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## Proclaim Glad Tidings to All the World

*“Souls are as precious in the sight of God as they ever were; and the Elders [are] . . . to persuade and invite all men everywhere to repent, that they may become the heirs of salvation.”*

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

**A**fter the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith continued to proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel. During the month of April, he traveled to Colesville, New York, to visit his friend Joseph Knight Sr., who with his family had become interested in the gospel. The Prophet held meetings in the neighborhood, and “many began to pray fervently to Almighty God, that He would give them wisdom to understand the truth.”<sup>1</sup> About two months later, on a second visit to Colesville, the Prophet found that a number of people who had heard the gospel now desired to be baptized. For these new converts, accepting the gospel took faith and courage, as the Prophet recorded:

“We appointed a meeting for the Sabbath, and on the afternoon of Saturday we erected a dam across a stream of water, which was convenient, for the purpose of there attending to the ordinance of baptism; but during the night a mob collected and tore down our dam, which hindered us from attending to the baptism on the Sabbath. . . . Early on Monday morning we were on the alert, and before our enemies were aware of our proceedings, we had repaired the dam, and the following thirteen persons [were] baptized, by Oliver Cowdery, viz.: Emma Smith; Hezekiah Peck and wife; Joseph Knight, Sen., and wife; William Stringham and wife; Joseph Knight, Jun.; Aaron Culver and wife; Levi [Hall]; Polly Knight; and Julia Stringham.”<sup>2</sup>

That fall, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson were to “go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them” (D&C 28:8; 30:5–6; 32:1–3). These missionaries traveled some 1,500 miles, preaching briefly among various Indian tribes, including the Seneca in New York, the Wyandot in Ohio, and the Delaware and Shawnee in Indian territory. However, the missionaries’ greatest success came when they stopped in the area of Kirtland, Ohio. There they baptized about 130 converts, principally from among the Reformed Baptist congregation of Sidney Rigdon, thus opening what would become a gathering place for hundreds of Church members the following year. The missionaries also found some converts among the settlers in Jackson County, Missouri, where the city of Zion would later be established.

Whether he was preaching to those around him or sending missionaries into the world, the Prophet Joseph Smith loved missionary work. Elder Parley P. Pratt recorded the following experience that occurred in 1839: “While visiting with Brother Joseph in Philadelphia, [Pennsylvania,] a very large church was opened for him to preach in, and about three thousand people assembled to hear him. Brother Rigdon spoke first, and dwelt on the Gospel, illustrating his doctrine by the Bible. When he was through, Brother Joseph arose like a lion about to roar; and being full of the Holy Ghost, spoke in great power, bearing testimony of the visions he had seen, the ministering of angels which he had enjoyed; and how he had found the plates of the Book of Mormon, and translated them by the gift and power of God. He commenced by saying: ‘If nobody else had the courage to testify of so glorious a message from Heaven, and of the finding of so glorious a record, he felt to do it in justice to the people, and leave the event with God.’

“The entire congregation were astounded; electrified, as it were, and overwhelmed with the sense of the truth and power by which he spoke, and the wonders which he related. A lasting impression was made; many souls were gathered into the fold. And I bear witness, that he, by his faithful and powerful testimony, cleared his garments of their blood. Multitudes were baptized in Philadelphia and in the regions around.”<sup>3</sup>

## Teachings of Joseph Smith

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**Because the world is in spiritual darkness, we should be diligent in preaching the gospel.**

*In 1834, Joseph Smith and other elders of the Church in Kirtland sent the following letter to the brethren in other areas:* “Though our communications to you may be frequent, yet we believe they will be received on your part with brotherly feelings; and that from us your unworthy brethren, you will suffer a word of exhortation to have place in your hearts, as you see the great extent of the power and dominion of the prince of darkness, and realize how vast the numbers are who are crowding the road to death without ever giving heed to the cheering sound of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Consider for a moment, brethren, the fulfillment of the words of the prophet; for we behold that darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the minds of the inhabitants thereof [see Isaiah 60:2], that crimes of every description are increasing among men; vices of great enormity are practiced; the rising generation growing up in the fullness of pride and arrogance; the aged losing every sense of conviction, and seemingly banishing every thought of a day of retribution; intemperance, immorality, extravagance, pride, blindness of heart, idolatry, the loss of natural affection, the love of this world, and indifference toward the things of eternity increasing among those who profess a belief in the religion of heaven, and infidelity spreading itself in consequence of the same; men giving themselves up to commit acts of the foulest kind and deeds of the blackest dye, blaspheming, defrauding, blasting the reputation of neighbors, stealing, robbing, murdering, advocating error and opposing the truth, forsaking the covenant of heaven, and denying the faith of Jesus—and in the midst of all this, the day of the Lord fast approaching when none except those who have on the wedding garment will be permitted to eat and drink in the presence of the Bridegroom, the Prince of Peace!

“Impressed with the truth of these facts, what can be the feelings of those who have been partakers of the heavenly gift and

have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come? [See Hebrews 6:4–5.] Who but those who can see the awful precipice upon which the world of mankind stands in this generation, can labor in the vineyard of the Lord without feeling a sense of the world's deplorable situation? Who but those who have duly considered the condescension of the Father of our spirits in providing 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 [see 1 Peter 1:4]—who but such can realize the importance of a perfect walk before all men, and a diligence in calling upon all men to partake of these blessings? How indescribably glorious are these things to mankind! Of a truth they may be considered tidings of great joy to all people; and tidings, too, that ought to fill the earth and cheer the hearts of every one when sounded in his ears.”<sup>4</sup>

“The servants of God will not have gone over the nations of the Gentiles, with a warning voice, until the destroying angel will commence to waste the inhabitants of the earth, and as the prophet hath said, ‘It shall be a vexation to hear the report.’ [See Isaiah 28:19.] I speak thus because I feel for my fellow men; I do it in the name of the Lord, being moved upon by the Holy Spirit. Oh, that I could snatch them from the vortex of misery, into which I behold them plunging themselves, by their sins; that I might be enabled by the warning voice, to be an instrument of bringing them to unfeigned repentance, that they might have faith to stand in the evil day!”<sup>5</sup>

“May God enable us to perform our vows and covenants with each other, in all fidelity and righteousness before Him, that our influence may be felt among the nations of the earth, in mighty power, even to rend the kingdoms of darkness asunder, and triumph over priestcraft and spiritual wickedness in high places, and break in pieces all kingdoms that are opposed to the kingdom of Christ, and spread the light and truth of the everlasting Gospel from the rivers to the ends of the earth.”<sup>6</sup>



*The Prophet Joseph Smith admonished the Saints to call upon all people to partake of the blessings of the gospel. “How indescribably glorious are these things to mankind!”*

*Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of the Church, recalled the following words of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “The world is full of darkness. Sin and wickedness is overwhelming the world as the waters cover the great deep. The devil rules over the world in a great measure. The world will war against you; the devil will, earth will, and hell will. But . . . you must preach the Gospel, do your duty, and the Lord will stand by you. Earth and hell shall not prevail against you.”<sup>7</sup>*

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**Our duty is to invite all mankind to repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and become heirs of salvation.**

“This we believe to be our duty—to teach to all mankind the doctrine of repentance, which we shall endeavor to show from the following quotations:

“Then opened He their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem’ [Luke 24:45–47].

“By this we learn that it behoved Christ to suffer, and to be crucified, and rise again on the third day, for the express purpose that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations.

“ ‘Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call’ [Acts 2:38–39].

“By this we learn that the promise of the Holy Ghost is made unto as many as those to whom the doctrine of repentance was to be preached, which was unto all nations. . . . Therefore we believe in preaching the doctrine of repentance in all the world, both to old and young, rich and poor, bond and free.”<sup>8</sup>

“Souls are as precious in the sight of God as they ever were; and the Elders were never called to drive any down to hell, but to persuade and invite all men everywhere to repent, that they may become the heirs of salvation. It is the acceptable year of the Lord: liberate the captives that they may sing hosanna [see Isaiah 61:1–2].”<sup>9</sup>

“It should be the duty of the Elder to stand up boldly for the cause of Christ, and warn [the] people with one accord to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and for the Holy Ghost.”<sup>10</sup>

“I will proceed to tell you what the Lord requires of all people, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, ministers and people, professors of religion and non-professors, in order that they may enjoy the Holy Spirit of God to a fulness and escape the judgments of God, which are almost ready to burst upon the nations of the earth. Repent of all your sins, and be baptized in water for the remission of them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and receive the ordinance of the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power, that ye may receive the Holy Spirit of God; and this is according to the Holy Scriptures, and the Book of Mormon; and the only way that man can enter into the celestial kingdom. These are the requirements of the new covenant, or first principles of the Gospel of Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

“It is required of all men, to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; to repent of all their sins and to be baptized (by one in authority) in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and to have hands laid on them for the gift of the Holy Ghost, to constitute them a member in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”<sup>12</sup>

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**Servants of the Lord go throughout the world to find those who are willing to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

“Send somebody to Central America and to all Spanish America; and don’t let a single corner of the earth go without a mission.”<sup>13</sup>

“We don’t ask any people to throw away any good they have got; we only ask them to come and get more. What if all the world should embrace this Gospel? They would then see eye to eye, and the blessings of God would be poured out upon the people, which is the desire of my whole soul.”<sup>14</sup>

“Thousands who have heard the Gospel have become obedient thereto, and are rejoicing in its gifts and blessings. Prejudice, with its attendant train of evil, is giving way before the force of truth, whose benign rays are penetrating the nations afar off. . . . The time was, when we were looked upon as deceivers, and that ‘Mormonism’ would soon pass away, come to naught, and be forgotten. But the time has gone by when it is looked upon as a transient matter, or a bubble on the wave, and it is now taking a deep hold in the hearts and affections of all those who are noble-minded enough to lay aside the prejudice of education, and investigate the subject with candor and honesty.”<sup>15</sup>

“Some of the Twelve and others have already started for Europe [in September 1839], and the remainder of that mission we expect will go now in a few days. . . . The work of the Lord rolls on in a very pleasing manner, both in this and in the old country. In England many hundreds have of late been added to our numbers; but so, even so, it must be, for ‘Ephraim he hath mixed himself among the people’ [Hosea 7:8]. And the Savior He hath said, ‘My sheep hear my voice’ [John 10:27]; and also, ‘He that heareth you, heareth me’ [Luke 10:16]; and, ‘Behold I will bring them again from the north country, and gather them

from the coasts of the earth' [Jeremiah 31:8]. And as John heard the voice saying, 'Come out of her, my people' [Revelation 18:4], even so must all be fulfilled; that the people of the Lord may live when 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen' [Revelation 18:2]."<sup>16</sup>

*In a letter written from Liberty Jail in March 1839, the Prophet Joseph Smith stated the following, later recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 123:12: "There are many yet on the earth among all sects, parties, and denominations, who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it."*<sup>17</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 second and third paragraphs on page 150. Why does it sometimes take courage to share our testimonies of the Restoration and the Book of Mormon? How can we develop such courage?
- Joseph Smith described the spiritual darkness of the world; then he testified of the “tidings of great joy” in the restored gospel (pages 151–53). How might these two thoughts inspire us to open our mouths and share the gospel?
- Read the first paragraph on page 153. When has the Lord stood by you in your missionary efforts?
- Ponder the scripture passages Joseph Smith quoted to remind us of our duty to teach the gospel to all mankind (pages 153–54). Think about or discuss what you and your family can do to share the gospel with others.
- Read the fourth paragraph on page 154, in which the Prophet speaks of missionary work as an effort to liberate the captives. In what ways might some people be considered captives? (For some examples, see pages 151–53.) In what ways can the first principles and ordinances of the gospel liberate them?
- Review the Prophet’s invitation in the third paragraph on page 155. How might this invitation encourage people to learn

about the restored gospel? Review the fourth paragraph on page 155 and the last paragraph of the chapter. What can we do to help people “lay aside [their] prejudice” about the Church? How might our actions help people know where to find the truth?

- What blessings have come into your life as a result of your efforts to proclaim the gospel?

*Related Scriptures:* Mark 16:15–20; 2 Nephi 2:8; Alma 26:1–9, 26–37; D&C 42:6–9, 11–14; 88:77–83

### Notes

1. *History of the Church*, 1:81; from “History of the Church” (manuscript), book A-1, pp. 39–40, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. *History of the Church*, 1:86–88; punctuation modernized; paragraph divisions altered; from “History of the Church” (manuscript), book A-1, pp. 42–43, Church Archives.
3. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), pp. 298–99; capitalization modernized.
4. *History of the Church*, 2:5–6; punctuation modernized; 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.
5. *History of the Church*, 2:263; from a letter from Joseph Smith to the elders of the Church, Nov. 1835, Kirtland, Ohio, published in *Messenger and Advocate*, Nov. 1835, p. 211.
6. *History of the Church*, 2:375; from the minutes of a council meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve held on Jan. 16, 1836, in Kirtland, Ohio; reported by Warren Parrish.
7. Quoted by Wilford Woodruff, *Deseret News*, July 30, 1884, p. 434.
8. *History of the Church*, 2:255–56; paragraph divisions altered; from a letter from Joseph Smith to the elders of the Church, Sept. 1835, Kirtland, Ohio, published in *Messenger and Advocate*, Sept. 1835, pp. 180–81.
9. *History of the Church*, 2:229, footnote; from “To the Saints Scattered Abroad,” *Messenger and Advocate*, June 1835, p. 138.
10. *History of the Church*, 2:263; from a letter from Joseph Smith to the elders of the Church, Nov. 1835, Kirtland, Ohio, published in *Messenger and Advocate*, Nov. 1835, p. 211.
11. *History of the Church*, 1:314–15; from a letter from Joseph Smith to N. C. Saxton, Jan. 4, 1833, Kirtland, Ohio; Mr. Saxton’s name is incorrectly given as “N. E. Seaton” in *History of the Church*.
12. Editor’s reply to a letter from Richard Savary, *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 15, 1842, p. 732; capitalization modernized; Joseph Smith was the editor of the periodical.
13. *History of the Church*, 5:368; from instructions given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 19, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Willard Richards.
14. *History of the Church*, 5:259; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Jan. 22, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff.
15. *History of the Church*, 4:336–37; spelling modernized; paragraph divisions altered; from a report from Joseph Smith and his counselors in the First Presidency, Apr. 7, 1841, Nauvoo, Illinois, published in *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1841, p. 384.
16. *History of the Church*, 4:8–9; punctuation modernized; from a letter from Joseph Smith to Isaac Galland, Sept. 11, 1839, Commerce, Illinois.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 123:12; a letter from Joseph Smith and others to Edward Partridge and the Church, Mar. 20, 1839, Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri.