



CHAPTER 3

The Angel Moroni and the Gold Plates

1823–1827



Three years went by after Joseph's first vision. When he was 17 years old, Joseph wondered what God wanted him to do. One night Joseph prayed about this. He had faith that God would tell him what to do.

Joseph Smith—History 1:27–29



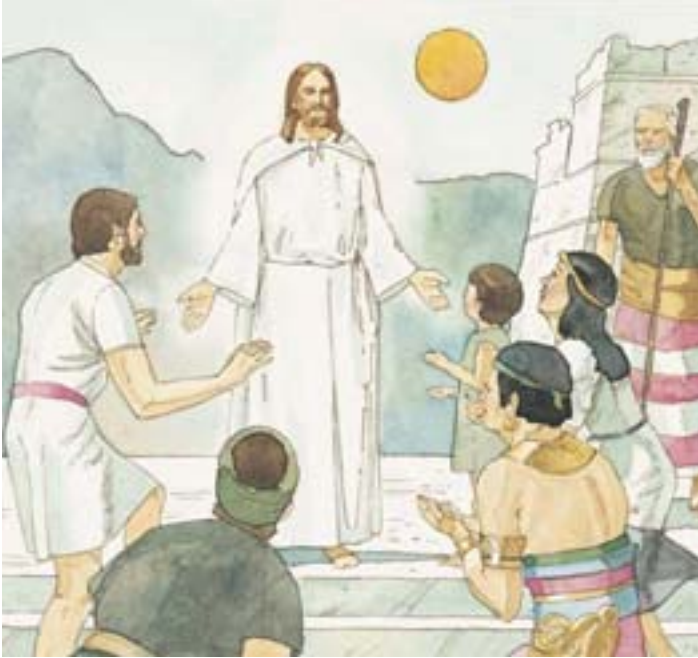
Joseph saw a bright light in his room. An angel was standing in the light. The angel's face was very bright. He wore a beautiful white robe.

Joseph Smith—History 1:30–32



The angel said his name was Moroni. God had sent him to talk to Joseph. Moroni said God had a work for Joseph to do.

Joseph Smith—History 1:33



The angel Moroni told Joseph about a book. The book was about people who had lived in the Americas long ago. Jesus Christ had come to these people and taught them His gospel.

Joseph Smith—History 1:34



Moroni said the book was written on gold pages called plates. It was written in a language that is unknown to us today. God wanted Joseph to translate the book into English.

Joseph Smith—History 1:34–35



The angel Moroni said the gold plates were buried in a hill near Joseph's home. Moroni said that two stones, called the Urim and Thummim, were hidden with the plates. The stones would help Joseph translate the book. While Moroni was talking, Joseph saw a vision that showed him where the plates were buried.

Joseph Smith—History 1:34–35, 42



Moroni also told Joseph about Elijah, who was a great prophet who lived long ago. The story of Elijah is in the Old Testament.

Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39; Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–3



Moroni said that Elijah would come and restore special priesthood power to the earth. This power would make it possible for families to be sealed together in the temple so they could live together forever.

Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39
 Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–3; 110:13–16



The angel Moroni went away, then came back two more times that night. He told Joseph many things each time, then left when it was morning. Joseph got up and went to work with his father on the farm.

Joseph Smith—History 1:43–48



Joseph was too tired to work, so his father sent him home. As he started home, he fell to the ground. Moroni then appeared again and repeated what he had said during the night. When Moroni left, Joseph told his father the things Moroni had taught him. Joseph's father believed him. He knew that God had sent Moroni, and he told Joseph to obey him.

Joseph Smith—History 1:48–50



Joseph went to the hill where the gold plates were buried. He found the plates in a stone box that was underneath a big rock. The Urim and Thummim were also in the box.

Joseph Smith—History 1:50–52



While Joseph was at the hill, the angel Moroni came to him. Moroni would not let Joseph take the gold plates yet. He told Joseph to come to the hill on the same day each year for four years.

Joseph Smith—History 1:53



Joseph obeyed Moroni and went to the Hill Cumorah each year. There Moroni taught Joseph about the Lord's kingdom on earth.

Joseph Smith—History 1:54



Joseph Smith's family was poor and needed money. Joseph wanted to help his family, so he went to the state of Pennsylvania to work. He lived with a man named Mr. Hale.

Joseph Smith—History 1:56–57



Mr. Hale had a daughter named Emma. Joseph and Emma loved each other, and after a time they got married. Then they went back to live with Joseph's family in New York, where Joseph helped his father on the farm.

Joseph Smith—History 1:57–58



Several months after Joseph and Emma were married, Joseph went again to the Hill Cumorah. Four years had passed since Joseph had first seen the gold plates, and this time Moroni let him take them. Moroni told Joseph to take good care of the plates.

Joseph Smith—History 1:59



Many people heard about Joseph receiving the gold plates. They tried to steal the plates from him, but he hid them where they could not be found. God helped Joseph keep the gold plates safe.

Joseph Smith—History 1:60



People in the area caused a lot of trouble for Joseph. They told lies about him and his family.

Joseph Smith—History 1:60–61



The trouble was so bad that Joseph and Emma decided to go back to Pennsylvania, where Joseph hoped he could begin translating the plates in peace. A man named Martin Harris lived near Joseph. He was kind to Joseph and Emma and gave them money to help them move.

Joseph Smith—History 1:61–62