





By Elder
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TESTIFY *of the* RESTORATION

*Joseph Smith is our apostolic link to that
Son of God whose Church this is.*

The greatest event and the most important accomplishment in the course of all human history is the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and the eternal triumph that provided over physical and spiritual death for everyone who has lived, now lives, or ever will live upon the earth.

The greatest event since that divine sacrifice and the next greatest accomplishment in making that Atonement fully efficacious in the great plan of salvation was the appearance of the Father and the Son to the boy prophet Joseph Smith in the New York springtime of 1820. Had we never had what we have come to call “the Restoration,” the great plan of salvation would have been forever thwarted, and the full blessings of the Atonement would not have reached most of God’s children, past, present, and future.

This Is Our Message to the World

Yes, our message is most certainly the Atonement of Jesus Christ and all that it stands for, but we have no way to make that unspeakable gift accessible or redemptive or effective in the lives of people unless we declare the latter-day Restoration of divine truth and heavenly priesthood. Take away Joseph Smith and the First Vision, take away the events which followed, take away a direct restoration from heaven, and what do we have? We don’t have much—at least not enough to distinguish



us from a thousand other good groups of people.

Believe it or not, other people have happy families. Other people have health codes. Other people give welfare assistance. Some people even do missionary service of one kind or another. Other people claim the Bible to be the word of God. Other people declare Jesus to be the Christ.

Careful and sensitive and kind as we must be in how we say it, we declare that we are dramatically different in quite a few particulars.

And, because those particulars were missing from the earth, the Lord said: “I . . . called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;

“And also gave commandments to others”—that’s you and me—“that they should proclaim these things unto the world” (D&C 1:17–18).

To a world that had lost its footing and direction, God restored the way. To a world consumed by falsehood and error, God restored the truth. To

a world strangled in sin and death, God restored the life. (See John 14:6.)

Bear Testimony of Today’s Message

We have to testify of such a restoration, or we have no testimony at all! In the scriptures is this sobering directive:

“And the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin. . . .

“And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief,

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and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

“Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole Church under condemnation. . . .

“And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and *remember the new covenant*, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them. . . .

“For *I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment—that you remain steadfast . . . in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you*” (D&C 84:49, 54–57, 61; emphasis added).

“*Are communicated*”—present tense: revelation, living prophets, now, this generation, this set of commandments, this dispensation. In short—the Restoration. Remain steadfast in bearing that testimony, and your sins will be forgiven you.

You see, the world—and apparently even the members of the Church—are always tempted to look back, look too far, look too early, look “beyond the mark” (Jacob 4:14), thereby failing to receive the greater truth, which is presented to them and to us *in our own time*.

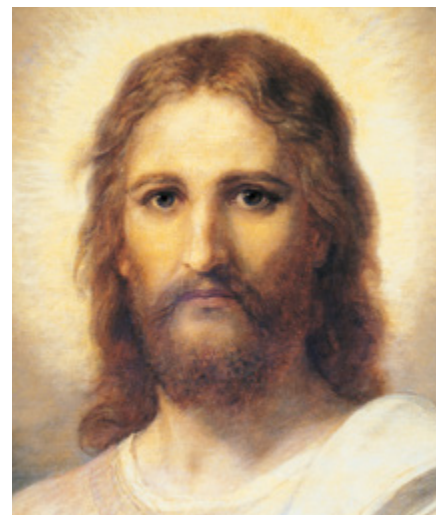
The rock upon which the latter-day Church of Jesus Christ rests is not solely the revelation of Christ to Peter or to Adam or to Enoch or Moses or Abraham. It is the revelation of Christ to the Prophet Joseph Smith coupled with the revelation of Christ to Joseph Smith’s successor prophets and apostles and indeed the revelation of Christ in the heart of each individual member of this Church.

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Testify of Joseph Smith’s Prophetic Calling

We cannot reject Joseph Smith, nor forget him, nor omit him, nor try to tell our message without him without also rejecting the message and dismissing the powers that he brought. He stands at the head of the greatest of all gospel dispensations, and every valid testimony must be a witness borne of the Spirit that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son, received Their





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revelations, and was the conduit to us of that restored authority which alone can legitimize an ordinance of salvation under the great atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our faith is in Christ, and salvation is in Him only. But in this the last of all dispensations, Joseph Smith is our apostolic link to that Son of God whose Church this is.

We cannot testify of the Living Father and the Living Son without testifying that we know They have appeared in our day. And we cannot testify of Their great introductory appearance in our day without testifying of the divine calling of the young prophet, Joseph Smith Jr., who saw Them. Others have seen Them since and will continue to see Them until Christ comes in His glory.

My Testimony

I testify that many plain and precious truths of the gospel and all of the priesthood keys of that gospel had been lost from the earth and had to be restored. I bear solemn witness that they were restored. I testify that God is our Father and has not left us, His children, without hope or happiness or a dream and chance for heaven.

I testify that Jesus Christ is God's Son in the flesh as well as in the Spirit, Himself a God and the Son of a God—the Only Begotten of the Father and the Savior of all mankind. I testify that They chose young Joseph Smith before the foundation of the world to be a prophet, a seer, a revelator, the bearer of the keys of the kingdom for this last time in the mortal plan for our salvation.

I testify that Joseph beheld the Father and the Son in vision, and that vision was but a preface to the remarkable sequence of events that would restore saving principles and authoritative priesthood to the earth, principles and priesthood absolutely essential for the salvation of humankind.

I testify that the Book of Mormon is the word of God and the keystone of our religion. I testify that it is a new witness, another witness, another testament of the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel, and “the most correct of any book on earth” (see Book of Mormon, Introduction).

I testify that 15 men have succeeded Joseph Smith as prophets and Presidents of this Church, leading in this hour to our own beloved Thomas S. Monson.

I declare that this, my personal witness, is the truth and that it has not come from man, but it has come from heaven.

That is the message we deliver to all the world. **NE**

From an address given at a seminar for new mission presidents on June 27, 2002.