

Joseph's Call

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We will show that the call of Joseph, and the purpose of The Book of Mormon, was to:

- Build up the Bible.
- Build up the Lord's Church, which he said was **already present**.
- Define who his "other sheep" were.
- Reveal the "true points of doctrine."
- Eliminate contention.

Did Joseph ever claim that he received a call from God? Yes, but not right away. Many attribute Joseph's call to an early experience called The First Vision, i.e. Joseph's first vision. In it, God answered a few questions through His Son, then gave a promise that the full or complete gospel would later be made known to him:

At first, he was severely tempted by the powers of darkness, which endeavored to overcome him; but he continued to seek for deliverance, until darkness gave way from his mind, and he was enabled to pray in fervency of the spirit, and in faith. And while thus pouring out his soul, anxiously desiring an answer from God, he at length, saw a very bright and glorious light in the heavens above; which, at first, seemed to be a considerable distance. He continued praying, while the light appeared to be gradually descending towards him; and as it drew nearer, it increased in brightness and magnitude, so that, by the time that it reached the tops of the trees, the whole wilderness, for some distance around was illuminated in a most glorious and brilliant manner. He expected to have seen the leaves and boughs of the trees consumed, as soon as the light came in contact with them; but perceiving that it did not produce that effect, he was encouraged with the hope of being able to endure its presence. It continued descending slowly, until it rested upon the earth, and he was enveloped in the midst of it. When it first came upon him, it produced a peculiar sensation throughout his whole system; and immediately, his mind was caught away, from the natural objects with which he was surrounded; and he was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in their features or likeness. He was informed that his sins were forgiven. He was also informed upon the subjects, which had for some time previously agitated his mind, viz.—that all the religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines; and consequently, that none of them was acknowledged of God, as his church and kingdom. And he was expressly commanded, to go not after them; and he received a promise that the true doctrine—**the fullness of the gospel, should, at some future time, be made known to him**; after which, the vision withdrew, leaving his mind in a state of calmness and peace, indescribable. (Orson Pratt, *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions*.)

How the "fullness of the gospel" would be made known to Joseph was not revealed to him at that time. Three years later, on September 21st, 1823 Joseph received this call:

30 While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

31 He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as

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were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom.

32 Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me.

33 He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

34 He said **there was a book** deposited, written upon **gold plates**, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the **fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it**, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants; (Joseph Smith-History)

Over the course of the next four years, Joseph was allowed to visit the location where the record was hid to receive further instruction, but he was not allowed to take the record until September of 1827. The project of transcribing the record was completed over the next two and a half years, then made available for purchase on March 26, 1830, with a first edition printing of five thousand.

Joseph did receive a call from God to bring forth the ancient record called The Book of Mormon. But that call did not include starting a church.

In a revelation that was given to Joseph early on during the transcribing process, it described in more detail what he was called to do, and what the purpose of The Book was.

The need for that revelation was due to Joseph having given the first 116 transcribed pages to Martin Harris (The book's financier.) who wanted them to show his family and friends. Unfortunately, the pages became lost. This is what the Lord said:

Revelation to Joseph Smith, Harmony, Pennsylvania, summer of 1828. History of the Church 1:20-23.

1 Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, **you have lost them.**

2 And you also lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened.

3 Nevertheless, it is now restored unto you again; therefore see that you are faithful and continue on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun.

4 Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end.

5 Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.

6 Behold, they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted has sought to destroy you.

7 And for this cause I said that he is a wicked man, for he has sought to take away the things wherewith you have been entrusted; and he has also sought to destroy your gift.

8 And because you have delivered the writings into his hands, behold, wicked men have taken them from you.

9 Therefore, you have delivered them up, yea, that which was sacred, unto wickedness.

10 And, behold, Satan hath put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands.

11 And behold, I say unto you, that because they have altered the words, they read contrary from that

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which you translated and caused to be written;

12 And, on this wise, the devil has sought to lay a cunning plan, that he may destroy this work;

13 For he hath put into their hearts to do this, that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate.

14 Verily, I say unto you, that I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing.

15 For behold, he has put it into their hearts to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God, in asking to translate it over again.

16 And then, behold, they say and think in their hearts—We will see if God has given him power to translate; if so, he will also give him power again;

17 And if God giveth him power again, or if he translates again, or, in other words, if he bringeth forth the same words, behold, we have the same with us, and we have altered them;

18 Therefore they will not agree, and we will say that he has lied in his words, and that he has no gift, and that he has no power;

19 Therefore we will destroy him, and also the work; and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to iniquity against that which is good;

21 And their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations; and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; therefore they will not ask of me.

22 Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction.

23 And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God; but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment.

24 Yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work.

25 Yea, he saith unto them: Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy; behold, this is no harm. And thus he flattereth them, and telleth them that it is no sin to lie that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him.

26 And thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare.

27 And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men.

28 Verily, verily, I say unto you, wo be unto him that lieth to deceive because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

29 Now, behold, they have altered these words, because Satan saith unto them: He hath deceived you—and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God.

30 Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands;

31 For, behold, they shall not accomplish their evil designs in lying against those words. For, behold, if you should bring forth the same words they will say that you have lied and that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted yourself.

32 And, behold, they will publish this, and Satan will harden the hearts of the people to stir them up to anger against you, that they will not believe my words.

33 Thus Satan thinketh to overpower your testimony in this generation, that the work may not come forth in this generation.

34 But behold, here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished the work of translation.

35 Marvel not that I said unto you: Here is wisdom, show it not unto the world—for I said, show it not unto the world, that you may be preserved.

36 Behold, I do not say that you shall not show it unto the righteous;

37 But as you cannot always judge the righteous, or as you cannot always tell the wicked from the righteous, therefore I say unto you, hold your peace until I shall see fit to make all things known unto the world concerning the matter.

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38 And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi;

39 Yea, and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi.

40 And now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which, in my wisdom, I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account—

41 Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained;

42 And behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words.

43 I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.

44 Behold, they have only got a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi.

45 Behold, there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work.

46 And, behold, all the remainder of this work does **contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers should come forth unto this people.**

47 And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers;

48 Yea, and this was their faith—**that my gospel, which I gave unto them that they might preach in their days, might come unto their brethren the Lamanites, and also all that had become Lamanites because of their dissensions.**

49 **Now, this is not all—their faith in their prayers was that this gospel should be made known also, if it were possible that other nations should possess this land;**

50 And thus they did leave a blessing upon this land in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this gospel in this land might have eternal life;

51 Yea, that it might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they may be.

52 And now, behold, according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my gospel to the knowledge of my people. **Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up.**

53 And for this cause have I said: If this generation harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them.

54 **Now I do not say this to destroy my church, but I say this to build up my church;**

55 Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.

56 But it is they who do not fear me, neither keep my commandments but build up churches unto themselves to get gain, yea, and all those that do wickedly and build up the kingdom of the devil—yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, that it is they that I will disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the center.

57 Behold, **I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not.

58 I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

59 I am he who said—**Other sheep have I which are not of this fold—unto my disciples,** and many there were that understood me not.

60 And I will show unto this people that I had other sheep, and that they were a branch of the house of Jacob;

61 And I will bring to light their marvelous works, which they did in my name;

62 Yea, and I will also bring to light my gospel which was ministered unto them, and, behold, they shall not deny that which you have received, but they shall build it up, **and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me.**

63 And this I do that I may establish my gospel, **that there may not be so much contention;** yea, Satan

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doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them.

64 Therefore, I will unfold unto them this great mystery;

65 For, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts;

66 Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely.

67 **Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church.**

68 **Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church.**

69 And now, behold, whosoever is of my church, and endureth of my church to the end, him will I establish upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

70 And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Amen.(D&C 10)

We see that the Lord confirmed the call of Joseph and the purpose of The Book with these additional statements:

- Was to build up the Bible.
- Was to build up the Lord's Church, which he said was **already present**.
- Defined who his "other sheep" were.
- Revealed the "true points of doctrine."
- Was to eliminate contention.
- Defined his church as "whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me."

It is important to note that this revelation was given to Joseph Smith **before** he transcribed the record and **before he started a church**.

We know what Joseph's call was from three sources - Isaiah's prophecy; Moroni's visit; and this revelation. And we know what The Book of Mormon was to be used for. These are rulers by which we can measure his work and the work of The Book of Mormon, and we feel they are fair and just.

Those familiar with Joseph Smith should recognize discrepancies between what he was called to do and what he did do. Today, there are several denominations that trace their beginnings to Joseph Smith, with the Mormon Church being the largest of them. Together, they have all gone far beyond the original call that Joseph was given.

The following Twelve Points are the more significant "Wounds" to the Great and Marvelous Work that was foretold by Isaiah:

1. [Book](#)
2. Church
3. Prophets
4. Apostles
5. Revelation
6. Priesthood
7. Salvation
8. Marriage
9. All Wrong
10. Geography
11. Children

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12. God

We will explain each of these “Wounds” or Topics on the web site and give the reader the opportunity to post a Comment or Question if they choose to do so.