



Joseph, the Seer



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Did you know that Elder Neal A. Maxwell likes to play tennis and to read? He also loves the Prophet Joseph Smith and bears testimony of him:

Young Joseph was told that his name would be “both good and evil spoken of” throughout the world (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). . . . Yet his contemporary religious leaders, then much better known than Joseph, have faded into the footnotes of history, while the work of Joseph Smith grows constantly. . . .

In a prophetic father’s blessing given in December 1834 to Joseph Smith, Jr., Father Smith confirmed . . . upon young Joseph: “Thy God has called thee by name out of the heavens . . . to do a work in this generation which no other man would do as Thyself.” The ancient Joseph [in Old Testament times] “looked after his posterity in the last days . . . And sought diligently to know . . . who would bring the word of the Lord [to them] and his eyes beheld thee, my son: [Joseph Smith, Jr.] his heart rejoiced and his soul was satisfied.”

Young Joseph also heard his father promise, “Thou shalt like to do the work which the Lord shall command Thee.” (See 2 Nephi 3:8.) . . .

Was Joseph imperfect like other prophets? Of course! Surely, Joseph could identify with these words of an ancient prophet, which he translated:

“Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, . . . but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise

than we have been” (Mormon 9:31; see also Doctrine and Covenants 67:5). . . .

Did Joseph experience the same anxieties in carrying out his mission as did other prophets? Indeed! Joseph could understand with what feelings a weary and beset Paul wrote:

“For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears” (2 Corinthians 7:5; see also 2 Corinthians 4:8).

Was Joseph unjustly accused as were other prophets? Yes! Even unto this very day fragments of fact are flung at his memory. Paul was accused of being mad [crazy]. (See Acts 26:24.) Even Jesus himself was accused of being a winebibber [drunkard], of being possessed of a devil, and of being mad. (See Matthew 11:19; John 10:20.)

Yet, in the midst of all these things, as promised, Joseph loved the work to which he had been called. . . .

As was promised Joseph in an 1834 father’s blessing:

“Thousands and tens of thousands shall come to a knowledge of the truth, through thy ministry, and thou shalt rejoice with Them in the Celestial Kingdom; [and] thou shalt stand on Mount Zion when the tribes of Jacob come shouting from the north, and with thy brethren, the Sons of Ephraim, crown them in the name of Jesus Christ.” . . .

Therefore, [my young] brothers and sisters, I have no hesitancy—only gladness—in declaring my everlasting admiration for Joseph, the Seer! I thank the Father for providing such a seer! I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for calling, directing, and tutoring Joseph!

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