



# Jesus Christ, the Divine Redeemer of the World

*“Salvation could not come to the world without the mediation of Jesus Christ.”*

## **From the Life of Joseph Smith**

**Y**ears before Joseph Smith was born, his paternal grandfather felt inspired that something would happen in his family that “would revolutionize the world.”<sup>1</sup> Joseph Smith’s history records: “My grandfather, Asael Smith, long ago predicted that there would be a prophet raised up in his family, and my grandmother was fully satisfied that it was fulfilled in me. My grandfather Asael died in East Stockholm, St. Lawrence county, New York, after having received the Book of Mormon, and read it nearly through; and he declared that I was the very Prophet that he had long known would come in his family.”<sup>2</sup>

As the Prophet of the Restoration, one of Joseph Smith’s most important roles was to testify of Jesus Christ. He was blessed to enjoy a personal knowledge of the divinity of Jesus Christ and to understand His role as the Redeemer of the world. This knowledge began with the First Vision, in which young Joseph saw Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and heard the Father declare, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). In this sacred experience, Joseph was privileged to receive instruction from the Savior of the world.

Nearly twelve years later, on February 16, 1832, the Prophet was translating the Bible, with Sidney Rigdon as his scribe, in the home of John Johnson in Hiram, Ohio. After the Prophet translated John 5:29, which describes the resurrection of those who are good and those who are evil, a vision was opened to Joseph and Sidney, and they saw and conversed with the Savior:



*The Savior appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. "The veil was taken from our minds," Joseph said, "and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit."*

“By the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God—even those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his Only Begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning; of whom we bear record; and the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision. . . .

“And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness; and saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—that by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:12–14, 20–24).

Joseph Smith saw the Savior again on April 3, 1836. The Prophet and Oliver Cowdery had retired to the west pulpit in the Kirtland Temple. They bowed themselves in solemn prayer, after which the Savior appeared before them. The Prophet declared:

“The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:1–4).

From such experiences, the Prophet gained firsthand knowledge and became a special witness of the divinity of the Savior.

## Teachings of Joseph Smith

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**In all dispensations, God's people have relied on the Atonement of Christ for the remission of their sins.**

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“God . . . prepared a sacrifice in the gift of His own Son, who should be sent in due time to prepare a way, or open a door through which man might enter into the Lord's presence, whence he had been cast out for disobedience. From time to time these glad tidings were sounded in the ears of men in different ages of the world down to the time of Messiah's coming.

“By faith in this atonement or plan of redemption, Abel offered to God a sacrifice that was accepted, which was the firstlings of the flock. Cain offered of the fruit of the ground, and was not accepted, because he could not do it in faith; he could have no faith, or could not exercise faith contrary to the plan of heaven. It must be shedding the blood of the Only Begotten to atone for man, for this was the plan of redemption, and without the shedding of blood was no remission. And as the sacrifice was instituted for a type by which man was to discern the great Sacrifice which God had prepared, to offer a sacrifice contrary to that, no faith could be exercised, because redemption was not purchased in that way, nor the power of atonement instituted after that order; consequently Cain could have no faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. But Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God Himself testifying of his gifts [see Hebrews 11:4].

“Certainly, the shedding of the blood of a beast could be beneficial to no man, except it was done in imitation, or as a type, or explanation of what was to be offered through the gift of God Himself—and this performance done with an eye looking forward in faith on the power of that great Sacrifice for a remission of sins. . . .

“. . . We cannot believe that the ancients in all ages were so ignorant of the system of heaven as many suppose, since all that were ever saved, were saved through the power of this great plan

of redemption, as much before the coming of Christ as since; if not, God has had different plans in operation (if we may so express it), to bring men back to dwell with Himself. And this we cannot believe, since there has been no change in the constitution of man since he fell; and the ordinance or institution of offering blood in sacrifice was only designed to be performed till Christ was offered up and shed His blood—as said before—that man might look forward in faith to that time. . . .

“That the offering of sacrifice was only to point the mind forward to Christ, we infer from these remarkable words of Jesus to the Jews: ‘Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad’ [John 8:56]. So, then, because the ancients offered sacrifice it did not hinder their hearing the Gospel; but served, as we said before, to open their eyes, and enable them to look forward to the time of the coming of the Savior, and rejoice in His redemption. . . . We conclude that whenever the Lord revealed Himself to men in ancient days, and commanded them to offer sacrifice to Him, that it was done that they might look forward in faith to the time of His coming, and rely upon the power of that atonement for a remission of their sins. And this they have done, thousands who have gone before us, whose garments are spotless, and who are, like Job, waiting with an assurance like his, that they will see Him in the *latter day* upon the earth, even in their flesh [see Job 19:25–26].

“We may conclude, that though there were different dispensations, yet all things which God communicated to His people were calculated to draw their minds to the great object, and to teach them to rely upon God alone as the author of their salvation, as contained in His law.”<sup>4</sup>

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**Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead,  
all mankind will be resurrected.**

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it. But in connection with these, we believe



*“The Lamb of God hath brought to pass the resurrection,  
so that all shall rise from the dead.”*

in the gift of the Holy Ghost, the power of faith, the enjoyment of the spiritual gifts according to the will of God, the restoration of the house of Israel, and the final triumph of truth.”<sup>5</sup>

“ ‘As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;’ all shall be raised from the dead [1 Corinthians 15:22]. The

Lamb of God hath brought to pass the resurrection, so that all shall rise from the dead.”<sup>6</sup>

“God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world, and this He has given an assurance of in that He raised up His Son Jesus Christ from the dead—the point on which the hope of all who believe the inspired record is founded for their future happiness and enjoyment; because, ‘If Christ be not risen,’ said Paul to the Corinthians, ‘your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished’ [1 Corinthians 15:17–18]. . . .

“Christ Himself has assuredly risen from the dead; and if He has risen from the dead, He will, by His power, bring all men to stand before Him: for if He has risen from the dead the bands of the temporal death are broken that the grave has no victory. If then, the grave has no victory, those who keep the sayings of Jesus and obey His teachings have not only a promise of a resurrection from the dead, but an assurance of being admitted into His glorious kingdom; for, He Himself says, ‘Where I am there also shall my servant be’ [John 12:26].”<sup>7</sup>

“Those who have died in Jesus Christ may expect to enter into all that fruition of joy when they come forth, which they possessed or anticipated here. . . . I am glad I have the privilege of communicating to you some things which, if grasped closely, will be a help to you when earthquakes bellow, the clouds gather, the lightnings flash, and the storms are ready to burst upon you like peals of thunder. Lay hold of these things and let not your knees or joints tremble, nor your hearts faint; and then what can earthquakes, wars and tornadoes do? Nothing. All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it. . . .

“God has revealed His Son from the heavens and the doctrine of the resurrection also; and we have a knowledge that those we bury here God will bring up again, clothed upon and quickened by the Spirit of the great God; and what mattereth it whether we lay them down, or we lay down with them, when we can keep them no longer? Let these truths sink down in our hearts, that we may even here begin to enjoy that which shall be in full hereafter.”<sup>8</sup>

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**Through the Atonement of Christ and obedience to the gospel, we can become joint heirs with Jesus Christ.**

“I believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and that He died for the sins of all men, who in Adam had fallen.”<sup>9</sup>

*Articles of Faith 1:3*: “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”<sup>10</sup>

“After God had created the heavens and the earth, he came down and on the sixth day said, ‘Let us make man in our own image.’ In whose image? In the image of the Gods created they them, male and female, innocent, harmless, and spotless, bearing the same character and the same image as the Gods [see Genesis 1:26–27]. And when man fell he did not lose his image, but his character still retained the image of his Maker. Christ, who is the image of man, is also the express image of his Father’s person [see Hebrews 1:3]. . . . Through the atonement of Christ and the resurrection, and obedience to the gospel, we shall again be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ [see Romans 8:29]; then we shall have attained to the image, glory, and character of God.”<sup>11</sup>

“The Father of our spirits [provided] a sacrifice for His creatures, a plan of redemption, a power of atonement, a scheme of salvation, having as its great objects, the bringing of men back into the presence of the King of heaven, crowning them in the celestial glory, and making them heirs with the Son to that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away.”<sup>12</sup>

“The scripture says those who will obey the commandments shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. . . . ‘The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him in the flesh that we may be also glorified together.’ [See Romans 8:16–17.]”<sup>13</sup>

“How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, wife, father, mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly tabernacle is laid down and

dissolved, they shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die any more, but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.”<sup>14</sup>

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**Jesus Christ is perfect, pure, and holy, and He  
has called us to be like Him.**

“Who, among all the Saints in these last days, can consider himself as good as our Lord? Who is as perfect? Who is as pure? Who is as holy as He was? Are they to be found? He never transgressed or broke a commandment or law of heaven—no deceit was in His mouth, neither was guile found in His heart. . . . Where is one like Christ? He cannot be found on earth.”<sup>15</sup>

“The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but Christ subjected the same in hope [see Romans 8:20]—all are subjected to vanity while they travel through the crooked paths and difficulties which surround them. Where is the man that is free from vanity? None ever were perfect but Jesus; and why was He perfect? Because He was the Son of God, and had the fullness of the Spirit, and greater power than any man.”<sup>16</sup>

“When still a boy [Jesus Christ] had all the intelligence necessary to enable Him to rule and govern the kingdom of the Jews, and could reason with the wisest and most profound doctors of law and divinity, and make their theories and practice to appear like folly compared with the wisdom He possessed.”<sup>17</sup>

“The commandments of our Lord, we hope are constantly revolving in your hearts, teaching you, not only His will in proclaiming His Gospel, but His meekness and perfect walk before all, even in those times of severe persecutions and abuse which were heaped upon Him by a wicked and adulterous generation. Remember, brethren, that He has called you unto holiness; and need we say, to be like Him in purity? How wise, how holy; how chaste, and how perfect, then, you ought to conduct yourselves in His sight; and remember, too, that His eyes are continually upon you.”<sup>18</sup>

“When we reflect upon the holiness and perfections of our great Master, who has opened a way whereby we may come unto



*“When we reflect upon the holiness and perfections of our great Master, . . . our hearts melt within us for his condescension.”*

him, even by the sacrifice of himself, our hearts melt within us for his condescension. And when we reflect also, that he has called us to be perfect in all things, that we may be prepared to meet him in peace when he comes in his glory with all the holy angels, we feel to exhort our brethren with boldness, to be humble and prayerful, to walk indeed as children of the light and of the day, that they may have grace to withstand every temptation, and to overcome every evil in the worthy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For be assured, brethren, that the day is truly near when the Master of the house will rise up and shut the door, and none but such as have on a wedding garment will be permitted to enjoy a seat at the marriage supper! [See Matthew 22:1–14.]”<sup>19</sup>

## Suggestions for Study and Teaching

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Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages vii–xii.

- Review the accounts of Joseph Smith’s visions of the Savior (pages 45–47). What are your thoughts and feelings as you ponder these experiences?
- Anciently, animal sacrifices helped the Lord’s people “open their eyes, and . . . look forward to the time of the coming of the Savior, and rejoice in His redemption” (page 49). What are some things that help you look to the Savior today?
- Read the paragraph that begins at the bottom of page 49. Note that in this statement, an appendage is something that is connected to something of greater importance, such as a branch that is connected to the trunk of a tree. Why do you think the testimonies of the apostles and prophets concerning the Savior’s Atonement and Resurrection are the “fundamental principles of our religion”? How might you approach your service at home and in the Church if you remember that all other things are appendages to these principles?
- Review the Prophet Joseph’s teachings about the resurrection (pages 49–51). What comfort do you receive from knowing that “all your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful”? In what ways can a knowledge of the resurrection help us “begin to enjoy that which shall be in full hereafter”?
- As you review pages 52–53, ponder what the Savior has done so we can become joint heirs with Him. Consider ways you can show Him your gratitude for His atoning sacrifice.
- On pages 53–54, the Prophet Joseph Smith mentions many of the Savior’s attributes. What other attributes do you think of when you ponder the life and mission of the Savior? Think about something you can do to become more like Him.

*Related Scriptures:* Isaiah 53:1–12; 2 Nephi 9:5–26; D&C 20:21–29

## Notes

1. Reported by George A. Smith, *Deseret News*, Aug. 12, 1857, p. 183.
2. *History of the Church*, 2:443; from “History of the Church” (manuscript), book B-1, addenda, p. 5, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
3. *History of the Church*, 5:555; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Aug. 27, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Willard Richards and William Clayton.
4. *History of the Church*, 2:15–17; punctuation modernized; paragraph divisions altered; from “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” Jan. 22, 1834, published in *Evening and Morning Star*, Mar. 1834, p. 143.
5. *History of the Church*, 3:30; from an editorial published in *Elders’ Journal*, July 1838, p. 44; Joseph Smith was the editor of the periodical.
6. *History of the Church*, 6:366; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on May 12, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Thomas Bullock.
7. *History of the Church*, 2:18–19; paragraph divisions altered; from “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” Jan. 22, 1834, published in *Evening and Morning Star*, Mar. 1834, p. 144.
8. *History of the Church*, 5:361–62; paragraph divisions altered; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 16, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff and Willard Richards.
9. *History of the Church*, 4:78; from a letter from Matthew L. Davis to Mary Davis, Feb. 6, 1840, Washington, D.C., reporting a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Feb. 5, 1840, in Washington, D.C.
10. Articles of Faith 1:3.
11. Quoted by James Burgess, in compilation of excerpts from Joseph Smith’s discourses; James Burgess, *Journals, 1841–48*, vol. 2, Church Archives.
12. *History of the Church*, 2:5; from “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” Jan. 22, 1834, published in *Evening and Morning Star*, Feb. 1834, p. 135.
13. Quoted by George Laub, in compilation of excerpts from Joseph Smith’s discourses, ca. 1845; George Laub, *Reminiscences and Journal Jan. 1845–Apr. 1857*, p. 31, Church Archives.
14. *History of the Church*, 6:306; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 7, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, Thomas Bullock, and William Clayton.
15. *History of the Church*, 2:23; from “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” Jan. 22, 1834, published in *Evening and Morning Star*, Apr. 1834, p. 152.
16. *History of the Church*, 4:358; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on May 16, 1841, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported in *Times and Seasons*, June 1, 1841, pp. 429–30.
17. *History of the Church*, 6:608; from instructions given by Joseph Smith on June 27, 1844, in Carthage Jail, Carthage, Illinois; reported by Cyrus H. Wheelock.
18. *History of the Church*, 2:13; from “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” Jan. 22, 1834, published in *Evening and Morning Star*, Mar. 1834, p. 142.
19. Letter from Joseph Smith and high priests to the brethren in Geneseo, New York, Nov. 23, 1833, Kirtland, Ohio, Church Archives.