

Ir-D&C-32  
To Seal the Testimony  
(D&C 135)  
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. It was **true revelation** that said, “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in the world, than any other man that ever lived in it” (D&C. 135:3).

A. And someday the world will be astonished at the **number of prophecies which foretold of this Joseph**, and how he would be the leader of God’s Latter-day Gathering of Israel.

B. Most people recognize the thundering prophecies throughout the Bible that there would be a Latter-day regathering of Israel, including the ten tribes.

C. Jeremiah said this gathering would be greater than that of Israel from Egypt (Jer. 16:14-17).

D. We should recognize that this gathering must have a great leader --- like unto Moses.

II. There were many prophecies about the leader of this gathering.

A. Among them were the events in the life of Jacob’s son Joseph which foreshadowed Joseph Smith. (The life of Joseph of Egypt also foretold many events in the life of the Savior).

B. Joseph of Egypt was the namesake of Latter-day Joseph, (See 2 Nephi 3, particularly v. 15), and his life taught about Joseph Smith and about his **work**.

C. For the Latter-day Joseph would, like his namesake, **open up the storehouses [of truth] after centuries of spiritual famine [through apostasy]**. And he would, like the ancient Joseph, **offer spiritual nourishment to his brethren, Israel, and to an otherwise perishing world**.

III. Another prophecy of the Restoration and its Deliverer came through Gideon whose story is



told on the Sunstones of the Nauvoo Temple.

A. In Gideon’s time, the Gentiles had supplanted the place of Israel as God’s Kingdom, due to wickedness on the part of Israel. But the time came when Israel was to be delivered. Gideon became their “delivering judge.”

B. Israel overcame Gentile power because Gideon had lights hidden in jars. He and his few followers broke the jars, and suddenly the light streamed forth into darkness. At the same time, they blew on trumpets. The Gentiles fled, and Israel was restored as God’s Kingdom.

C. On the sunstones, **the clouds represent the darkness of apostasy. The Sun breaking through the clouds represents the Light of the Gospel bringing forth its light.**

D. Hymn # 1 in our Hymnal recounts the story.

“The morning breaks, the shadows flee. Lo Zion’s standard is unfurled.

“The dawning of a brighter day majestic rises o’er the world.”

“The clouds of error disappear before the rays of truth divine.”

“The Gentile fullness now comes in. And Israel’s blessings are at hand.” (Parley P. Pratt)

E. Don’t forget the trumpets above the sun on the Sunstones. **Gideon also blew on trumpets.**

The Golden Plates [translated into the Book of Mormon] were actually received on the **Israelite Holy Day of the Feast of Trumpets**. And from those plates would come the beginnings of true principles restored, which would regather Israel.

F. **Thus Moroni stands upon our Temples, trumpeting to the world that God’s truths have been restored** [See Lenet Read, “The Feast of Trumpets and the Golden Plates,” January *Ensign*, 2000 for details].

G. Paul understood the similitude in the life of Gideon. For he warned the Gentiles in his Epistle to the Romans that pride would bring them down, and in the last days **“There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob”** (Romans 11: 26).

H. Joseph Smith was that prophesied Deliverer.

IV. Like so many great prophets, Joseph Smith died *for* his Savior, Jesus the Christ.

A. John Taylor sang, “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” which Joseph asked to be sung a second time. Note the parallels to Joseph’s current plight in willingness to die *for* Christ.

B. “In **pris’n** I saw him next, condemned to meet a **traitor’s** doom at morn.

The **tide of lying tongues, I stemmed**, And **honored him ‘mid shame and scorn.**

My friendship’s utmost zeal to try, **He asked if I for him would die.**

The flesh was weak; my blood ran chill, But my free spirit cried, ‘I will.’

C. In fact, the charges against both Joseph and Christ were “treason.” Similarly, **it was due to lying tongues that both were martyred**. Joseph had sought to silence the slanderous lies being told in the *Nauvoo Expositor*. Our laws allow for freedom of the press, **except in the case of slander**. Joseph considered going to court over these slanders. But that would have required many trips to Carthage, which was far too dangerous, due to mobs seeking his life. Joseph and a council gathered to discuss what to do and felt *their only recourse* was to destroy the printing press. But this act, blown out of proportion, became the first cause for imprisonment. We should remember that the Saints’ own press had been destroyed in Missouri, and the government officials had taken no action against its destroyers.

V. Joseph not only died *for* the Savior, but he *died like* the Savior --- to save the lives of others.

A. He had tried to escape, but in time he returned to Nauvoo. When he turned and rode back to Nauvoo, he knew he was going back to his death but would do so for the sake of the Saints.

B. In many ways, **Joseph made himself a “lightning rod,” to draw all the anger of the mobs upon himself, and to turn their wrath away from the rest of the Saints.**

C. Once he was dead, the mobs mostly left the Mormons alone long enough so they were able to complete the temple, perform many holy ordinances, and make many necessary preparations to take their journey into the West.

VI. Like the Savior, Joseph was silent. In his final hours he did not speak in revenge. Rather, he used his tongue to bear witness of the Book of Mormon to his companions, as his jailers listened.

A. In his final hours, his tongue made prophecies which were fulfilled.

1. Joseph testified to Dan Jones, who had followed him into prison and was willing to die with Joseph, “You will yet see Wales, and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die.” Dan

Jones did serve a mission in Wales, where he brought thousands into the Church. Joseph's prophecy was literally fulfilled.

VII. Hyrum, who had been a faithful second witness, understood the significance of leaving a "dying" testimony, as shown in D&C 135:4-5.

A. As said, "...he read [from Moroni's dying testimony in Ether 12]... and turned down the leaf upon it," thus making it his own dying testimony.

B. Moroni had written "And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou has been faithful: wherefore thy garments shall be made clean....thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.

**"And now I, Moroni, bid farewell ... until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood."**

C. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said Hyrum's doing this made it "as part of the everlasting testimony for which these two brothers were about to die" (*The Ensign*, Nov. 2009).

VIII. One of the most powerful testimonies of the work of Joseph Smith was given by his mother, at seeing him and his brother Hyrum after their deaths. It is particularly beautiful because it shows how The Lord and His Spirit brought comfort to her.

A. "After the corpses were washed, and dressed in their burial clothes, we were allowed to see them. I had for a long time braced every nerve, roused every energy of my soul, and called upon God to strengthen me, but when I entered the room, and saw my murdered sons extended both at once before my eyes, and heard the sobs and groans of my family and heard the cries of 'Father! Husband! Brothers!' from the lips of their wives, children, brother, and sisters, it was too much. I sank back, crying to the Lord, in the agony of my soul, 'My God, my God, why has thou forsaken this family!' A voice replied, '**I have taken them to myself, that they might have rest.**' Emma [wife of Joseph] was carried back to her room almost in a state of insensibility.... As for myself, I was swallowed up in the depth of my afflictions; and though my soul was filled with horror past imagination, yet I was dumb, until I arose again to contemplate the spectacle before me. Oh! At that moment how my mind flew through every scene of sorrow and distress which we had passed together, in which they had shown the innocence and sympathy which filled their guileless hearts. **As I looked upon their peaceful, smiling countenances, I seemed almost to hear them say --- 'Mother, weep not for us, we have overcome the world by love; we carried to them the Gospel, that their souls might be saved; they slew us for our testimony, and thus placed us beyond their power; their ascendancy is for a moment, ours is an eternal triumph.'**" (Lucy [Mack] Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (New York: Arno Press, 1969 [1853]) pp. 278-79.) (Emphasis added)

B. It is astonishing she described their faces as 'peaceful and smiling' as Hyrum was shot in the face, and Joseph fell head first out of a window. It would have been more likely for Lucy to describe any horror left in their mangled faces to elicit sympathy and to express her anger. But this was not the case. Lucy's testimony is surely true. **Their lives were such that in spite of all the ending horrors, they died with "peaceful, smiling countenances."**

IX. At a Church History Symposium held at Brigham Young University, Historian Richard L. Bushman pointed out claims that Joseph Smith was successful in starting his new faith because he was a charismatic figure.

A. But he also pointed out studies showing that **religions started with only the charisma of their originator never endure after that figure dies.**

B. The mobs indeed thought they would end Mormonism by the slaying of Joseph Smith.

But The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues on today, growing ever stronger throughout the world. ***This is largely due to the witness of the Holy Spirit that it is true, and its power to change the lives of others for good. That is one of the final testifiers that Joseph Smith was not just a charismatic figure. He truly was a prophet of God.***

***All past prophets had testified of his work.***

***Repeatedly he had born his own testimony.***

***And now he had sealed that testimony with his own blood.***