

lr-nt-02
“My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord”
Matthew 1; Luke 1
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(This material is organized to show **what was most important in ushering in Christ’s First Coming**, noting that the Lord used the same vital elements to begin His great Latter-day Work.).

I. Genealogical Inheritance was Important.

A. By revealing Jesus’ genealogy through Joseph (Matthew 1:1-16), and of Mary (Luke 3: 23-28; Acts 2:30), we know that the true King of Israel should have been Jesus, the True Son of David (See Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, pp. 85, 86, 89-90 for full explanation).

B. Note that the Angel Gabriel personally testifies that Jesus is the long expected King as Son of David (Luke 1:32).

II. Timing was important.

A. The Lord Himself said He would come “in the Meridian of Time” (Moses 5:57).

B. Consider why Christ’s coming in the Meridian of Time was significant.

1. It would be the peak or climax of time; all prophets before Him and after Him would point to Him.
2. **It verifies His Coming was the earth’s watershed event!**
3. Another significant timing is a pattern shown in Matthew 1:17. There were 14 generations from Abraham to David, another 14 from David until captivity in Babylon; and another 14 between that captivity and Christ. (Eric Huntsman in “Glad Tidings of Great Joy,” *The Ensign*, December 2010, p. 53, explains that this is another witness that Christ was the Son of David, as 14 was the numerical equivalent of David’s name in Hebrew).

III. **Messengers sent from Heaven announcing His coming were vitally important.**

A. Examining the number of angelic visitations that occur in these early stages of the coming of Christ verify the importance Heavenly messengers are to Christ’s work.

1. Yet, later leaders within the Christian Church suffered loss of faith in **revelation given from Heaven, supplanting it with their own thoughts and understanding.**

A. This writer once took a graduate class in “Early Christian Writings.” It became obvious as we progressed in reading the writings down through the ages, that the doctrines and beliefs were changing. When I asked my professor **if the earliest Christians would not have considered the later doctrines heresy**, he freely admitted that was so. **But then he explained that as time passed, men’s thoughts began to develop and become more mature. He made it clear he considered the “primitive Christians” unlearned and gullible to such things as angelic visitations.**

B. This experience verified to me the truth of what the Lord told Joseph Smith in the first vision, “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are

far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men.... But they deny the power thereof” (JS-History 1:19). (emphasis added)

IV. Preparing the Way was Important

- A. Through the miracle of John’s birth, timed to occur six months before Jesus,’ the way for Jesus’ coming was being prepared.
- B. This makes clear that the Lord does send someone to help prepare the way when He begins to engage in a great work of His own.

V. Knowing who was the True Father of Jesus is Vital

A. The New Testament makes it very clear that Jesus was truly the Son of God, and not of Joseph.

1. Consider that it is essential to know that Jesus was partially divine. **Without that divinity, He could not have fulfilled the necessary Atoning sacrifice in our behalf, thus saving us from the bondage of sin; nor could He have resurrected Himself, thus saving us all from the bondage of death.**

VI. The Usage of Names Is Important

- A. The Lord uses names as teaching tools and as witnesses to us.
 - 1. Consider what the name Emmanuel means (Mat. 1:23). [God with us].
 - 2. The name Yeshua means “Jehovah saves.” When translated directly into English it is translated as “Joshua.” When translated into Greek it is **Jesus**. (The King James translators and others kept the Greek form in our current Bibles).
 - 3. Why is the name “Joshua” significant? (It was Joshua who actually conquered the final barrier to the Promised Land, **foretelling that his namesake, the True Joshua or Jesus, would conquer the final barrier of death to lead us into Eternal Life, our true Promised Land** (See Alma 37: 41-45).

VII. The Testimony of Simple Saints is Important. (Consider the following testimonies).

- A. The testimony of Elizabeth (Luke 1:42-45).
- B. The testimony of Mary (Luke 1:46-55).
- C. The Testimony of Zacharias (Luke 1:67-79).
- D. The testimonies of Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38).
- E. Consider how these testimonies from simple people help us know our testimonies are also important and can have much power and influence.

VIII. Doing all things to “Magnify the Lord” is important.

- A. Though Mary was a very young woman, her wisdom and her testimony show great strength.
 - 1. **“What impresses one about Mary is her testimony and that her desire, uppermost, is “to magnify the Lord?” (Luke 1:46).**
 - 2. How can we “Magnify the Lord” in our day? Consider:
 - (a). bearing witness of Him and His great works;

- (b.) helping Him as His servants to accomplish all His works so that He will be glorified;
- (c) By becoming exalted ourselves and bringing others to exaltation, we glorify our Father.)

IX. Consider how all the above elements were also important in ushering in God's Latter-day Work.

A. Genealogy: Joseph Smith's genealogical inheritance was important. He was a literal descendant of Israel, a pure Ephraimite. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 322.) This verifies he was called to his great work.

1. As Latter-day Saints we also know through patriarchal blessings (and sometimes through our own genealogical records) we are descendants of Israel. Thus we know that the prophecies in the Old and New Testaments about the final gathering of Israel are true.

B. Timing: There are many parallels in timing of events of the latter days to ancient events considered significant by the Lord. I.E., the Golden Plates were received on the Israelite Holy Day of "The Feast of Trumpets." (See Lenet H. Read, "The Golden Plates and the Feast of Trumpets," *The Ensign*, January, 2000.). The Keys of Elijah were received at the time of Passover, (See John Pratt, "The Restoration of the Priesthood Keys on Easter," *The Ensign*, June and July, 1985). There are other significant parallels of timing.

C. Preparing the Way: Joseph Smith was called to prepare the Way for Christ's Second Coming.

1. In fact, all of us within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are similarly called to prepare the way for Christ's Second Coming

D. Usage of Names: Joseph Smith's name "Joseph" has more than one significant meaning. One is: "Suffering Servant," (Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 233). Another is "He shall add." His name was prophesied to be Joseph, after Joseph of Egypt (See 2 Nephi 3) and both meanings are consistent with his great calling.

E. "Messengers from Heaven" were a vital part of the Restoration and preparations for His Final Coming.

1. While many find it hard to believe in angels appearing in the Last Days, we can see from Christ's first coming that these are vital witnesses accompanying the Lord's Great works to the children of men.

F. Knowing who Jesus' Father truly is.

1. Having an unshakable testimony that Jesus was divine is vital. Many in the last days still believe in Jesus, but more and more of them believe in Him only as a great teacher or prophet. Latter-day Saints must continue to strengthen their testimonies and to testify to others that He is truly the Son of God. For if not the Son of God, the greatest of His works, the salvation of mankind, would have come to naught.