

Young Folks' History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

By

Nephi Anderson

Web-Books.Com

Young Folks' History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Front Page	3
A Parable.....	4
The First Vision	6
The Angel Moroni.....	8
The Sacred Plates	10
The Book Of Mormon	13
The Three Witnesses.....	15
The Priesthood Restored.....	17
Organization Of The Church	18
Persecution Of Joseph.....	20
The Mission To The Indians.....	23
Removal To Ohio.....	26
The Land Of Zion	28
Persecution In Jackson County	30
Expulsion From Jackson County	32
Zion's Camp	34
The Church At Kirtland	37
The Twelve Apostles—the Seventies—the Kirtland Temple.....	39
The Mission To England.....	41
Far West	44
The Haun's Mill Massacre	47
Driven From Missouri.....	50
In Missouri Prisons	53
Nauvoo	56
The Martyrdom	59
Expulsion From Illinois	63
The Battle Of Nauvoo.....	66
Westward	69
The Mormon Battalion.....	72
The Pioneers.....	74
Great Salt Lake City.....	76
Growth Of Utah And The Church	78
The "Utah War"	80
The "Utah War," (Concluded.)	82
Prosperity	84
The "Crusade"	86
Presidency Of Wilford Woodruff	88
Temple Building	91
Presidency Of Lorenzo Snow	93
Presidency Of Joseph F. Smith.....	95
Appendix.....	99

Front Page

To Parents and Teachers

Studying the history of our country creates patriotism and engenders loyalty. For the same reason, a study of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will implant in our boys and girls a love for its heroes, a loyalty to its principles, and an appreciation of its achievements. By a knowledge of the history of the Church, our young people will prize more highly that heritage given them of God and preserved for them by the sweat and blood of their fathers.

The teacher using this little book will understand that it is not exhaustive, but rather suggestive. The teacher should be in possession of much more history than is given here. He should fill in much of the undercurrent of heroism, faith, and devotion exhibited by the characters of the history, very little of which can be given in the text. The importance of this larger knowledge on the part of the teacher will be understood by an examination of the review and questions at the end of each chapter. The aim in these questions is not only to review the facts of the lesson, but by suggestions and reference to bring out more fully deductions and principles.

It is believed that by combining the topical and the question methods the best results may be obtained. The topics are to be assigned certain pupils for treatment. Questions should not be limited to those in the book. The teacher should find many more to ask.

Special attention is called to the maps. Have pupils locate each important place. Quite a number of dates are found in the text. It is not intended that the pupils should memorize them all. Most of them should be used merely in fixing the relative time between events. It is suggested that the pupils be encouraged to refer to the Church works and other books mentioned in the text.

For further preparation the teacher is referred to "The History of the Church," "Cannon's Life of Joseph Smith," "Whitney's History of Utah." The "Faith Promoting Series," Evan's "Hundred Years of Mormonism," etc., will give much interesting and valuable information.

A Parable

Once upon a time the owner of a very large garden planted therein a tree, the fruit of which was very precious and of great value to all who ate of it. For a time, the tree grew and bore much good fruit. But the owner of the garden had an enemy who went about secretly sowing seeds of weeds and all manner of briers and brush, that they might spread all over the garden and kill out the good tree which the master had planted. The enemy also persuaded many of the workmen in the garden to neglect the good tree, and let the briers and weeds grow up around it and so prevent its growth. Thus in time the once precious fruit of the good tree became wild and scrubby, no better than the enemy's trees which grew around it.

Years passed, and the master, grieving that the precious fruit should have become so worthless, determined to plant the good tree once more in the garden. He did not try to clear away a spot for it amid the old, overgrown parts of the land, but he called upon certain workers to go to a distant part of the garden where nothing had been planted for a long time, and there prepare the ground for the planting of the tree.

These workers were faithful to their master and did as they were told. Very few of the enemy's noxious weeds were growing in the new soil, so it was not such hard work to clear the ground and prepare a place for the master to plant his tree.

To be better protected against the enemy, the master told his workmen to build a high, strong wall about that part of the garden. This was all done; and then one beautiful spring day the owner came with his servants. They had with them the precious tree taken from some other garden where it had grown without hindrance from weeds. The tree was planted and put in charge of other servants to tend it. The warm sun shone on it, the rains came from heaven to water it, and the tree took firm root and grew.

Now all the boys and girls who read this book will understand that the little story I have just told is what is called a *Parable*, meant to make plainer some facts and truths. I can not tell you all about that tree here, how it grew and bore fruit, and how many people came and ate of its delicious fruit, notwithstanding the enemy came again and tried to check its growth. I say, I cannot tell it to you in the form of a parable, but will tell it as it actually happened. You may, if you like, imagine in your own minds the rest of the parable, but the real story you will find more interesting than any made-up tale can be.

First, let me explain to you the meaning of the parable.

The garden means the earth, and the owner is the Lord, who came to the earth about nineteen hundred years ago to die for the sins of the world. He also planted the good tree, that is, He brought the gospel and taught it to his followers. The enemy is the evil one, the devil, who stirred up men to work against the gospel and to kill those who obeyed it. He also mixed his lies with Christ's truths, until in time the pure gospel was not to be found on the earth.

This was the condition of the world for hundreds of years. Then the Lord wished to restore the true gospel and again establish his Church on the earth. He therefore chose a place where all would have the right to believe the truth and be protected in that liberty. The Lord, therefore, moved upon Columbus to discover this land of America.

The servants spoken of, whom the Lord sent to prepare the land for the planting, were all those great and good men whom you have read about in your American history: Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and many others. You will remember how these men loved right and liberty, and how they worked so hard for it; and in reading the history of these men we can plainly see that the Lord was with them and helped them. These men built the high wall, which means that they made just laws that would protect the people and let them worship God in any way they thought right.

Thus was the way prepared for the gospel to be restored again to the earth; and the Lord himself came from heaven, also his servants Moroni, Peter, James, and John to bring the glad tidings to all who live on the earth.

Then the Lord called some more servants to preach the gospel to the world and build up his Church. The first and greatest of these servants is known by the name of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. How the Lord called him to this great work and delivered to him the gospel will be told you in the next chapter.

Topics.—1. The Parable. 2. Explanation.

Questions and Review.—1. Name some of Christ's first disciples. 2: Tell how some of them were killed. 3. How long was the world without the gospel? 4. Tell how Columbus discovered America. 5. Who were the Pilgrims? 6. What was the Revolutionary war about? 7. What is the Constitution of the United States? 8. Find out what it says about religious liberty. 9. Why is America the "Land of liberty?"

The First Vision

At the time when Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States, there was born among the Green Mountains of Vermont a boy who was to become the great prophet of the last days. The hills and valleys of Vermont look beautiful in the summer, but at the time here spoken of they were no doubt covered with snow, for it was the 23rd of December, 1805, in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, that Joseph Smith first saw the light of the world.

Joseph was named after his father, whose name was Joseph. His mother's maiden name was Lucy Mack. Joseph had five brothers and three sisters whose names were Alvin, Hyrum, (then Joseph), Samuel, William, Don Carlos, Sophronia, Catherine and Lucy; so you see that there was a large family for the father and mother to take care of. Joseph's parents were poor and had to work hard for a living, so when the boys were old enough they had to help on the farm; this they willingly, did. For this reason Joseph did not go to school much, but he learned to read, to write fairly well, and to work some examples in arithmetic. Though Joseph did not get much of an education at school, yet he was a great student; and then God became his teacher, so that before he died, as you will see, he became one of the most learned men in the world.

When Joseph was ten years old they all moved from Vermont to Palmyra, in the western part of the state of New York. Four years later they moved again to the small town of Manchester, in Ontario, now Wayne County, New York.

While the family was living at Manchester there arose a great religious excitement all through the country. The different religious sects held many meetings and tried to get people to join them. Joseph was now in his fifteenth year and he also became interested, as his parents had always taught him to believe in God and the Bible. Joseph thought he would like to join the true church of Christ, but what troubled him was to know which of all these sects was the true church. He could see that all of them could not be true, as God surely would not have a great many churches, one striving against the other; also, no doubt, he had read in the Bible that there was but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," etc., which the Lord accepted. Joseph went first to one meeting, then to another. His mother and some of his brothers and sisters had joined the Presbyterians, but Joseph could not make up his mind what to do.

But there is a way by which anyone may find out which is the true church and therefore which to join, and every boy and girl that reads this book should remember it. It is this: Ask God. Joseph did not know this until one day while reading in his Testament he came to the fifth verse in the first chapter of James, which reads as follows:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and unbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

This was just the thing. God had surely led him to read that verse. Joseph certainly lacked wisdom, and here was a way to find out what he wanted to know about the sects. The Lord would tell him. All he had to do was to ask. How simple it was!

On a beautiful morning in the spring of the year 1820, Joseph decided to ask the Lord for wisdom. He went out into a grove near his father's house, and after looking around to make sure that he was alone, he kneeled down on the grass under the trees and began to

pray. No sooner had he begun than some awful power which he could not see took hold of him and made it nearly impossible for him to speak. It soon became dark around the boy, and Joseph thought the unseen power would kill him; but he struggled hard and tried to pray to God for help.

Just at that moment Joseph saw a great light coming down from above, and then the evil power left him. The light was brighter than the sun, and as it came down and touched the tops of the trees, Joseph wondered why it did not burn them. Then it shone all around him, and in the light, standing in the air above him, he saw two persons who looked like men, only they were shining with a glory that can not be described. One of them, pointing to the other, said to the boy:

"Joseph, this is my Beloved Son; hear him."

Joseph then asked which of all the religions was right, and great was his surprise when he was told that none was right; that they all had gone astray from the truth; and that he must join none of them. Joseph was told many other things, among which was that some day the true gospel would be made known to him. Then they left him alone in the woods.

What a wonderful thing! God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ had actually come to Joseph. He had seen them and they had spoken to him. That same Jesus of whom he had read in his Bible had come from heaven and his Father had come with him to introduce him to the boy praying in the woods!

This was the first vision and the beginning of the gospel in our day; and by thinking carefully about this vision, we may see that it teaches us many things. First, that God has a body like unto man's. Second, that the Father and the Son are two persons, not one, as many in the world believe. Third, that the many religions which man has made are not accepted by God. Fourth, that God has not ceased to give revelations to men on the earth.

Topics.—1. Joseph's Boyhood. 2. The Vision. 3. What may be learned from the vision.

Questions and Review.—1. When and where was Joseph Smith born? 2. To what places did Joseph move? 3. What led Joseph to ask God for wisdom? 4. Repeat James I:5. 5. Why can not all the sects in the world be right? 6. Did the Father and the Son come to Joseph solely because of this prayer? [Note: Not.—If we say that the Father and the Son came to Joseph because of his prayer, we might conclude that every boy who prayed should receive such a visit. No; the time had come for the ushering in of a new dispensation, etc. To bring out this thought is the idea of this question.] 7. Why did the evil one try to destroy Joseph? 8. What may we learn from this vision?

The Angel Moroni

When Joseph told of his vision to some of his friends he was surprised to find that they did not believe him, but made fun of what he said. The strangest thing to the boy was that the preachers of religion, instead of being glad at such glorious news, told him it was from the devil, and that God did not give any more revelations from heaven. All such things had ceased with the apostles of old, they said. Another strange thing was that these preachers began to tell untruths about him, and seemed to hate him for what he told. Still Joseph would not deny his story. "I have actually seen a vision," he said again and again. "I know it, and I know that God knows it, and I dare not deny it."

So three years went by.

On the evening of September 21, 1823, after Joseph had retired to his room, he prayed earnestly that the Lord would forgive him his sins and show him if he was yet accepted of him. While he was yet praying a very bright light came into the room, and immediately a person stood in the air by his bedside. As this person was an angel—a being who had died and had been resurrected with an immortal body—it is interesting to know how he looked.

Joseph describes him as a man having on a robe whiter than anything he had ever seen. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrists. His feet were also bare a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. Not only was his robe very white but his whole person shone with great glory. The room was very light, but not so bright as close around the angel's person.

The angel called Joseph by name, and said that he was a messenger sent from God to him, and that his name was Moroni. He told Joseph that God had a work for him to do, and because of this work, good and evil would be spoken about his name in all nations. The angel then told him of a record written on gold plates which were hidden in a hill not far away. This record was a history of the peoples who had lived on this continent, of whom the Indians were a part. With the plates was an instrument called the Urim and Thummim, which God had prepared for the translating of the records. After a time these things would be given to Joseph, but he must take great care of them and show them to no one except those to whom the Lord would direct. Then Moroni showed Joseph, by a vision, the place, where the plates were hidden.

After giving much other instruction, the light in the room began to gather in towards the person of the angel, leaving the room again in darkness, except just around the heavenly visitor, who soon disappeared in a shining path into heaven.

Three times that same night Moroni visited Joseph and told him nearly the same things over again. About the plates Joseph was further told that he would be tempted to get them for the purpose of getting rich, as the plates were of great value; but he must not yield to that spirit as they were sacred, and he must have no other purpose in view than to do the will of God and build up his kingdom; otherwise he would not get them. At the close of the third visit it was morning, and then Joseph knew that he had been talking with the angel nearly all the night.

That morning Joseph went as usual with his father to work in the field, but he was so weak that he could do but little. His father, seeing this, told him to go home.

On the way, as he was climbing over a fence, Joseph fell helpless to the ground. After that the first thing he knew was that some one was calling him by name. Looking up he again saw the angel Moroni, who once more told him all that he had related the night before. He then told Joseph to go back to the field and tell his father of the vision and the commandments which he had received.

Joseph obeyed at once, and went back and told all he had seen and heard. His father believed all he said, and told Joseph to obey the angel, as the teachings and commandments were surely from the Lord.

Topics.—1. Beginning of persecution. 2. Visit of the angel Moroni. 3. What Moroni told Joseph.

Questions and Review.—1. What did people say of Joseph's first vision? 2. Why did people persecute a young boy like Joseph? 3. Name the date of Moroni's visit. 4. What is an angel? (See Doc. and Cov. Sec. 129, also Key to Theology, Chap. 12.) 5. Describe the Angel Moroni. 6. Why did the angel repeat so often his instructions to Joseph? 7. How old was Joseph at this time?

The Sacred Plates

About two miles south of Joseph's home, in Manchester, is a large hill, the highest in that part of the country. To this place Joseph went on the morning after the angel's visit, as this was the spot he had seen in his vision. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, Joseph found a large, rounded stone, nearly covered with earth. Prying this up, he found it to be the lid of a stone box which was buried in the earth. Raising the lid, he looked in, and there indeed were the sacred treasures about which the angel had told him. As he stood looking at them in wonder, the angel Moroni came to his side, and Joseph was taught many things about the future. He was shown in a vision the glory of the good and the darkness of the evil.

Joseph was about to take the plates from the box, when the angel forbade him, telling him the time had not yet arrived, but that he should come to the hill in one year from that date when the angel would meet him. This he must do for four years, at the end of which time, if Joseph was faithful, the plates would be given to him to translate and publish to the world.

True to the angel's instructions, Joseph went to the hill Cumorah on the 22nd day of September of each year, at which time Moroni appeared to him and gave him many teachings about the word of God.

During all this time Joseph had to labor hard on the farm, sometimes hiring out to work for others. In October, 1825, he worked for a man by the name of Josiah Staal, who took Joseph to the State of Pennsylvania, and set him with other men, digging for a silver mine which he thought he could find. After working at it for some time, Joseph persuaded his employer to give it up. It was from this incident that Joseph's enemies sometimes called him a "money digger."

While working for Mr. Staal, Joseph boarded for some time with the family of Isaac Hale. Here he met Emma Hale who became his wife, they being married in the year 1827.

The four years were now passed. On the 22nd of September, 1827, Joseph went on his fifth visit to the sacred hill, and on that day the angel Moroni delivered to him the plates and the Urim and Thummim. He was told to take good care of them as evil men would try to take them from him; but if he, Joseph, would do all he could to preserve them, the Lord would come to his assistance when it would be needed.

The records which Joseph received consisted of a great many gold plates nearly as thick as common tin. They were about seven by eight inches in size, and were bound together by three rings running through holes, in the edges of the plates. This made the plates like a book, so that they might be turned as the leaves of a book are turned. On each side of every plate were engraved beautiful letters, in a language which Joseph could not read. The book was about six inches thick. A part of it was sealed, and Joseph was told not to open it, as the time had not yet come for that part to be made known to the world.

The Urim and Thummim consisted of two transparent stones, clear as crystal, set in two rims of a bow. It was used in ancient times by the seers, and through it they received revelations of things past and future. You may read about this instrument in the Bible, in Exodus, 28: 30; and Ezra 2: 63.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

