

The First Vision

Introduction

The most defining event in Mormon religious history is the appearance of God, the Father, and Jesus Christ to the young boy, Joseph Smith. From this vision, the Mormon faith was born.

The Mormon faith consists of many churches that claim to have the authority of God to proclaim His truths to the world. The largest and most influential of these sects is known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and was established, not by the will of the Lord, but “suffered” to come forth by the insistence of Joseph Smith and those who had gained a testimony of the *Book of Mormon*. The translation of the “unsealed” portion of Mormon’s plates was Joseph’s *ONLY* divine calling.

When Joseph Smith received what has become known in early Mormon History as *The First Vision*, he was NOT commanded to establish a church, or any other organization for that matter. He gives his relation of this event in his own words, saying:

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.’ He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History 1:18-20)

What was it that Joseph was forbidden to write at the time he gave this accounting of *The First Vision*?

Keep in mind that this *official* version of *The First Vision* was NOT given until 1838. The enemies of Mormon doctrine point to varying accounts of this important vision given by Joseph Smith prior to the *official* declaration given in 1838. The existence of these accounts is indeed true, and upon studying the different accounts, which are easily available upon honest research, one will come to the conclusion that no mention of the Father and the Son together was made by Joseph Smith until 1838, eight years after the LDS Church was first organized.

Why did Joseph Smith lie? What was the purpose in keeping the true nature of *The First Vision* from the members of the Church and the world? What were these “*other things*” that he could not reveal to the members of the Church when he gave the true nature of *The First Vision* in 1838? The answer rests in the “many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time.”

Keep in mind that Joseph Smith knew what was written on the 116-page manuscript (*The Book of Lehi*) that Martin Harris had lost. He also knew that the things revealed in that manuscript were supposed to be withheld for a “wise purpose in the Lord.” (Doesn’t it seem reasonable that there would be a “*wise purpose*” in not bringing forth the contents of the 116-page lost manuscript, as the Lord knows his work and would never allow the foolishness of a man to keep it from coming forth?) Unless one reads *The Book of Lehi*, and *The Sealed Portion, The Final Testament of Jesus Christ*, he or she cannot properly understand the things which Joseph Smith was forbidden to give to the Church in 1838. It would behoove the honest researcher to read these works for a clearer understanding of these things.

Here are the complete words of the Lord given to Joseph Smith in *The First Vision*:

The First Vision

The words of Jesus Christ, the Beloved Son of God, given to Joseph Smith Jr. near Manchester Township, Ontario County, New York, in the early morning hours of April 6, 1820. Commanded not to be revealed to the world until all things in their fullness are given to the inhabitants of the world according to the own due time of the Lord. Now given to the world by way of commandment; quoted by Joseph Smith to Christopher Nemelka on December 23, 2004.

BEHOLD, Joseph, with diligence and proper faith thou hast inquired of our Father concerning these churches and creeds, which are an abomination in His sight, having a form of godliness, as they pretend, but denying the power of the Holy Ghost, which the Father hath given to this world as a witness of His will concerning its inhabitants.

2 Behold, these teach for commandments the doctrine and precepts of men, who deny the Holy Ghost and seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but each man therein walketh after the manner of the flesh which he hath received in this world.

3 Behold, they draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me, knowing not me, nor the Father, which denieth unto them eternal life in His kingdoms.

4 Behold, thou hast been chosen to bring salvation to many of the children of God in this world, even those who seek the Father diligently as thou hast sought after him, and who keep His commandments, which He hath given unto them through me, their Savior.

5 Verily I say unto thee, the formation of a church is not that which the Father requireth of His children; nevertheless, this He suffereth that His word might go forth among His children in the manner that they have accepted for their own learning.

6 And I came down in the flesh as the Son of God and fulfilled all things which were given me of the Father to do for the world, insomuch that it might be saved from the sins of its generations.

7 And I was persecuted and rejected and lifted up upon the cross for the things which I taught unto the Jews, which things were the

words that the Father sent me to give to the world. But the world knoweth not the Father, but hath invented many gods and beliefs that take away the plainness of the plan that our Father hath established for this part of His kingdom, over which He hath placed me as your Lord and God.

8 And He hath commanded all the ends of the earth to come unto me and receive the words which He hath given me to give to the children of men that they might be saved in His eternal kingdoms.

9 And He hath suffered prophets to be called among men that they might hear His words; they, because of their wickedness, unable to learn these things from the Holy Ghost, which was given unto them by the Father to teach them all things whatsoever are expedient for their salvation.

10 But they have cast out the holy prophets and changed the doctrine and ordinances given of them to point the children of men towards me and the commandments that I have given unto them.

11 Behold, great darkness covereth the whole earth, and there are none, save a few only, who do not defile themselves by the flesh; and the works thereof doth condemn them, taking away from them the power of the Holy Ghost to be with them and give them the fruits of the Spirit.

12 For except they obey the commandments of the Father, they shall not have the power to receive of the Holy Ghost, who giveth only unto those who are one with Us; they then being one with Us.

13 Behold, Joseph, my Son, thou shalt be prepared in thy youth to bring forth more of the

word of God that shall be revealed to you in due time, that it might testify of the words, which I have already suffered to be given unto the world and which the children of men carry forth among them, and which they preach in their churches, and which they ponder in their hearts, ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the Father, and the Son.

14 Behold, this is eternal life, that ye might know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.

15 For straight is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto eternal life in the kingdom of our Father, and few there be that find it, because they receive me not in the world, neither do they know me or Him who hath sent me.

16 But if the children of men receive me in the world, then they shall know me, and shall receive eternal life in the eternal worlds of the Father.

17 Behold, because the religious sects of this world do not know me, they cannot receive eternal life, for they are led by men who deny the power of the Holy Ghost because they do not the works that I have done, neither do they teach the things that I have taught unto them, and which they have in the testimony of the word that hath already been given unto them.

18 And it is the will of the Father that all the children of men come unto the Father through me that they might have this eternal life of which I have spoken. Behold, there is no other way except by me that this salvation shall come unto them.

19 And I came unto the Jews that I might teach them that they did not need to follow the leaders of their churches to destruction, but that if they seek the Holy Ghost and keep my commandments, then they would find peace and rest in me, having the fullness of my gospel revealed unto them.

20 But the Jews rejected me because of the things that I taught unto them, desiring rather to follow the course of their churches and their leaders, which they looked to for the words of salvation.

21 Behold, the religions and churches of men have always been an abomination before God, for He despiseth them, because they put one man above his neighbor in the things which they believe.

22 And these churches lead the children of God away from the Father because of the leaders who put themselves above the members of these churches, teaching for commandments the doctrines and precepts of men.

23 And the people are led to believe that their church is greater than that of another, thus causing a division among them, who should have all things in common before the Father.

24 Behold, in time it shall be given unto thee—the mysteries of God and the path that He desireth that His children should follow to eternal life; and not only eternal life, but for the establishment of peace and happiness upon the earth.

25 And thou shalt desire to establish a church among men according to the commandments and the words that thou shalt receive concerning these things as they shall be given unto thee. But this thing is not that which shall bring happiness unto you; for this reason, I forbid this thing. But unto you it shall be given according to the desires of the Gentiles.

26 And thou shalt desire to do this to prove the Gentiles herewith. and show unto them that they are not above the Jews, and that the Jew is not above the Gentile, that all might know that God is no respecter of persons, and would that all of His children seek not the arm of flesh, but Him and His righteousness.

27 And thou shalt be called as a prophet among them, being the first who shall prepare the way for the last, that the children of men might have the opportunity to know the Father and receive eternal life as I have explained it unto thee. And the Gentiles shall reject that which shall be given them through you; and they shall cast you out from among them and listen not to your precepts and counsel.

28 And thou shalt lead those that listen to thy words like my servant Moses led those of the house of Israel, and give unto them my words as thou receivest through me, like unto Moses and

Aaron. But the Gentiles shall reject thee, as did the Israelites the law that Moses brought down unto them, that they might have known me and the Father who sent me unto them.

29 And thou shalt be commanded to give unto them a lower law of ordinances and sacrifice like unto those which Moses gave unto the rebellious house of Israel, who would not hear my words from my own mouth, but wanted that they be given unto them through Moses.

30 And when they rejected me and trusted more in the arm of the flesh than they did in me, I took the plainness of my gospel from among them and allowed them to be led according to their own desires, which were unrighteous before God. And they did stumble exceedingly because of their wickedness.

31 And the fullness of my gospel was among them, but they did not understand it, trusting more in their fleshly ordinances and the sacrifices that pointed them towards this gospel.

32 And when I came down among them, they could not give up the traditions and doctrines of men that had crept in among them and deceived their souls, causing them to trust in their church and its leaders for their salvation.

33 And behold, as I was led, so shalt thou be led like a lamb to the slaughter, being innocent of the sins of this generation, having given unto them the opportunity to receive the fullness my gospel and establish the kingdom of God upon the earth for the last time.

34 And the Gentiles shall be led like unto the Jews of old, and they shall do all things in the likeness of the Jews, that the first may be last and the last may be first, showing that the weaknesses of men are the same yesterday as they are today.

35 And then shall the Father put forth His hand for the last time upon the earth and begin to gather the wheat from among the tares, and cause the tares that they shall be bundled together, and the wheat shall be gathered into the barn where it shall be safe from the fire which shall soon come to consume this world, destroying the churches and doctrines of them who teach falsehoods and lead the children of men away from the Father.

36 And when the work of the Father commenceth upon this earth, then shall the light of my gospel once again shine forth its light, that those who shall see it might follow it into the barn of the Lord, where they shall be safe.

37 And there shall be one like unto you, who shall be the last, who shall be called forth to give unto the Gentiles the fullness of my gospel as I gave it unto the Jews.

38 And he shall not be like unto Moses, but he shall be like unto me, having my countenance upon him for the sake of the work of the Father.

39 And he shall do that which I have done, and preach against the religions of men and their doctrines, calling upon all men to repent and come unto me and be saved.

40 And there shall be many that shall receive the words that he shall give unto them, which have been prepared to come forth in their fullness. And these words shall come forth from thy own works, which shall be given unto thee in mine own time, as thou shalt be prepared.

41 And his work shall testify of thy work, and thy words shall testify of his words, giving unto the children of men the testimony of two, that the fullness of my gospel might come forth to prepare the world for my coming.

42 Behold, Joseph, thou art in thy youth; therefore, concern not thyself with the particulars of these things, for all shall be given you according to my command and that which I have been given of the Father.

43 Thou shalt receive the keys of authority to do these things when thou hast been prepared to receive these things.

44 And when thou shalt be rejected by the Gentiles, then shall the keys that shall be given unto thee be taken from off the earth until the last, who shall be given these same keys to bring forth the mysteries of God in their plainness, that the children of men might have no more excuses in not understanding the plan of the Father.

45 And now, my son, keep all these things in thy heart and reveal them to no man. And a commandment I give unto thee, that thou shalt not reveal unto the world the true nature of our beings—my Father and I being exalted beings

made of flesh and bone like unto other men, except for the exalted nature of our flesh.

46 For behold, this is a mystery that the world shall not have until thou hast caused the fullness of my gospel to come forth unto the world to prepare them for these things.

47 For in the day that thou shalt be commanded to reveal these things unto the world, thou shalt be persecuted and hated, and thy work shall be cut short because of these things and the other mysteries that shall be given unto thee.

48 And thou shalt not reveal all of these things unto those who shall follow thee, until it be commanded by me under the direction of the Father. For in that day He shall commence His final work among the children of men.

49 For if the Gentiles shall have these things, then they shall not proceed with faith; and that which they would do cannot come to pass because of their knowledge of these things.

50 And when they shall receive these things, then shall they know that the work of the Father hath commenced upon the earth for the last time.

51 Behold, if the Gentiles shall reject the fullness of my gospel given unto them through you, then shall they set up their churches and their sects, like unto those that exist in this day, but they shall be more numerous, and their doctrines more corrupt before God.

52 But that church which shall come forth because of thee shall become like unto the church that came forth from the Jews because of Moses. And in all these things there shall be a symbol and a type—the first being last and the last being first.

53 Behold, thou art Joseph, and hast been called of God to go forth in the calling of Elijah and turn the hearts of the children to their fathers as foretold by my holy prophets.

54 Seek not for the wisdom of men; for all things whatsoever thou shalt be in need of pertaining to this calling shall be given unto thee.

55 Remember my words and my commandments this day, my Son, and thou shalt be commanded to bring these things forth in mine own due time.

56 Remember me and the Father who smileth upon thee at this time. Know us, Joseph, and where we are, thou shalt one day come.

57 Peace be unto thee; therefore, we leave with thee the Comforter, who shall now begin to teach thee all things for thy salvation. We love thee, Joseph.