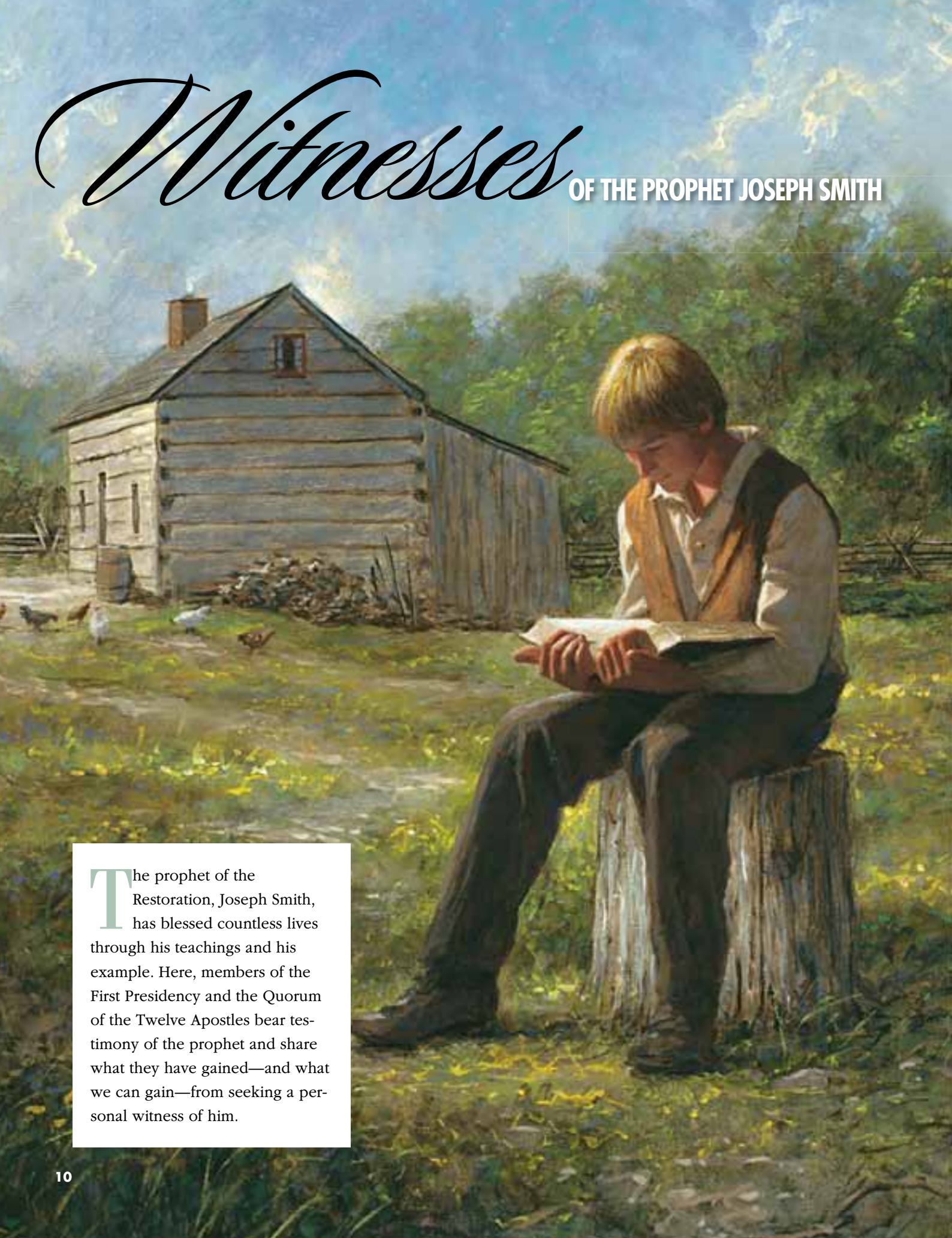


Witnesses

OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH



The prophet of the Restoration, Joseph Smith, has blessed countless lives through his teachings and his example. Here, members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles bear testimony of the prophet and share what they have gained—and what we can gain—from seeking a personal witness of him.



A Model of Obedience and Courage

President Thomas S. Monson

“When but 14 years of age, this courageous young man [Joseph Smith] entered a grove of trees, which later would be called sacred, and received an answer to his sincere prayer.

“There followed for Joseph unrelenting persecution as he related to others the account of the glorious vision he received in that grove. Although he was ridiculed and scorned, he stood firm. Said he, ‘I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it’ (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

“Step by step, facing opposition at nearly every turn and yet always guided by the hand of the Lord, Joseph organized The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He proved courageous in all that he did.

“Toward the end of his life, as he was led away with his brother Hyrum to Carthage Jail, he bravely faced what he undoubtedly knew lay ahead for him, and he sealed his testimony with his blood.

“As we face life’s tests, may we ever emulate that undaunted courage epitomized by the Prophet Joseph Smith” (“They Marked the Path to Follow,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2007, 7–8).



Gratitude and Love

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency

“The Prophet Joseph Smith is an example and a teacher of enduring well in faith. I do not worship him, but I thank and love him as the Lord’s prophet of the Restoration. He has helped me pray with the intent to obey. I am better able to feast in the word and the love of God. Because of him I feel the Holy Ghost more often in the moments when I try to build the faith of a person in the Lord’s kingdom. And because of what I know of the Prophet Joseph and the scriptures which were revealed through him, I more often feel the love of God for His children and of His for me when I reach down to lift someone up” (“An Enduring Testimony of the Mission of the Prophet Joseph,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 92).



An Example of Seeking and Receiving

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency

“The young Prophet Joseph Smith . . . was a teenager when he studied the scriptures. During this time a multitude of unanswered questions arose. He wondered, he pondered, he asked, and he received answers.

“Build your testimony the same way: Study the scriptures, increase your knowledge of the gospel, search for answers in the scriptures. If you have doubts or fears, invest the time and energy to find the answers in the scriptures and in the written words of our prophets. Contemplate, meditate, ponder, and pray.

“Go to our Heavenly Father in prayer; communicate with Him daily. Draw close to Him, and He will draw close to you. Ask about your studies of the scriptures, about your feelings and your questions, and He will answer. He is waiting, He is real, and He is there. Use the gift of the Holy Ghost. Believe in the power of prayer.

“It takes effort and time. Be patient; it is worth it. You can do it. You are not alone in this; others went through this before” (“Making Choices for Eternity,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 28–29).

LEFT: LET HIM ASK OF GOD, BY JON McNAUGHTON; RIGHT: THE DESIRES OF MY HEART, BY WALTER RANE



A Walk with the Prophet Joseph Smith
President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“At times in my life, during some deliberate and all too brief moments of reverie, study, and research, I have walked with the Prophet Joseph Smith—starting with him in Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, thence on to Palmyra, to Kirtland, to Far West, later to Liberty, and ultimately from Nauvoo to Carthage. It was thrilling to journey through the pages of early Church history, the remarkably well-documented biography of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

“I commend this practice to all who esteem and honor this great man and prophet. In this way we can see him in moments of despair, but also in moments of exaltation. We can stand with him in an hour of triumph and yet see him weeping when he was bereft of loved ones, or in times of deep sorrow when friends turned from him—even his brethren, his close counselors. We can catch moments when he was jumping, or wrestling, or pulling sticks in good-natured fun; or join him where, as the master of an elegant home, he was sought out by the great of the world; or see him in a general’s uniform as a public figure, even a presidential candidate.

“Looking a little deeper into his countenance and his activities, we can see him, for instance, step forth in steadfastness to rebuke and correct, and at times see him humbled and corrected by the Almighty in the work he was assigned to do” (*Things of the Soul* [1996], 34–35).



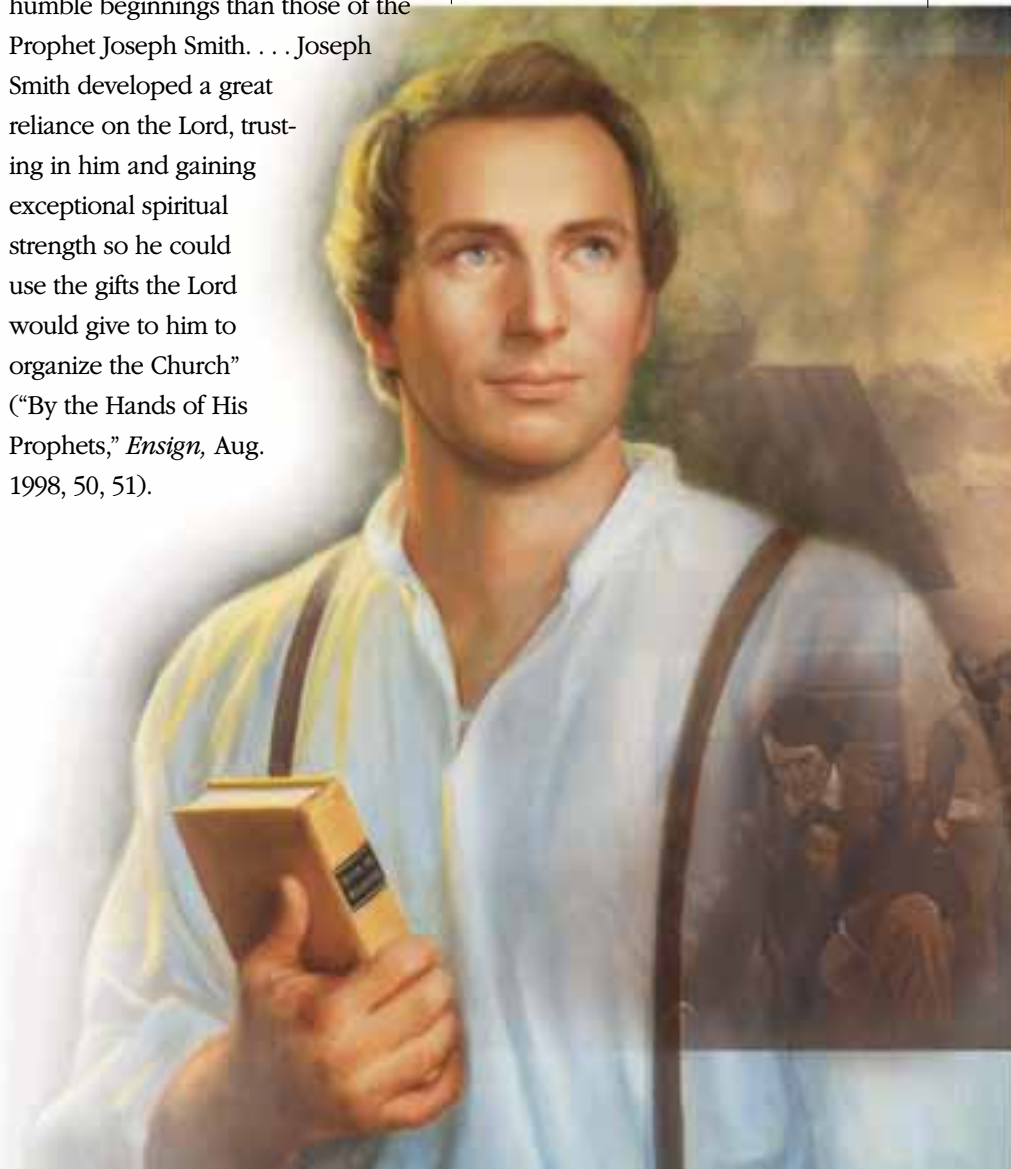
Trust in the Lord
Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“The Lord needed a strong, vigorous young man who would be teachable. He needed someone he could mold into the leader who could bring forth the restoration of the gospel. The one foreordained for this great assignment was Joseph Smith. Out of weak things of the earth, the Lord created one with power and strength. Few prophets have come from more humble beginnings than those of the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . Joseph Smith developed a great reliance on the Lord, trusting in him and gaining exceptional spiritual strength so he could use the gifts the Lord would give to him to organize the Church” (“By the Hands of His Prophets,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1998, 50, 51).



The Reality of God’s Love
Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, literally appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in April 1820. While this may be relatively unknown in the annals of history, yet it constituted an epochal event in the history of humanity—a profound demonstration of the love of God for all of His children” (“Combating Spiritual Drift—Our Global Pandemic,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 104).





A Reliance on Spiritual Gifts

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“Overarching the Prophet Joseph’s entire ministry was his comparative youth, his superficial formal education, and his incredibly rapid acquisition of knowledge and maturity. . . . The Prophet Joseph had no role models from whom he could learn how to be a prophet and leader of the Lord’s people. He learned from heavenly messengers and from the harvest of his unique spiritual gifts. He had to rely on associates who had no role models either. They struggled and learned together, and the Prophet’s growth was extremely rapid” (“Joseph, the Man and the Prophet,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 71, 72).



Peace and Happiness in This Life

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“Those who have an unwavering testimony that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God know that he, in fact, received revelation from God. They know that those revelations contain all the instruction necessary for us to find peace and happiness in this life” (“What Came from Kirtland,” in *Brigham Young University 1994–95 Devotionals and Fireside Speeches* [1995], 50).

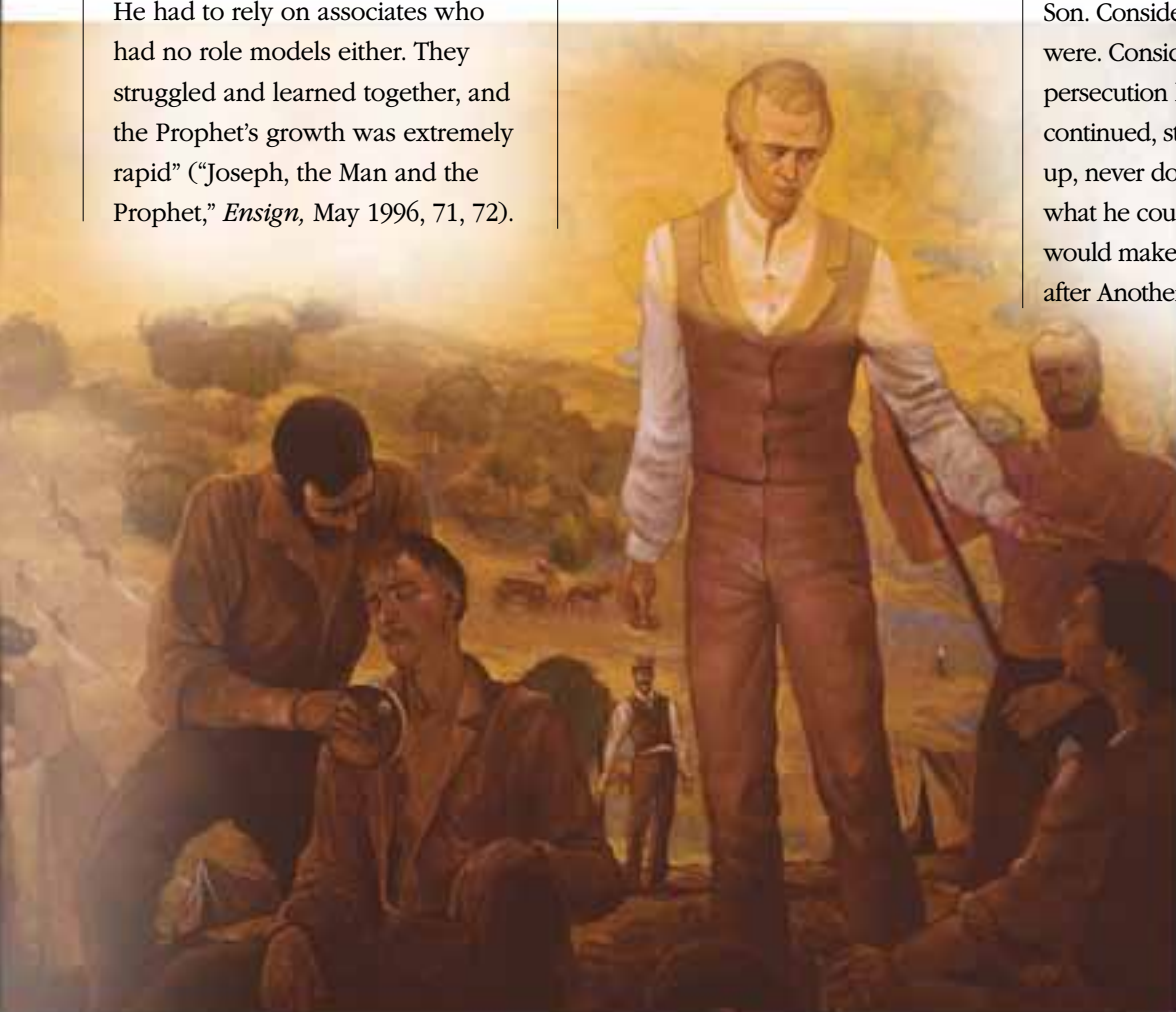


Never Giving Up

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“The answer to [Joseph’s] prayer filled him with light and direction. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son appeared to him. Their direction swept away the thick darkness that had seized him and threatened to destroy him. It forever swept away his confusion.

“From that moment until his martyrdom nearly a quarter of a century later, Joseph Smith committed himself to the path shown him by the Father and the Son. Consider how painful his days were. Consider the suffering and the persecution he had to endure. Yet he continued, step by step, never giving up, never doubting that if he only did what he could, his Heavenly Father would make up the rest” (“One Step after Another,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 27).



LEFT: HEADING AT NAUVOO, BY GARY SMITH; FAR LEFT: PROPHET OF THE LORD, BY DAVID LINDSLEY



A Book of Truths
Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“Try reading the Book of Mormon because you want to, not because you have to. Discover for yourself that it is true. As you read each page ask, ‘Could any man have written this book or did it come as Joseph Smith testified?’ Apply the teachings you learn. They will fortify you against the evil of Satan. Follow Moroni’s counsel. Sincerely ask God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, with real intent, if the teachings of the Book of Mormon are true (see Moroni 10:3–5). Ask with a desire to receive a confirmation personally, nothing doubting. There has to be an explanation of that book you can hold in your hand. I know that you can receive a spiritual confirmation that it is true. You will then know that Jesus Christ lives, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s Church. . . . You will confirm that the Savior guides His Church through a living prophet. These truths will become a foundation for your productive life” (“Realize Your Full Potential,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 42–43).



A Pattern for Gaining Testimony
Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“Gaining a testimony and becoming converted begins with study and prayer, then living the gospel with patience and persistence and inviting and waiting upon the Spirit. The life of Joseph Smith and the pattern of the Restoration are excellent examples of this process. . . . Like Joseph, many of us find ourselves seeking the light of truth. Just as the world was prepared for the Restoration, each of us is prepared to receive the light of the gospel in our own lives” (“Receiving a Testimony of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 28–29).



A Knowledge of Revelation
Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“Are the heavens open? Does God reveal His will to prophets and apostles as in days of old? That they are and that He does is the unflinching declaration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to all the world. And in that declaration lies the significance of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. . . .

“His life asked and answered the question ‘Do you believe God speaks to man?’ In all else that he accomplished in his brief 38 and a half years, Joseph left us above all else the resolute legacy of divine revelation—not a single, isolated revelation without evidence or consequence . . . but specific, documented, ongoing directions from God” (“Prophets, Seers, and Revelators,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 8).



RIGHT: MY SERVANT JOSEPH, BY LIZ LEMON SWINDIE; FAR RIGHT THIS PAGE: JOSEPH IN NAUVOO, 1840, BY THEODORE GORKA



Lessons in Pondering the Scriptures
Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“The Prophet Joseph Smith provided an important guideline about pondering and reflecting upon the scriptures. He taught: ‘I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?’ (*History of the Church*, 5:261). Thus, striving to understand the question that preceded a particular revelation, parable, or episode can assist us in obtaining a deeper understanding of the scriptures” (“Because We Have Them before Our Eyes,” *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 6).



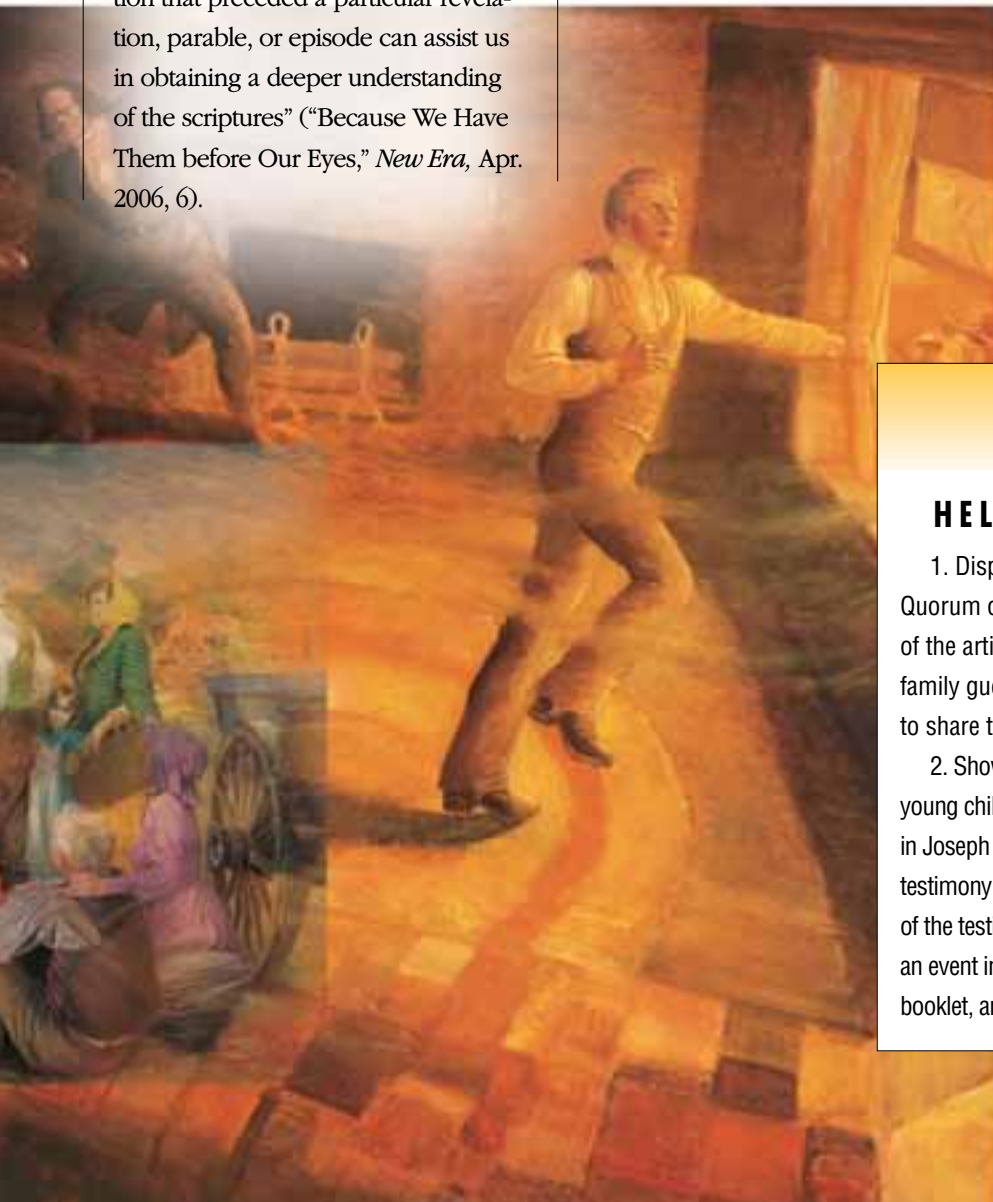
A Foundation for Decisions
Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“The foundation for every important decision and choice you will make is your testimony of Jesus Christ and the restoration of His gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon is an essential element of that testimony” (“Strengthen Faith as You Seek Knowledge,” *New Era*, Sept. 2008, 2, 4).



A Sure Knowledge of the Savior
Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“The Prophet Joseph could and did attest that Jesus lives, a resurrected, glorified person, because he saw Him and conversed with Him. He could and did attest that He is the very Son of God and that through His Atonement, we are redeemed, ‘begotten sons and daughters unto God’ (D&C 76:24) because God the Father personally declared it to Joseph. Joseph translated and published the most powerful and persuasive written testament of Jesus Christ in existence. And finally, the Prophet sealed this testimony with his own blood as a martyr” (BYU–Hawaii commencement address, June 18, 2005, available at www.byuh.edu under “devotionals”). ■



MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH AND HYRUM, BY GARY SMITH



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Display a picture of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Read the introduction of the article. As you read the testimonies, have your family guess who the author is. Invite family members to share their thoughts.
2. Show a picture of Joseph Smith. For families with young children, tell the story of the First Vision found in Joseph Smith—History 11–20. Conclude by bearing testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Summarize a few of the testimonies, and have your children draw a picture of an event in Joseph Smith’s life. Combine the pictures in a booklet, and have it available for family members to review.