

Emma Smith

Doctrine and Covenants 25

*Hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, while I speak unto you,
Emma Smith, my daughter. Doctrine and Covenants 25:1*

Emma Hale Smith was the wife of Joseph Smith, prophet of the Restoration. She was born July 10, 1804, to Isaac and Elizabeth Lewis Hale, who were the first permanent settlers in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Emma met Joseph when he boarded at her father's inn while working near Harmony. They were married January 18, 1827. That fall Joseph received the golden plates and began to translate them as directed by the Lord. Emma served as a scribe during the early part of the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Emma Smith received several significant blessings from the Lord. Section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants is addressed directly to Emma, and in verse 3 the Lord tells her, "Behold, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art an elect lady, whom I have called." The Lord told Emma in her patriarchal blessing that she was blessed because of her faithfulness and truth and that she also would be blessed with her husband. (See Gracia N. Jones, "My Great-Great-Grandmother Emma Hale Smith," *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 32.)

Emma and Joseph had 11 children, two of whom were adopted. Six of these little ones died at birth, in infancy, or in early childhood. Emma had much of the responsibility of providing for their children during Joseph's long absences due to imprisonment or duties as the prophet of the Church.

Emma's contributions to the Church, in addition to being an early scribe for the translation of the Book of Mormon, were numerous. In 1830 she was instructed by the Lord to compile a book of hymns for the Church (see D&C 25:11), a task she completed five years later. When the Relief Society was organized in Nauvoo in 1842, Emma was the first general president. She continually cared for many ill and homeless Saints in addition to her children and Joseph's extended family.

After Joseph's death on June 27, 1844, the Saints knew they would have to leave Nauvoo, so they began to make plans. In 1846 they headed west. Emma, a 41-year-old widow with her aged mother-in-law and five children to care for, chose the security of her home in Nauvoo rather than the unknown perils of the frontier and did not accompany the Saints.

A few months before she died, Emma bore her testimony to her sons. She told them she participated in the events of the Restoration, including "the translation of the plates." She had no doubt that the Book of Mormon was "of divine authenticity" and said also that the translation of the Book of Mormon was "a marvel and a wonder" to her. She stated that she knew the gospel was true and that the Church had been established by divine direction. (See Jones, "Emma Hale Smith," 36.)

Summary

Emma Hale Smith was the wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She contributed greatly to the work of the Restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was a scribe for Joseph during the early days of translating the Book of Mormon, she compiled the first book of hymns for the Church, and she was chosen as the first president of the Relief Society when it was organized in

1842. She helped Joseph in his work whenever she could, she cared for their children, and she cared for others who were sick and poor. After Joseph was martyred, Emma chose not to travel with the pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley but remained in Nauvoo, where she continued to care for her aged mother-in-law and her five children.

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