadership to the emerging Church. As a person, he was considered a man without guile. One scripture concerning him reads, “I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart” (D&C 124:15). With a love for Hyrum that was stronger than death, Joseph once described him as possessing “the mildness of a lamb, and the integrity of a Job, and in short, the meekness and humility of Christ” (HC 2:338). When John Taylor looked upon Hyrum’s slain body, he reflected, “He was a great and good man, and my soul was cemented to his. If ever there was an exemplary, honest, and virtuous man, an embodiment of all that is noble in the human form, Hyrum Smith was its representative” (HC 7:107).

Hyrum and his first wife, Jerusha, had four daughters and two sons. After Jerusha’s death, he married Mary Fielding in 1837, and she bore him a son and a daughter. When Joseph Smith introduced PLURAL MARRIAGE to him, Hyrum at first



Hyrum Smith’s home in Kirtland, Ohio.

opposed the idea, but when converted to the principle, he became one of its staunchest advocates.

Many of Hyrum’s descendants have played significant roles in Church history. A son, Joseph F. SMITH, became the sixth President of the Church, and a grandson, Joseph Fielding SMITH, became the tenth President. Four of the six Patriarchs to the Church since 1845 have been descendants of Hyrum Smith.

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## SMITH, JOSEPH

[This entry is divided into four parts:

The Prophet

Teachings of Joseph Smith

Writings of Joseph Smith

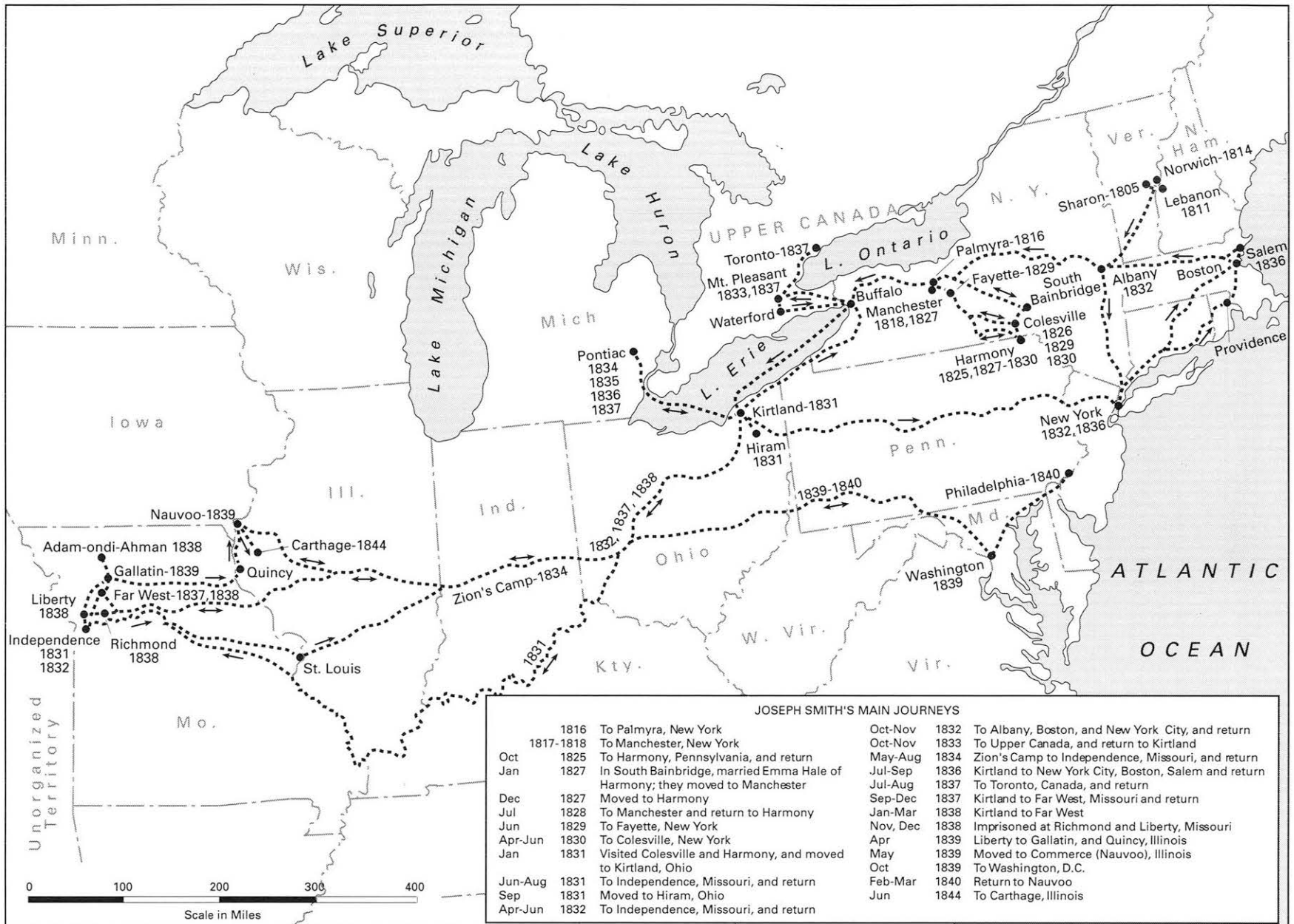
Legal Trials of Joseph Smith

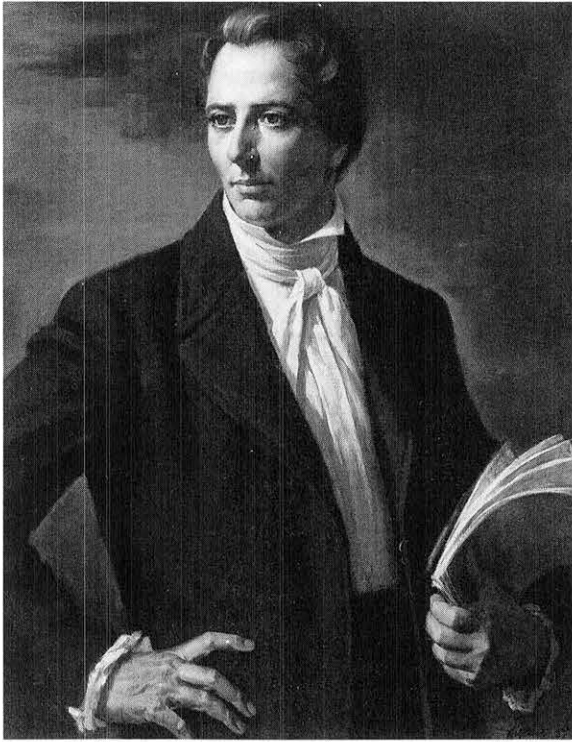
The Prophet is a biography of Joseph Smith; Teachings of Joseph Smith sketches his thought and teachings; Writings of Joseph Smith examines his personal writings and the body of scripture, revelations, and history resulting from his ministry; and Trials of Joseph Smith recounts his legal and judicial history. *See also* Visions of Joseph Smith.

Historical overviews of LDS history during the Joseph Smith period are History of the Church: c. 1820–1831; c. 1831–1844. For entries dealing with his prophetic calling consult Prophet Joseph Smith. For Joseph Smith’s family background, see Smith Family and Smith Family Ancestors; *see also* entries for his mother, Lucy Mack Smith; his father, Joseph Smith, Sr.; his brother Hyrum Smith, and his wife, Emma Hale Smith.]

#### THE PROPHET

Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844), often referred to as the Prophet Joseph Smith, was the founding PROPHET of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Latter-day Saints call him “the Prophet” because, in the tradition of Old and New Testament prophets, he depended on REVELATION from God for his teachings, not on his own learning. They accept his revelations, many of them published as the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS and





*Joseph Smith*, by Alvin Gittens (1959, oil on canvas, 31" × 39"). Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, first elder and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His inspiration and genius single him out among the great spiritual leaders of all time.

as the PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, as scripture to accompany the Bible. As a young man, Joseph Smith also translated a sacred record from ancient America known as the BOOK OF MORMON. These revelations and records restored to the earth the pure gospel of Christ. Joseph Smith's role in history was to found the Church of Jesus Christ based on this restored gospel in preparation for the second coming of Christ.

Little in his background pointed toward this momentous life. Joseph Smith's ancestors were ordinary New England farm people. His Smith ancestors emigrated from England to America in the seventeenth century and settled in Topsfield, Massachusetts, where they attained local distinction. His grandfather Asael Smith, unable at the time to pay the debts on the family farm, sold the farm, liquidated the debts, and migrated in 1791 to

Tunbridge, Vermont, where he purchased enough land to provide for his sons. Joseph Smith's Mack ancestors, from Scotland, settled in Lyme, Connecticut, prospered for a while, and then fell on hard times. Joseph's grandfather Solomon Mack attempted various enterprises in New England and New York, with little financial success. One of the Mack sons moved to Tunbridge, and through him Lucy Mack met Joseph Smith, Sr., one of Asael's sons. The pair married in 1796. They had eleven children, nine of whom lived to adulthood. Joseph Smith, Jr., born December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont, was the third son to live and the fourth child.

Young Joseph had little formal schooling. His parents lost their Tunbridge farm in 1803 through a failed business venture and for the next fourteen years moved from one tenant farm to another. In 1816 they migrated to Palmyra, New York, just north of the Finger Lakes, where in 1817 they purchased a farm in Farmington (later Manchester), the township immediately south of Palmyra. Clearing land and wresting a living from the soil left little time for school. "As it required the exertions of all that were able to render any assistance for the support of the Family," Joseph wrote in 1832, "we were deprived of the bennifit of an education suffice it to say I was nearly instructid in reading writing and the ground rules of Arithmatic which constuted my whole literary acuirements" (Jessee, 1989–, 1:5). His mother described him as "much less inclined to the perusal of books than any of the rest of the children, but far more given to meditation and deep study" (Smith, p. 84). His knowledge of the Bible and his biblical style of writing suggest that much of his early education came from that source.

One subject he pondered was religion. His parents had been reared under the influence of New England Congregationalism but, dissatisfied with the preachers around them, they were not regular churchgoers. Both parents had deep religious experiences and an intense longing for salvation, without having a satisfactory way to worship. A few years after settling in Palmyra, Lucy Smith and three of the children joined the Presbyterians; Joseph, Sr., and the others stayed home, Joseph, Jr., among them. Young Joseph was deeply perplexed about which church to join, and the preach-

ing of the revival ministers in the area intensified his uncertainty.

In the spring of 1820, when he was just fourteen, Joseph turned directly to God for guidance. The answer was astonishing. As he prayed in the woods near his house, the Father and the Son appeared to him. Assuring him that his sins were forgiven, the Lord told him that none of the churches were right and that he should join none. Latter-day Saints call this Joseph Smith's FIRST VISION, the initial event in the RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL. At the time, it made little impression on the people around Joseph Smith. He told a minister about the vision and was rebuffed. Believing the Bible sufficient, ministers were skeptical of direct revelation. The scorn upset Joseph, who had only tried to report his actual experience, and alienated him still further from the churches.

After three years with no further revelations, Joseph wondered if he still was in favor with God and prayed again for direction and forgiveness. The vision he received on September 21, 1823, set the course of his life for the next seven years. An angel appeared and instructed him about a sacred record of an ancient people. This angel, MORONI<sub>2</sub>, told Joseph that he was to obtain the record, written on GOLD PLATES, and translate it. He also told him that God's covenant with ancient Israel was about to be fulfilled, that preparation for the second coming of Christ was about to commence, and that the gospel was to be preached to all nations to prepare a people for Christ's millennial reign. In a vision Joseph saw the hill near his home where the plates were buried. When he went the next day to get the plates, the angel stopped him. He was told that he must wait four years to obtain the plates and that, until then, he was to return each year for instructions. On September 22, 1827, he obtained the plates from which he translated the Book of Mormon (*see* MORONI, VISITATIONS OF).

The discovery of gold plates in a hillside resonated strangely with other experiences of the Smith family. Like many other New Englanders, they were familiar with searches for lost treasure by supernatural means. Joseph Smith's father was reputed to be one of these treasure-seekers, and Joseph Smith himself had found a stone, called a SEER STONE, which reportedly enabled him to find lost objects. Treasure-seekers wanted to employ him to help with their searches. One, a man named Josiah Stowell (sometimes spelled Stoal), hired Joseph and his father in 1825 to dig for a

supposed Spanish treasure near HARMONY, PENNSYLVANIA. The effort came to nothing, and the Smiths returned home, but the neighbors continued to think of the Smiths as part of the treasure-seeking company. Joseph Smith had to learn, in his four years of waiting, to appreciate the plates solely for their religious worth and not for their monetary value. The angel forbade Joseph to remove the plates on his first viewing because thoughts of their commercial worth had crossed his mind. Joseph had to learn to focus on the religious purpose of the plates and put aside considerations of their value as gold.

While working in Harmony in 1825, Joseph Smith met Emma Hale at the Hale home where he and his father boarded. He continued seeing her through the next year while working at other jobs in the area, and on January 18, 1827, they married. She was tall, straight, slender, and dark-haired; he stood over six feet tall with broad chest and shoulders, light brown hair, and blue eyes. After the wedding they went to live with the Smith family in Manchester, close to the hill Cumorah where the plates still lay buried.

On September 22, 1827, Joseph Smith went to the hill for the fifth time. This time the angel permitted him to take the plates, with strict instructions to show them to no one. Designing people tried strenuously to get the plates, however, and he was not left in peace to begin translation. Eventually he and Emma were compelled to move, for their safety, to Harmony, near Emma's family.

For the next three years, Joseph's work depended on the support of a few loyal friends who came to his aid and helped buffer him from troublesome inquirers. His open manner inspired confidence, and his candor in simply narrating what had happened to him disarmed skepticism. His brother later wrote that Joseph's youth, his lack of education, and his "whole character and disposition" convinced the family that he was incapable of "giving utterance to anything but the truth" (*William Smith on Mormonism*, Lamoni, Iowa, 1883, pp. 9–10). By the time the translation was completed and the Book of Mormon published, three or four dozen people believed in his mission and divine gifts.

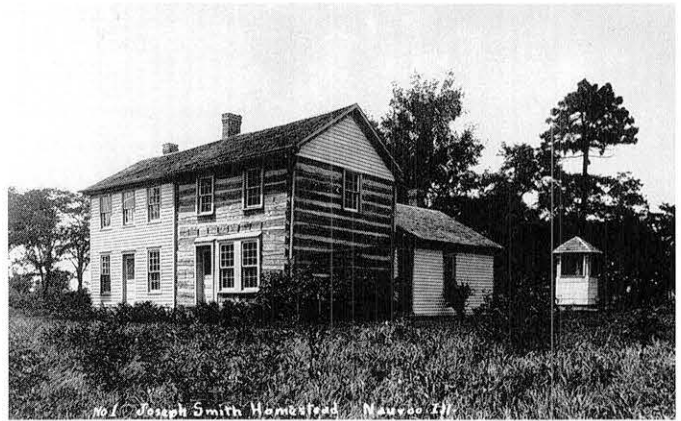
Martin HARRIS, a prosperous Palmyra farmer, was one of these friends. He helped Joseph move to Harmony and then moved there himself to help with the translation. To enable him to translate,

Joseph received with the plates a special instrument called interpreters or URIM AND THUMMIM. As he dictated, Martin Harris wrote (*see* BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION BY JOSEPH SMITH). In the spring of 1828, after three months of work, Martin Harris took the 116 pages of the translation home to show his wife, and they were lost or stolen. This interrupted the translation and left Joseph desolate. Soon after, he received a scathing rebuke in a revelation (D&C 3). About this time, Joseph and Emma's firstborn son died on the day of his birth, June 15, 1828, wrenching Joseph's feelings even further.

Translation resumed in the fall of 1828, continuing intermittently until the spring of 1829. Then Oliver COWDERY, a schoolteacher who learned of the plates from Joseph's parents, believed in Joseph and agreed to take dictation. From April to June 1829 they labored together. When the two friends prayed on May 15 for an understanding of baptism, a messenger who announced himself as John the Baptist appeared, conferred priesthood authority upon them, and instructed them to baptize each other (*see* AARONIC PRIESTHOOD: RESTORATION OF). Oliver later wrote: "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom" (JS—H 1:71n).

Oliver was not the only additional witness to the revelations. When opposition began to build in Harmony, Oliver and Joseph moved in June 1829 to FAYETTE, NEW YORK, to the family home of Oliver's friend David WHITMER. Here again Joseph received needed support from people who believed in him. Once the translation was completed, Joseph was told that others would be allowed to see the plates, which until that time only he had viewed. The angel Moroni appeared to Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer and showed them the gold plates while a voice from heaven declared that the translation was done by the power of God and was true (*see* BOOK OF MORMON WITNESSES). Joseph's mother reported that Joseph came into the house after this revelation and threw himself down beside her, exclaiming that at last someone else had seen the plates. "Now they know for themselves, that I do not go about to deceive" (Smith, p. 139). His words suggest the pressure he felt in being the only witness of his remarkable experiences.

In March 1830 the Book of Mormon was pub-



The Joseph Smith homestead in Nauvoo (c. 1930). The Prophet and his family lived here from 1839 to 1843. About 1856 the Prophet's son Joseph Smith III added the larger part of the building to the west.

lished, ending one phase of Joseph's life but not his divine mission. Revelations in 1829 instructed him to organize a church. On April 6, 1830, at the Whitmers' house in Fayette, New York, the Church of Christ was organized with Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as first and second elders (*see* ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH, 1830).

Leadership of the Church set Joseph Smith's life on a new course. Up to this time he had been a young man with a divine gift and a mission to translate the Book of Mormon; now, without any previous organizational experience, he was responsible for organizing a church and leading a people. He had to rely on revelation. Over the next six years, he received many revelations, 90 of which fill 190 pages in the Doctrine and Covenants. They range from instructions on mundane details of administration to exalted depictions of life hereafter. Typically, when problems had to be solved, whether administrative or doctrinal, the Prophet sought divine guidance and by virtue of this help led the Church.

The course the revelations laid out for the new Church was extraordinarily challenging. The Prophet received instructions for ventures reaching halfway across the continent and involving a reorganization of society. At the core of the instruction was the establishment of ZION. Book of Mormon teachings of Christ made reference to a NEW JERUSALEM, a city of Zion that would be established in America (3 Ne. 20:22). Later revelations outlined the nature of the new order. The

central concept was the GATHERING of the pure and honest from among the nations into communities where they could learn to live in unity and love under divine direction, and where temples could be built to administer the sacred ordinances of salvation.

In September–October 1830, missionaries were called to teach Native Americans who resided near the western boundary of Missouri (*see* LAMANITE MISSION). These missionaries were told that the city of Zion would be located somewhere in that region. Later revelations called for a gathering to Missouri to organize Zion, and a new economic order designed to enable the Saints to live together in unity (*see* CONSECRATION). Joseph and other leading figures in the Church journeyed to Jackson County, Missouri, in the summer of 1831, and there learned by revelation that the city was to be constructed and a temple built near Independence, Missouri (*see* MISSOURI: LDS COMMUNITIES IN JACKSON AND CLAY COUNTIES). The gathering was to commence immediately.

When it is remembered that Joseph Smith was not yet twenty-six, and five years earlier was an uneducated farmer notable only for his spiritual gifts, the daring of these plans is hard to comprehend. The magnitude of his conceptions never troubled him. “I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world,” he later remarked (*HC* 6:365). He acted in the certainty that the directions were from God and that the Church would triumph against all odds.

In the spring of 1831 virtually all Latter-day Saints left New York for Ohio. Joseph and Emma settled in KIRTLAND, OHIO, near a body of new converts, and for the next six years this was Church headquarters. The other focal point of Church life until 1838 was Missouri, first Independence, the site of the future city of Zion, then northern Missouri. As Latter-day Saints migrated to Missouri, tensions with old settlers increased. In Jackson County, in 1831–1833, and again in Caldwell County, in 1836–1838, efforts to establish Zion aroused violent opposition to what non-Mormons perceived as a threat to their way of life (*see* MISSOURI CONFLICT).

Joseph Smith also made efforts to realize his vision of Zion during the seven years that the Latter-day Saints were in Ohio. He organized the first STAKES and set up the presiding priesthood structure of the Church. The Prophet established a bank, a newspaper, and a printing office; he super-

vised the building of the Church’s first temple, and initiated extensive missionary work in the United States, Canada, and England. His revelations, including a law of health (*see* WORD OF WISDOM), tutored the Saints in the conduct of daily life. He made a translation of the Bible (*see* JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE). He introduced a school system to prepare the Saints for leadership and missionary roles and was himself a student of Hebrew in the school. The high point of the Kirtland years was the dedication of the temple. Although Joseph Smith had received priesthood authority several years earlier, in 1836, in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE, he received important additional KEYS of authority from Moses, Elias, and Elijah pertaining to the gathering of ISRAEL and the eternal SEALING of families.

Opposition had beset the Prophet from the time he first told people about his visions. In 1832 he was tarred, feathered, and beaten by a mob who broke into the house where he was staying at Hiram, Ohio, an intrusion that led to the death of a child. At Kirtland, dissent arose within the Church over the nature of the new society and the Prophet’s involvement in economics and politics; some accused him of attempting to control their private lives and labeled him a fallen prophet. By early 1838, opposition, especially among Ohio leadership, grew to the point that the Prophet and loyal members moved to Missouri.

Joseph Smith arrived with his family at Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri, in March 1838, where he sought once again to establish a gathering place for the Saints and to build a temple (*see* MISSOURI: LDS COMMUNITIES IN CALDWELL AND DAVIESS COUNTIES). But, as before, the influx of outsiders with differing social, religious, and economic practices was unacceptable to the old settlers. Opposition flared into violence at Gallatin, Daviess County, on August 6, 1838, when enemies of the Church tried to prevent Latter-day Saints from voting. The ensuing fight produced injuries on both sides. A subsequent misunderstanding with a local justice of the peace led to charges against the Prophet. As rumors spread, citizens of several counties, then militias, mobilized to expel the Latter-day Saints (*see* MISSOURI CONFLICT; EXTERMINATION ORDER).

The crisis came to a head on October 31, 1838, when Joseph Smith and several others, expecting to discuss ways to defuse the volatile situation, were arrested—it was the beginning of five

months of confinement. A November court of inquiry at Richmond, Ray County, accused the Prophet and others with acts of treason connected with the conflict and committed them to LIBERTY JAIL to await trial. Meanwhile, the Saints were driven from the state.

Harsh imprisonment made worse by forced separation from his family and the Church left Joseph time to reflect on the meaning of human suffering. His writings from prison contain some of the most sublime passages of his ministry. Excerpts from his letters were added to the collection of his revelations (*see* DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: SECTIONS 121–23). Acknowledging all that he had experienced, one of the revelations reminded him that however great his sufferings, they did not exceed the Savior's: "The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:8).

The following April, while being taken under guard to Boone County, Missouri, for a change in venue, the Prophet and his fellow prisoners were allowed to escape. Within a month of rejoining family and friends at Quincy, Illinois, Joseph Smith had authorized the purchase of land on the Mississippi River near Commerce, Hancock County, Illinois, and had moved his family into a two-room log cabin. During the summer of 1839, the Saints began settling their new gathering place, which they named NAUVOO.

Like many areas along the river bottoms, Nauvoo was at first poorly drained and disease-infested. During a malaria epidemic, the Prophet gave up his home to the sick and lived in a tent. Witnesses reported miraculous healing under his administration. "There was many sick among the saints on both sides of the river and Joseph went through the midst of them taking them by the hand and in a loud voice commanding them in the name of Jesus Christ to arise from their beds and be made whole" (Wilford Woodruff Diary, July 22, 1839, Ms., LDS Church Archives). Deaths were so frequent that a mass funeral was held.

Late in 1839 the Prophet traveled to Washington, D.C., to seek redress from the federal government for losses sustained by his people in Missouri. While there he obtained interviews with President Martin Van Buren and prominent congressmen, but came away frustrated and without relief.

Nauvoo was soon incorporated under the state-authorized NAUVOO CHARTER. Within the

next few years the city grew to rival Chicago as the largest in Illinois. Joseph served on the city council and eventually became mayor. As mayor he also served as presiding judge of the municipal court and as registrar of deeds. With the rank of lieutenant general, he led the NAUVOO LEGION, or municipal militia. He was also proprietor of a merchandise store and became editor and publisher of the newspaper *Times and Seasons*.

The relative security of Nauvoo provided Joseph Smith with an opportunity to move forward the work of the kingdom with renewed vigor. He sent the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to Great Britain, where they expanded missionary work and launched an emigration program that provided a stream of immigrants into the new place of gathering (*see* MISSIONS OF THE TWELVE TO BRITAIN). At Nauvoo the Prophet organized the first WARDS, the basic geographical units of the Church. He expanded the ecclesiastical authority of the Twelve to include jurisdiction within stakes, placing them for the first time in a position of universal authority over the Church under the First Presidency. He supervised the building of the NAUVOO TEMPLE and established the Female RELIEF SOCIETY of Nauvoo.

The Prophet faced a dilemma as he began to restore long-lost divine principles. Prompted by forebodings that his remaining time was short, he wished to hasten his efforts, but because many did not understand his mission and opposed him, he had to move slowly. "I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me . . . were the people prepared to receive them," he wrote in 1843 (*HC* 5:402). To resolve this dilemma, the Prophet presented some principles privately to a small number of faithful members, intending to plant the seeds before he died. As early as 1841, he introduced PLURAL MARRIAGE, a necessary part of the restoration of the ancient order of things, to members of the Twelve and a few others. Although he had understood the principle since 1831 and apparently had married one plural wife several years earlier, he married his first recorded plural wife, Louisa Beaman, in 1841. During his remaining years, he married at least twenty-seven others.

In May 1842 the Prophet introduced the full ENDOWMENT, religious ordinances subsequently observed in all LDS temples, to a small group in the upper room of his Nauvoo store. A year later he performed the first SEALINGS of married cou-



ples for time and eternity. In addition, he taught the Saints important doctrines pertaining to the nature of God and man (*see* KING FOLLETT DISCOURSE). In March 1844 he organized the COUNCIL OF FIFTY, the political arm of the kingdom of God. By the time of his death three months later, he had completed all that he felt was essential for the continuation of the kingdom. By then he had transferred to the Twelve the keys of authority, confident that the program he had initiated would now continue regardless of what befell him (*see* SUCCESSION IN THE PRESIDENCY).

Teaching these principles privately to a small circle enabled Joseph Smith to fulfill his mission but complicated the situation at Nauvoo and unleashed forces that eventually led to his death. Some Saints had difficulty in accepting these unusual teachings. Upon being taught plural marriage, Brigham YOUNG said it was the first time in his life that he had desired the grave. Joseph's wife Emma at one point became "very bitter and full of resentment" ["Statement of William Clayton," *Woman's Exponent* 15 (June 1, 1886): 2]. As knowledge of the private teachings leaked into the community, speculation and distorted rumors proliferated.

While the Prophet pursued his objectives, forces outside the Church organized against him. Missouri authorities tried three times to extradite him from Illinois, resulting in lengthy periods of legal harassment. Because of the loss of property in earlier persecutions, he was unable to pay his debts and had to fend off creditors. When Illinois political leaders turned against the Latter-day Saints and no national leaders would champion their cause, the Prophet declared his candidacy for president of the United States, gaining a platform from which to discuss the rights of his people (*see* NAUVOO POLITICS).

By April 1844, dissenters openly challenged Joseph Smith's leadership by organizing a reform church and publishing a newspaper, the NAUVOO EXPOSITOR, for the purpose of denouncing him. Perceiving the *Expositor* as a threat to the peace of the community, the Nauvoo city council, with Joseph Smith presiding as mayor, authorized him to order the destruction of the press—an act that ignited the opposition. On June 12 the Prophet was charged with riot for destruction of the press. After a flurry of legal maneuvers, Joseph submitted to arrest at nearby Carthage, the county seat, under the governor's pledge of protection. Joseph had premonitions of danger, and the vocal threats of hotheads in adjoining towns gave substance to his

fears. On June 27, 1844, while in CARTHAGE JAIL awaiting a hearing, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were killed when a mob with blackened faces stormed the jail (*see* MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH AND HYRUM SMITH). The next day the brothers' bodies were returned to Nauvoo, where ten thousand Latter-day Saints gathered to mourn the loss of their Prophet.

Despite the adversity that dogged him from youth until death, Joseph Smith was not the somber, forbidding person his contemporaries generally envisioned in the personality of a prophet. An English convert wrote that Joseph was "no saintish long-faced fellow, but quite the reverse" [John Needham to Thomas Ward, July 7, 1843, *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 4 (Oct. 1843):89]. It was not uncommon to see him involved in sports activities with the young and vigorous men of a community. He is known to have wrestled, pulled sticks, engaged in snowball fights, played ball, slid on the ice with his children, played marbles, shot at a mark, and fished. Tall and well built, Joseph Smith did not hesitate to use his strength. Once in his youth he thrashed a man for wife-beating. In 1839, as he was en route to Washington, D.C., by stagecoach, the horses bolted while the driver was away. Opening the door of the speeding coach, the Prophet climbed up its side into the driver's seat, where he secured the reins and stopped the horses.

Joseph was also deeply spiritual. His mother said of him that in his youth he "seemed to reflect more deeply than common persons of his age upon everything of a religious nature" (Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*, preliminary manuscript, p. 46, LDS Church Archives). When he was just twelve, as he later wrote, his mind became "seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul" (*PJS* 1:5). Years after he began receiving revelations, he continued to seek spiritual comfort. In 1832 while on a journey, he wrote of visiting a grove "which is just back of the town almost every day where I can be Secluded from the eyes of any mortal and there give vent to all the feelings of my heart in meaditation and prayr" (*PWJS*, p. 238). Clearly he spoke from the heart in declaring that "the things of God are of deep import: and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out" (*HC* 3:295).

Joseph Smith deeply loved his family, and his personal writings are filled with prayerful outpour-

ings of tenderness and concern. "O Lord bless my little children with health and long life to do good in this generation for Christs sake Amen" (PWJS, p. 28). His family consisted of eleven children, including adopted twins. Of these, four sons and a daughter died in infancy or early childhood; five were living when their father was killed, and a sixth, a son, was born four months after his death. Occasional glimpses into his family life show him sliding on the ice with his son Frederick, taking his children on a pleasure ride in a carriage or sleigh, and attending the circus.

He was also a loyal friend and cared deeply about others. He repeatedly extended a forgiving hand to prodigals, some of whom had caused him pain and misery. "I feel myself bound to be a friend to all . . . wether they are just or unjust; they have a degree of my compassion & sympathy" (PWJS, p. 548). One observer noted that the Prophet would never go to bed if he knew there was a sick person who needed assistance. He taught that "love is one of the leading characteristics of Deity, and ought to be manifested by those who aspire to be the sons of God. A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone but ranges through the world, anxious to bless the whole of the human family" (PWJS, p. 481). One Church member who stayed at the Smith home and witnessed the Prophet's "earnest and humble devotions . . . nourishing, soothing, and comforting his family, neighbours, and friends," found observation of his private life a greater witness of Joseph Smith's divine calling than observing his public actions (JD 7:176-77).

Joseph Smith spent his life bringing forth a new dispensation of religious knowledge at great personal cost. He noted that "the envy and wrath of man" had been his common lot and that "deep water" was what he was "wont to swim in" (D&C 127:2). A little more than a year before his death he told an audience in Nauvoo, "If I had not actually got into this work and been called of God, I would back out. But I cannot back out: I have no doubt of the truth" (HC 5:336). He lived in the hope of bringing that truth to life in a society of Saints, and died the victim of enemies who did not understand his vision.

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#### TEACHINGS OF JOSEPH SMITH

The written and spoken words of the revelations to Joseph Smith are clear, direct, and unequivocal, yet his teachings are difficult to characterize or summarize, since they do not fit easily into traditional theological categories, and they always presuppose that more can, and probably will, be revealed by God. Audiences eagerly listened to the Prophet's bold proclamations and reasoning on hundreds of topics, although his was not a work of systematic analysis or synthesis. His teachings, sayings, counsels, instructions, blessings, responses, and commentaries from 1820 to 1844 are scattered over thousands of pages of revelations, scriptures, histories, journals, letters, and minute books (see JOSEPH SMITH: WRITINGS OF JOSEPH SMITH).

The teachings of Joseph Smith may be approached in many ways. Some collections arrange them topically; other commentaries focus on the historical settings of his revelations and discourses; still others compare published versions with recorded recollections of his sayings. In any case, one finds continuity and consistency rather than conspicuous breaks or reversals.

The record shows that Joseph Smith's access to sources and his own understanding entailed growth processes. He said in 1842, two years before his death, that he had "the whole plan of the kingdom" before him (HC 5:139). But it is not clear how early in his life the "whole plan" reached maturity in his mind.

Some of his teachings now have scriptural status; others are authoritative but not sustained as scripture. As he himself explained, a prophet is not always a prophet, but “only when he was acting as such” (*TPJS*, p. 278). Careful scholarship will distinguish original utterances of the Prophet from later accretions; also, some statements that he did not make or endorse have been published under his name. The following sketch treats his revelations, his scriptural translations, and his most characteristic sayings as comprising his teachings.

Joseph Smith never claimed to establish a new religion but to initiate a new beginning, a RESTORATION of the everlasting GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it” (*TPJS*, p. 121). He anticipated “a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories . . . from the days of Adam even to the present time” (D&C 128:18). This restoration would encompass “all the truth the Christian world possessed” (*TPJS*, p. 376)—including much that had been lost or discarded—and, in addition, revelations “hid from before the foundation of the world” (*TPJS*, p. 309). His teachings were often in contrast to postbiblical additions, subtractions, and changes. He said that he intended “to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world” (*TPJS*, p. 366).

The following are selected from among the dozens of topics and insights that typify the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

**GOD AND DIVINITY.** Joseph Smith taught that God is properly called Father. He is a glorified, exalted person, with personal attributes. Jesus Christ is the mediator between man and God. He is not identical with God, but has become like the Father. This strips away the mystery of many classical creeds. This doctrine is refined anthropomorphism, and it permeates ancient and modern scriptures.

Because God is the preeminent person, he may be approached, encountered, and known. He is subject to, and involved in, man’s struggles. He can be trusted to move, act, respond, love, serve, and give. From the presence of God and his Son proceeds forth a Spirit that gives light to everyone

who comes into mortality. This light is in all things, gives life to all things, and is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God (D&C 88:13).

**TRUTH.** Experience points to a plural universe. The highest knowledge is of things, existences, in all their varieties (D&C 93:24–25). The revelations to Joseph Smith speak of independent spheres of existence and an array of glorious degrees (D&C 76; cf. 88:37). Thus, any mystical thrust toward metaphysical union in which individuality is lost is abandoned.

**SCRIPTURE.** The Prophet taught that the scriptures are the written records of revelatory experiences. He rejected equally the dogmas of verbal inerrancy, of “merely human” origin, and of allegorical excess in interpreting the scriptures. The limits of the canon are fluid, as they were originally in early Judaism and Christianity. Scripture, spoken or written, is light to those who are quickened by divine life and light. The need for living prophets to supplement, clarify, and apply the written sources to contemporary needs is continual. “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*TPJS*, p. 194).

**CREATION AND COSMOS.** Joseph Smith’s teachings have been characterized by the word “eternalism”: “Every principle that proceeds from God is eternal” (*TPJS*, p. 181). The “pure principles of element” and of intelligence coexist eternally with God: “They may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed” (*TPJS*, p. 351). God created the universe out of chaos, “which is Element and in which dwells all the glory” (*WJS*, p. 351). “The elements are the tabernacle of God” (D&C 93:35). God is related to space and time, and did not create them from nothing. Change occurs through intelligence. The universe is governed by law. There were two creations: All things were made “spiritually” before they were made “naturally” (Moses 3:5). Through his Son, God is the Creator of multiple WORLDS. God is the Father of the human SPIRITS that inhabit his creations. His creations have no end.

**NATURE OF MAN.** As eternal intelligence, “man was in the beginning with God” (D&C 93:29–30). But his unfolding from grace to grace is dependent

on the nurture of God. Because of the gospel and the Atonement, the children of God are heirs of all the Father has and is, and can become gods themselves (D&C 76:58–61; 84:35–39; 88:107).

Spirit is refined matter. Individual spirits “existed before the body, can exist in the body; will exist separate from the body, when the body will be mouldering in the dust; and will in the resurrection be again united with it” (*TPJS*, p. 207). Thus, extreme dualism between spirit and matter is rejected.

Man is free to resist or to embrace either the powers of God or those of evil. God, man, Satan, and his hosts are independent. One cannot force another.

**PLAN OF SALVATION.** Finding himself in the midst of spirits and glory, God saw fit to institute laws whereby his children might advance like himself and have glory upon glory (*see PLAN OF SALVATION*). “At the first organization in heaven we were all present, and saw the Savior chosen and appointed and the plan of salvation made, and we sanctioned it” (*TPJS*, p. 181). Like embraces like (D&C 88:40); harmonies are restored: knowledge replaces ignorance, sanctity replaces sin, and life replaces death.

**FALL.** The Prophet rejected the traditional theory of ORIGINAL SIN and returned to the doctrine of man’s innocence before the Fall. ADAM and EVE transgressed, as planned, to open the way for the contrasting experiences of mortality. The Fall was not inevitable, but free. All men and women are, in their infant state, innocent before God. It follows that INFANT BAPTISM is unnecessary, that ACCOUNTABILITY comes later (at the age of eight), and that accountability for sin is personal, not inherited (D&C 68:25–27; 93:38). One becomes what one chooses to become.

God himself has a body “as tangible as man’s” (D&C 130:22), and the human BODY is a temple. “The great principle of happiness consists in having a body” (*TPJS*, p. 181, 297). Redemption is of the whole soul, meaning spirit and body.

**ATONEMENT.** The power of redemption is the ATONEMENT of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the unfolding drama, the Son inherited the fulness of the Father; he was not “eternally begotten,” nor were two absolutely unlike natures inherent in the person of Christ.

The atonement of Jesus Christ was necessary to reconcile the demands of JUSTICE AND MERCY. Christ responded to this need in a voluntary act, a descent in order to ascend (D&C 88:6).

Christ could not have known, except by experience, the depths of compassion. He suffered pains and afflictions and temptations “that his bowels might be filled with compassion according to the flesh,” for only thus could he “succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12). GETHSEMANE was the place and time of his most intense suffering for mankind; the CROSS was its final hour (D&C 19:16–20; JST Matt. 27:54).

Christ saves men from their SINS, not in them. He does not impute righteousness where there is none. One who seeks to become a law unto himself and abides in sin cannot be sanctified unless he repents (D&C 88:35).

The infinite atonement is intended to bring life and redemption to all the children of the Eternal Father, including those of other worlds who “are saved by the very same Savior of ours” (*T&S* 4:82–85).

**KNOWLEDGE.** Intelligence, as light and truth, is the glory of God (D&C 93:36). Mind is eternal, with access to the vast reaches of the eternities, and knowledge is essential to salvation: “One is saved no faster than he gets knowledge” (*TPJS*, p. 217); and he gains knowledge of the truths of the gospel no faster than he is saved—that is, no faster than he receives Christ into his life. “Knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glory and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (*TPJS*, p. 298). “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them” (*TPJS*, p. 149).

Knowledge of God and divine things comes through the Spirit. Revelation includes the visible presence, VISIONS, dreams, the visitations of angels and spirits, impressions, voices, prophetic flashes of inspiration and light, and the flow of pure intelligence into mind and heart. Such direct communications are essential to the religious life of every person. At least one GIFT OF THE SPIRIT is given to each person of faith. “It is impossible to receive the Holy Ghost and not receive revelation” (*TPJS*, p. 256). “No man can know that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost” (*WJS*, p. 115). “No generation was ever saved or destroyed upon dead

testimony neither can be; but by living” (*WJS*, p. 159). Within limits, these experiences can be verbalized and communicated.

**PURPOSE OF LIFE: JOY.** “Happiness is the object and design of our existence” (*TPJS*, p. 255). “We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom” (*TPJS*, p. 181). Glorified bodies have powers and privileges over those who have not, and to be denied or separated from the body is bondage. The combination of spirit body and physical body can maximize joy (D&C 93:33–34).

God’s glory is to work for the benefit of other beings. Likewise, man cannot find himself until he loses himself in the Christlike desire to elevate, benefit, and bless others (*PWJS*, p. 483). Even in mortality, members of the family of God may begin to experience the joy that will be in full hereafter (*TPJS*, p. 296).

**TRIALS AND AFFLICTION.** **EVIL** and pain are real, losses are real, temptation is real, overcoming is real. Both risk and reward attend the mortal experience. These are the conditions of soul growth. God’s purpose is to lift his children, but he cannot do so without their cooperation; nor can he intervene in a way that removes the need for experience, even bitter experience.

Life is a trial, a probation: “All these things shall give thee experience” (D&C 122:7). Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac was a similitude of the Father’s sacrifice of his Only Begotten Son. One cannot attain the heirship of the Son without being willing to sacrifice all earthly things. The overcoming of such trials is the foundation of perfected **LOVE**, and until one has perfect love, one is liable to fall (*TPJS*, p. 9). The view that all suffering in the world is punishment for sin is “an unhallowed principle” (*TPJS*, p. 162). The Saints must expect to wade through much tribulation, but afflictions may be consecrated to their gain.

**PRIESTHOOD.** **PRIESTHOOD** is **AUTHORITY** and power centered in Christ. It is conferred only by tangible **ORDINATION**, by the laying on of hands of one having authority. Joseph Smith taught the importance of priesthood **KEYS**: Jesus Christ “holds the keys over all this world” (*TPJS*, p. 323). John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, and Elias held various keys of priesthood functions and restored them to the earth by conferring them upon Joseph Smith and Oliver **COWDERY**.

Priesthood is not indelible; it can be lost. It is not infallible; only under the influence of the Spirit can one speak for and with the approval of God.

The opportunity for the fulness of priesthood blessings is conferred on both men and women when they make and keep unconditional covenants with Jesus Christ and then with each other as husband and wife (*see* **FATHERHOOD**; **MOTHERHOOD**).

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith explained and established the roles of apostles, prophets, bishops, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and so on, in analogue to their New Testament functions. He dissolved the distinction between laity and a priestly class: All priests, teachers, and administrators are lay people, and all worthy laymen are priesthood holders.

**ORDINANCES.** Joseph Smith restored and taught a progressive series of **ORDINANCES** that confer spiritual enlightenment and power. These ordinances were “instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world” (*TPJS*, p. 308). “Being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances” (*TPJS*, p. 162). All essential ordinances, from **BAPTISM** to temple **MARRIAGE**, involve prayer, covenant making, and divine ratification.

**TEMPLES.** Some ordinances pertain to the holy **TEMPLE**, where “the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). Temples embody and manifest sacred truths, “the mysteries and peaceable things” (D&C 42:61). They will enable the children of God to overcome the corruptible elements of their lives and enter the realms of light and fire, the presence of the Father and the Son. All of the temple functions and powers are reestablished today, with the authority of the high priesthood: **BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD**, the holy **ENDOWMENT**, and the **SEALING** of families are their essence. “We need the Temple more than anything else,” Joseph Smith taught (*Journal History*, May 4, 1844).

All temple ordinances point to Christ. The temple is presently, as it was anciently, his sanctuary, endowed with his glory, blessed with his name and ultimately with his presence. Christ is a living temple, and through him one may become a living temple (D&C 93:35; cf. Rev. 21:22).

**MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND HOME.** Reversing the Augustinian tradition that celibacy is preferable to marriage in this life and universal in the next, the Prophet taught that the Christlike life reaches its zenith in marriage and parenting. The greatest

prophets and prophetesses are also patriarchs and matriarchs. The highest ordinance is marriage, when king and queen begin their eternal family kingdom: The symbols are ordination, coronation, and sealing.

**SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL THOUGHT.** In the earthly government of God, a theodemocracy is contemplated: a covenant kingdom led by Jesus Christ, the benevolent King of Kings. The KINGDOM OF GOD on earth is to become like Enoch's city of ZION, with utopian thought and culture realized in a community of the pure-hearted.

Joseph taught a law of STEWARDSHIP and CONSECRATION. All the earth is the Lord's; property in Zion is, in effect, held in trust for the establishment of Zion. In the infancy of the Church, the Saints tried to live this economic system and failed, foundering on what it was designed to overcome: greed, covetousness, jealousy. Consequently, the Prophet was instructed to substitute the law of TITHING to prepare the Saints to live this higher law.

"The Constitution of the United States is a glorious standard; it is founded in the wisdom of God" (*TPJS*, p. 147). The protections of constitutional government should extend to all (*see* POLITICS: POLITICAL TEACHINGS). Wilford WOODRUFF recalled Joseph Smith's saying "that if he were the Emperor of the world and had control over the whole human family he would sustain every man, woman and child in the enjoyment of their religion" (*Journal History*, Mar. 12, 1897). This would allow, without compulsory means, the growth of a kingdom of God eventually to be administered in two world capitals, JERUSALEM in the East and the NEW JERUSALEM in the West.

The Church is the body of members who have entered the covenant and formed a community for the perfecting of its individual members. The living prophets, seers, and revelators are the authority nucleus of the kingdom of God, but the Church performs its work in intimate communities: families, WARDS, and STAKES.

**RESURRECTION.** Eternal family life is perfected only in the highest degree of God's CELESTIAL KINGDOM. In the RESURRECTION and JUDGMENT, each body with few exceptions (*see* SONS OF PERDITION) will receive a DEGREE OF GLORY. One's identity in both spirit and body is secure and eternal. God's celestial being, perfected and glorified, is the ideal. The earth itself,

having been baptized by water and then by fire, will die, be resurrected, glorified (D&C 88:25–26), and rolled back into the presence of God. The beauty, glory, perfection, and powers of a glorified resurrected body are unspeakable: "No man can describe it to you—no man can write it" (*TPJS*, p. 368). "All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it" (*TPJS*, p. 296).

**ESCHATOLOGY.** Joseph Smith uttered many prophetic statements about the future. His eschatology is extensive and inclusive. The gospel will be taught to all mankind, either on this earth or in the world of the spirits, so that all may receive it. The family of ABRAHAM, which has permeated all races of men, will be united. The families of Judah and Joseph will join hands in redemptive fulfillment. Many of these expectations and realizations are beyond the power of man to achieve or to impede. The work is "destined to bringing about the destruction of the powers of darkness, the renovation of the earth, the glory of God, and the salvation of the human family" (*TPJS*, p. 232).

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TRUMAN G. MADSEN

#### WRITINGS OF JOSEPH SMITH

The Prophet Joseph Smith's writing career began at age twenty-two when he commenced translation of the Book of Mormon. At his death seventeen years later, in 1844, he had left a substantial archive for the study of his life and the church he was instrumental in founding. In addition to the Book of Mormon, his papers include diaries covering intermittently the period 1832–1844; correspondence; reports of discourses; more than 130 revelations, published as the Doctrine and Covenants; a

record of Abraham; a Bible revision, including some restored writings of Enoch and Moses; and the beginnings of a multivolume documentary HISTORY OF THE CHURCH based upon his papers.

Several factors influenced and initially limited the extent of Joseph Smith's writings and the literary style of his prose. Because of the indigent circumstances of his family, his formal schooling was very little, the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic constituting, so he said, his entire scholastic preparation. Some who heard him noted that he seemed to have little native talent or training as a speaker. He felt inadequate as a writer, referring on one occasion to "the little narrow prison almost as it were total darkness of paper, pen, and ink."

But whatever the Prophet lacked in formal

rhetorical training was compensated for by his message. Beginning in his early life, religious experiences inspired him with a strong sense of mission that propelled him onto the stage of public controversy. He saw his mission as laying a foundation that would revolutionize the whole world, not by sword or gun but by "the power of truth." The articulation of that truth was the impetus of his writings. Many who heard him were awed by his ability to make plain the way of life and salvation. Many outsiders found his views striking and magnetic. His writings carry the same sense of purpose and conviction.

A study of early Mormon sources indicates that only a fraction of Joseph Smith's writings and teachings were preserved. This was the result of

#### JOSEPH SMITH'S WRITINGS

<i>Writings</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Scribes*</i>
Book of Mormon MSS Original MS Printer's MS	1827-1829	Oliver Cowdery and others
Diaries	1832-1844	William Clayton, Oliver Cowdery, Warren A. Cowdery, James Mulholland, Warren Parrish, Parley P. Pratt, Willard Richards, Sidney Rigdon, George W. Robinson, Joseph Smith, Sylvester Smith, and others
Revelations Kirtland revelation book Unbound revelations Bible revision Book of Abraham	1828-1844	William Clayton, Oliver Cowdery, Warren A. Cowdery, Orson Hyde, James Mulholland, Edward Partridge, William W. Phelps, Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith Sr., John Whitmer, Newel K. Whitney, Frederick G. Williams, and others
Correspondence Letter Bk. 1 Letter Bk. 2 Bound correspondence	1829-1844	Thomas Bullock, William Clayton, Howard Coray, Oliver Cowdery, Warren A. Cowdery, James Mulholland, Willard Richards, Sidney Rigdon, James Sloan, Joseph Smith, Robert B. Thompson, John Whitmer, Frederick G. Williams, and others
Egyptian MSS	1835?-1841	Oliver Cowdery, Warren Parrish, William W. Phelps, Joseph Smith, Willard Richards
Autobiographical/historical writings	1832-1844	Oliver Cowdery, Warren A. Cowdery, James Mulholland, Warren Parrish, William W. Phelps, Willard Richards, Joseph Smith, Robert B. Thompson, Frederick G. Williams, and others

\*Known scribes for Joseph Smith with life dates (in parenthesis) and approximate years of their clerical involvement: Thomas Bullock (1816-1885), 1843-1844; William Clayton (1814-1879), 1842-1844; Howard Coray (1817-1908), 1840-1841; Oliver Cowdery (1806-1850), 1829-1838; Warren A. Cowdery (1788-1851), 1836-1838; Orson Hyde (1805-1878), 1833-1836; James Mulholland (1804-1839), 1838-1839; Warren Parrish (1803-1887), 1835-1837; William W. Phelps (1792-1872), 1831-1844; Willard Richards (1804-1854), 1841-1844; Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), 1830-1838; George W. Robinson (1814-1878), 1836-1840; James Sloan (1792-?), 1840-1843; Sylvester Smith (c.1805-?), 1834-1836; Robert B. Thompson (1811-1841), 1839-1841; John Whitmer (1802-1878), 1829-1838; Newel K. Whitney (1795-1850), 1831-1838; Frederick G. Williams (1787-1842), 1832-1839.

haphazard record-keeping procedures during his early lifetime; the incompetence or untimely death of some of his clerks; long imprisonments; vexatious and repeated lawsuits; poverty; and disruptive conditions that forced the migration of the Latter-day Saints across two-thirds of the American continent.

Joseph Smith's dependence upon others to write for him also complicates the record. His philosophy was that "a prophet cannot be his own scribe." Hence, most of his writings were dictated, and some ghostwritten, but approved and accepted by him. While the presence of clerical handwriting in his papers helps date the source material, it does obscure his own image and necessitates a careful look at the sources for those who would distinguish the Prophet's mind and personality from those who assisted him.

Joseph's writings are characterized by long, unbroken sentences connected by conjunctions, descriptive images, and an astute narrative sense.

I write as often as you can, and if possible come and see me, and bring the children if possible, and according to your own feelings, best judgement, and endeavour to be comforted if possible, and I trust that all will turn out for the best. Yours, J. S.

Page of a letter from Joseph to his wife Emma in his own handwriting, written when Joseph was in chains in Richmond, Missouri, November 12, 1838. "Oh my affectionate Emma, I want you to remember that I am a true and faithful friend to you; and the children, forever, my heart is entwined around you[r]s forever and ever; oh, may God bless you all."

As a keen student of the scriptures, his prose is interspersed with biblical word forms and examples, and breathes a positive tone, reflecting a sense of vitality and love. His writing style and personality show up most clearly in his holograph writings. These show a conversational style, in contrast to the more formal manner of associates like Sidney RIGDON. Typical of his handwritten prose is this extract from an 1838 letter to his wife Emma written while in jail at Richmond, Missouri:

... Brother Robison is chained next to me he has a true heart and a firm mind, Brother Whight, is next, Br. Rigdon, next, Hiram, next, Parelly, next Amasa, next, and thus we are bound together in chains as well as the cords of everlasting love, we are in good spirits and rejoice that we are counted worthy to be persecuted for christ sake, tell little Joseph, he must be a good boy, Father loves him <With> a perfect love, he is the Eldest must not hurt those that <Are> smaller then him, but comfort them tell little Frederick, Father, loves him, with all his heart, he is a lovely boy. Julia is a lovely little girl, I love her also She is a promising child, tell her Father wants her to remember him and be a good girl, tell all the rest that I think of them and pray for them all, ... little baby Elexander is on my mind continually Oh my affectionate Emma, I want you to remember that I am a true and faithful friend, to you and the children, forever, my heart is intertwined around you[r]s forever and ever, oh may God bless you all amen you I am your husband and am in bands and tribulation &c— [Jessee, 1984, p. 368].

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DEAN C. JESSEE

## LEGAL TRIALS OF JOSEPH SMITH

Joseph Smith believed that his enemies perverted legal processes, using them as tools of religious persecution against him, as they had been used against many of Christ's apostles and other past martyrs. Although he often gained quick acquittals, numerous "vexatious and wicked" lawsuits consumed his time and assets, leading to several incarcerations and ultimately to his martyrdom. Beginning soon after his ministry began and continuing throughout his life, Joseph Smith was subjected to approximately thirty criminal actions and at least that many civil suits related to debt collection or failed financial ventures.

The first charge of being a "disorderly person" involved treasure hunting for hire, brought against him at SOUTH BAINBRIDGE, NEW YORK, in 1826 by a disgruntled Methodist preacher related to Josiah Stowell, Joseph's employer. When Stowell refused to testify against him at the trial, Joseph was discharged. In July 1830 in the same venue, Joseph was tried and acquitted by another magistrate on charges of "being a disorderly person, of setting the county in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon, etc." (*HC* 1:88). The trial ended at midnight. The next day, he was seized and tried in neighboring Broome County on the same charges, as well as charges of casting out a devil and using pretended angelic visitations to obtain property

from others. Following a twenty-three-hour trial involving some forty witnesses, Joseph was again acquitted (*HC* 1:91–96).

After the Church moved to KIRTLAND, OHIO, in 1831, several religious-based charges were prosecuted against Smith and other LDS leaders, but were dismissed on the grounds listed following each charge: assault and battery (self-defense), performing marriages without a valid license (one was procured), attempted murder or conspiracy (lack of evidence), and involuntary servitude without compensation during the ZION'S CAMP military crusade to Missouri (won on appeal). In turn, Church leaders successfully instituted charges and recovered damages for assaults occurring while they were acting in a religious capacity. However, the financial Panic of 1837 swamped the Prophet and others with civil debt-collection litigation. Worse still were suits for violating Ohio banking laws when the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company (*see* KIRTLAND ECONOMY) failed soon after it was organized in 1836 without a state charter. Charges of fraud and self-enrichment were raised but not proven; a jury conviction was appealed, but Joseph Smith left Ohio for Missouri before it was heard.

In Missouri, most actions against the Latter-day Saints were extralegal, brought by non-Mormon vigilantes prejudiced against the Saints' opposition to slavery, their collective influx, and Smith's religious teachings concerning modern revelation and the territorial establishment of ZION in Jackson County. Civil magistrates routinely refused to issue peace warrants for Mormons or to redress their personal injuries or property damage. For example, despite being beaten and tarred and feathered and having the printing office destroyed, the LDS printer was awarded less than his legal fees and the Presiding Bishop received "one penny and a peppercorn." All three branches of state government seemed paralyzed or supportive of mob action, as the Saints were repeatedly dispossessed and expelled from county to county.

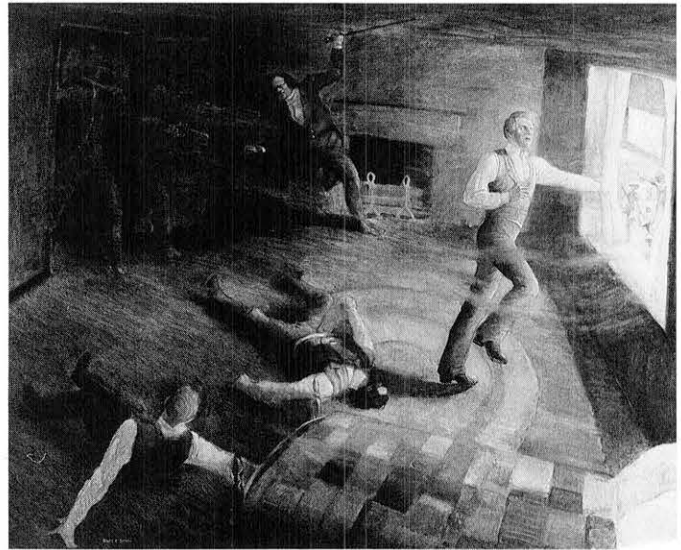
Finally, election-day violence between Mormons and non-Mormons erupted at Gallatin in Daviess County, Missouri, on August 6, 1838. Joseph Smith and others called on Justice of the Peace Adam Black to obtain an "agreement of peace" from Black to support the law and not attach himself to any mob. This resulted in Joseph Smith's and Lyman Wight's being arrested, based on an affidavit alleging riot and assault by them, while obtaining the writs from Black (*HC* 3:61).

Smith and Wight appeared before Judge Austin King and were ordered to appear at the next hearing of the grand jury in Daviess County (*HC* 3:73).

On October 25, 1838, Moses Rowland, a Missouri state militiaman, was killed at the Battle of Crooked River in a clash with a company of Saints who were attempting to rescue three kidnapped brethren. Upon hearing of this engagement, coupled with other reports, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued his infamous EXTERMINATION ORDER. Joseph and other leading Saints were arrested, and received a preliminary court hearing before Judge Austin King in Richmond, Missouri, on November 12–29, 1838. Joseph Smith and some other defendants were confined for four and a half months in LIBERTY JAIL pending a grand jury indictment on such charges as murder, arson, theft, rebellion, and treason. While en route to stand trial in a more impartial venue, Joseph and others were allowed to escape, thereby preventing widespread official embarrassment on the part of the state.

In 1838–1839 the Saints settled in NAUVOO, ILLINOIS, after their wrongful expulsion from Missouri. To avoid the “legal” persecutions suffered in earlier states, they obtained a liberal city charter for Nauvoo, which granted broad habeas corpus powers to local courts. These helped to free Joseph Smith and other Latter-day Saints when they were sought on writs by arresting officers from outside of Nauvoo. In 1841 state judge Stephen A. Douglas set aside a Missouri writ to extradite Joseph for charges still pending there, and in 1843 a federal judge did the same for a similar requisition after the alleged shooting of then ex-governor Boggs. However, the increasing use of the writ of habeas corpus by Nauvoo magistrates, preempting even state and federal authority, escalated distrust among non-Mormons who felt that Joseph Smith considered himself above the law.

The Prophet’s final use of habeas corpus came after his arrest in June 1844 by a county constable for inciting a “riot” by ordering suppression of the NAUVOO EXPOSITOR. This action climaxed a series of lawsuits between the Prophet and several apostates, who had charged him with perjury and adultery; he had countercharged with perjury, assault, defamation, and resisting arrest. After a subsequent trial on the merits and his acquittal in Nauvoo, the governor persuaded the Prophet to let himself be arrested and tried again for the “riot,” this time in Carthage, where he was incarcerated



*Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum*, by Gary E. Smith (1980s, oil on canvas, 48" × 60"). On June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith, age 38, and his loyal brother Hyrum were shot in the Carthage Jail by a mob. Courtesy Blaine T. Hudson.

without bail on a new charge of “treason” for declaring martial law and ordering out the Nauvoo militia to keep peace. Joseph Smith’s enemies charged that he was going on the offensive against citizens of Illinois. Two days later, he and his brother Hyrum were killed by a mob in disguise.

Even after death, legal trials involving the Prophet continued. Of sixty potential assassins named before a grand jury, nine were indicted and five stood trial at Carthage for the murder of Joseph (a separate trial was to follow for the murder of Hyrum). After a six-day trial, all defendants were acquitted in June 1845 for insufficient evidence. The final legal indignity to Joseph Smith and the Church in Illinois was a series of federal court decrees in 1851 and 1852 that liquidated all remaining personal and Church assets held by Joseph Smith during his lifetime, in order to discharge an 1842 default judgment. He had guaranteed a promissory note to the federal government in an early Nauvoo business transaction; when the note was unpaid, a succession of lawsuits followed, forestalling his efforts in bankruptcy and prompting charges of fraud and misconduct. Although plagued by bad advice and misfortune in business matters, the Prophet was never found guilty of any misconduct.

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JOSEPH I. BENTLEY

## SMITH, JOSEPH, III

See: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

## SMITH, JOSEPH, SR.

Joseph Smith, Sr. (1771–1840), father of the Prophet Joseph SMITH, believed in the religious experiences of his son and supported him from the time of his FIRST VISION. He later received significant callings in the newly formed Church. Joseph, Sr., died following the expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from Missouri and was considered a martyr for the cause.

Joseph Smith, Sr., was born in Topsfield, Massachusetts, July 12, 1771, the third of eleven children born to Asael and Mary Duty Smith (see SMITH FAMILY ANCESTORS). As a young man, he moved with his parents to Tunbridge, Vermont, where he met Lucy Mack (see Lucy Mack SMITH). They were married January 24, 1796, in Tunbridge (see SMITH FAMILY).

The couple began married life as part owners in the Asael Smith farm and received a \$1,000 wedding present from Lucy's brother Stephen and his business partner, John Mudget. Joseph and

Lucy's finances declined, however, after they opened a mercantile store in Randolph and invested in ginseng, a root that grew wild in Vermont and was prized in China as a medicine. A failed exporting venture required them to sell their farm and sacrifice their wedding gift to pay their debts. Now tenants instead of landowners, they moved from one rented farm to another in Vermont and New Hampshire. After three successive crop failures in Norwich, Vermont, they moved to Palmyra, New York, in 1816.

Like his father, Joseph, Sr., was a religious man, but, remained aloof from conventional religion. From 1811 to 1819 he had seven dreams that reflected his yearnings for redemption and may have prepared him to believe in his son Joseph's VISIONS, despite the fierce opposition that they aroused among others who heard of them.

The Smiths purchased a 100-acre farm in Manchester, New York, soon after their arrival from Vermont in 1816, but lost it in 1825 when they were unable to make the final yearly payment of \$100. In an effort to raise the money, Joseph, Sr., and his son Joseph joined Josiah Stowell in a venture to dig for purported treasure in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Critics of the Smith family have used this incident as evidence of their interest in money digging. While the practice of seeking buried treasure was common at that time in the Northeast and Joseph, Sr., may have participated in searching for it, his digging for Stowell was a desperate attempt to earn money to meet a mortgage payment. After they lost their farm, the Smiths again became tenant farmers.

In 1829 a revelation to Joseph SMITH, Jr., called his father to participate in the "marvelous work" about to be accomplished (D&C 4), and soon thereafter, Joseph, Sr., became one of the Eight Witnesses to the Book of Mormon and saw and held the GOLD PLATES (see BOOK OF MORMON WITNESSES). He was present when the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, and was baptized on the same day (see ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH, 1830). He was ordained the first PATRIARCH TO THE CHURCH in 1833 and in that office gave blessings of comfort and inspiration throughout the remainder of his life. In Kirtland, Ohio, in 1834 he was called also as a member of the high council.

Joseph, Sr., and Lucy moved with the Church from New York to Ohio, Missouri, and finally Nauvoo, Illinois. They operated a farm in Kirtland, Ohio, and a boardinghouse in Far West, Missouri.