

# The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith

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We declare without equivocation that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared in person to the boy Joseph Smith. . . .

. . . Our whole strength rests on the validity of that vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the heavens.

Reflect upon it, my brethren and sisters. For centuries the heavens remained sealed. Good men and women, not a few—really great and wonderful people—tried to correct, strengthen, and improve their systems of worship and their body of doctrine. To them I pay honor and respect. How much better the world is because of their bold action. While I believe their work was inspired, it was not favored with the opening of the heavens, with the appearance of Deity.

Then in 1820 came that glorious manifestation in answer to the prayer of a boy who had read in his family Bible the words of James: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

Upon that unique and wonderful experience stands the validity of this Church.

In all of recorded religious history there is nothing to compare with it. The New Testament recounts the baptism of Jesus when the voice of God was heard and the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove. At the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John saw the Lord transfigured before them. They heard the voice of the Father, but they did not see Him.

Why did both the Father and the Son come to a boy, a mere lad? For one thing, they came to usher in the greatest gospel dispensation of all time, when all of previous dispensations should be gathered and brought together in one. . . .

The instrument in this work of God was a boy whose mind was not cluttered by the philosophies of men. That

mind was fresh and without schooling in the traditions of the day.

It is easy to see why people do not accept this account. It is almost beyond comprehension. And yet it is so reasonable. Those familiar with the Old Testament recognize the appearance of Jehovah to the prophets who lived in that comparatively simple time. Can they legitimately deny the need for an appearance of the God of heaven and His resurrected Son in this very complex period of the world’s history?

That They came, both of Them, that Joseph saw Them in Their resplendent glory, that They spoke to him and that he heard and recorded Their words—of these remarkable things we testify.

I knew a so-called intellectual who said the Church was trapped by its history. My response was that without that history we have nothing. The truth of that unique, singular, and remarkable event is the pivotal substance of our faith.

But this glorious vision was but the beginning of a series of manifestations that constitute the early history of this work.

As if that vision were not enough to certify to the personality and the reality of the Redeemer of mankind, there followed the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Here is something that a man could hold in his hands, could “heft,” as it were. He could read it. He could pray about it, for it contained a promise that the Holy Ghost would declare its truth if that witness were sought in prayer. . . .

There followed the restoration of the priesthood—first, of the Aaronic under the hands of John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus in Jordan.

Then came Peter, James, and John, Apostles of the Lord, who conferred in this age that which they had received under the hands of the Master with whom they walked, even “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” with authority to bind in the heavens that which they bound on earth (see Matthew 16:19).

Subsequently came the bestowal of further priesthood keys under the hands of Moses, Elias, and Elijah.

Think of it, my brothers and sisters. Think of the wonder of it.

This is the restored Church of Jesus Christ. We as a people are Latter-day Saints. We testify that the heavens have been opened, that the curtains have been parted, that God has spoken, and that Jesus Christ has manifested Himself, followed by a bestowal of divine authority.

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