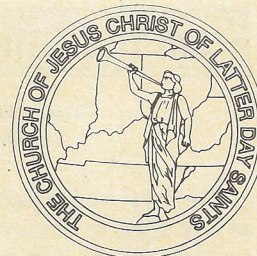




The IRON ROD



OUR CHARGE AS MISSIONARIES IS TO TEACH AND TESTIFY OF CHRIST AND THE RESTORATION AND INVITE ALL TO COME AND BE BAPTIZED UNTO REPENTANCE THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

President's Message

May, 1992

Joseph Smith: A Revealer of Christ

In Principle 3 of Discussion 1 we teach that God has established a simple pattern in revealing the plan of salvation to his children. He chooses witnesses and these prophets testify of Christ. We learn of God from those who know him. Initially we are all dependent on someone else's testimony. We grow spiritually as we do physically; both body and spirit are born dependent, both require careful nurturing, both are intended to grow to a state of maturity and independence, and then both are expected to assume a parenting role to others that the process may begin anew. The plan of salvation was first given to Adam. Because of apostasy the plan has had to be periodically revealed anew to great prophets, dispensation heads, who like Joseph Smith know the Lord and reveal Christ to all those that live in that dispensation.

When we speak of dispensations as Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained we speak

of those designated portions of the earth's history when the Lord, through one man, gives his word to the whole world and makes all the prophets, and all the seers, and all the administrators, and all the apostles of that period subject to, and exponents, of, what came through that individual... Every prophet is a witness of Christ; every dispensation head is a revealer of Christ for his day; and every other prophet or apostle who comes is a reflection and an echo and an exponent of the dispensation head. All such come to echo to the world and to expound and unfold what God has revealed through the man who was appointed for that era to give his eternal word to the world. Such is the dispensation concept.

Our dispensation, which is the last and greatest dispensation, is the period of time from the First Vision to the Second Coming. It is the time when the Gospel will be taken to all the world. It is the time when the work will go forward on both sides of the veil as never before. The prophet of this dispensation, the revealer of Christ for our day, is the prophet Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith was the chosen vessel to whom angels appeared to restore every key and power and authority necessary for men to work out their salvation and obtain their eternal inheritance. The revelations that came after the ministry of Joseph Smith came to other chosen vessels to amplify to expound and to expand upon that which the Prophet Joseph had received.

In every gospel dispensation where God dispenses

the plan of salvation to his children on the earth he follows the same pattern where he reveals two great truths that must be accepted by mankind if they are to be saved. First, that Jesus is the Christ. Next, that God has given the Gospel to the children of men on earth in that day through the prophet head of that particular dispensation. A dispensation head is the revealer for that period or dispensation of the knowledge of Christ and of salvation. In a testimony meeting or as missionaries in our day we say, "I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and in the next breath we say, "I know that Joseph Smith is the prophet who restored the fullness of the Gospel in these latter-days."

The same pattern has been followed in all dispensations. People of earlier dispensations would testify of the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ and that Adam or Abraham or Moses, as the case may be, was his prophet and the revealer of the knowledge of Christ and salvation for those on the earth at that particular time. The pattern which the Father always uses to fulfill the covenants which he has made to his children on the earth is to declare, "...the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof, and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants he hath made unto the children of men" (Moroni 7:31-32).

In D&C 31:3 the Lord tells missionaries that we are to, "lift up our heart and rejoice for the hour of our mission is come and your tongue shall be loosed and you shall declare the glad tidings of great joy unto this generation." The glad tidings is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In verse 4 the Lord continues, "And you shall declare the things which have been revealed to my servant Joseph Smith Jun. You shall begin to preach from this time forth, yea, to reap in the field that is white already to be burned." In other words, our charge as missionaries is to teach and testify of Christ and the restoration of the Gospel through the prophet Joseph Smith, and to baptize them unto repentance.

Salvation is in Christ and salvation is now available to all who will receive it because Joseph Smith has again revealed Christ to the world in these latter days.

With Love,

President Lunt