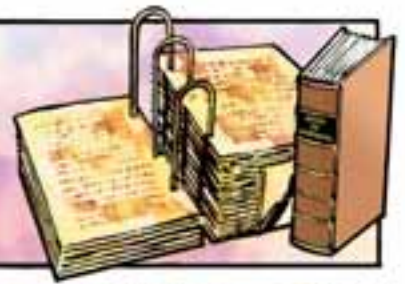


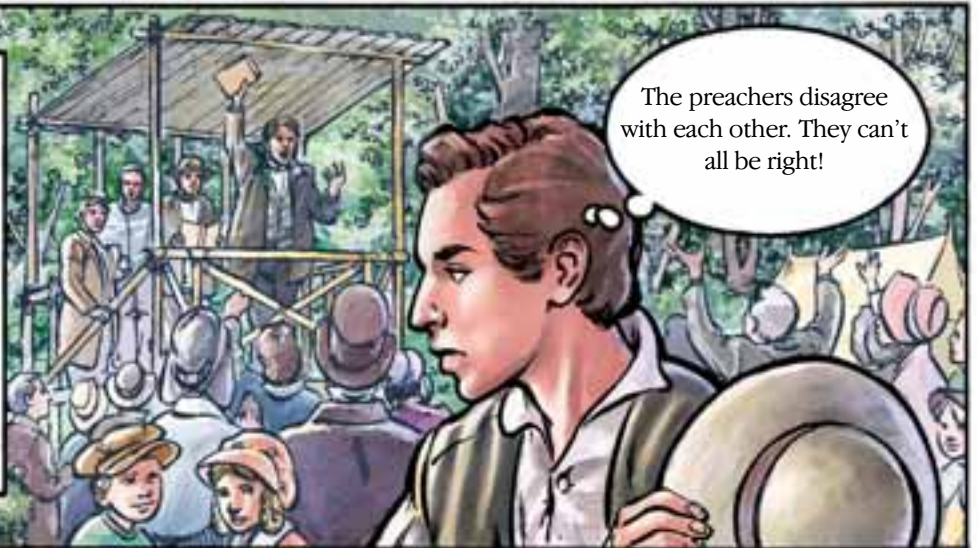


FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

The First Vision



When Joseph was 14 years old, many people in his hometown were excited about religion. Preachers gave sermons to try to get people to join their churches. Joseph learned about the different churches, but he couldn't decide which one to join.



The preachers disagree with each other. They can't all be right!

One day, as he was studying the Bible, he read James 1:5. Then he knew what to do.



"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Joseph decided he would do what the scripture said—ask God. He went into the woods to pray.



He had never prayed out loud before. He looked around to make sure he was alone, then knelt down.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAL VELLUTO AND EUGENIO MATTOZZI

As soon as he tried to speak, he was surrounded by thick darkness and he was afraid he would be destroyed. He prayed to be saved from this evil power.



Joseph later said: “Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . . I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air.

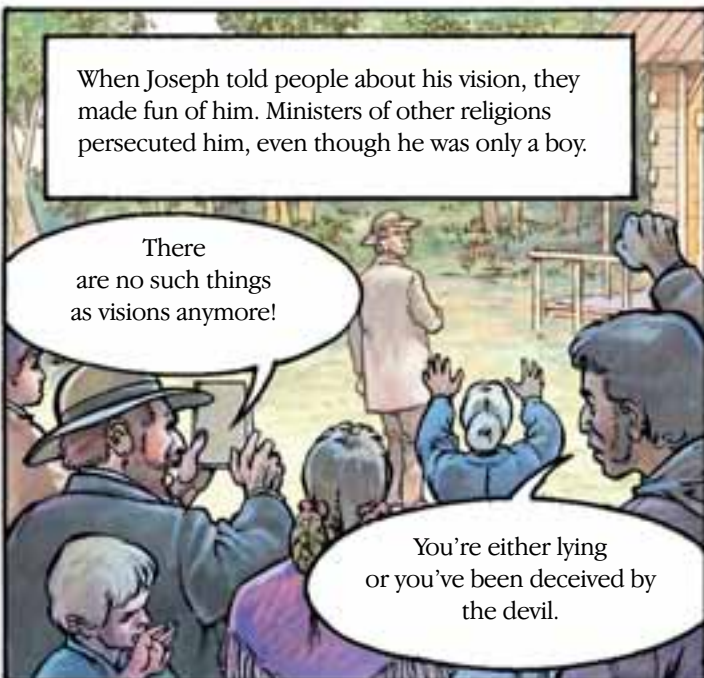


“One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*”



Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph. They told him not to join any of the churches because they were all wrong.

When Joseph told people about his vision, they made fun of him. Ministers of other religions persecuted him, even though he was only a boy.



Joseph never denied his testimony. He said: “Though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; . . . I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it.”

