

The Man Who Communed with Jehovah

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Mwanamume Aliyenena na Yehova

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Wa Sabini

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Joseph Smith was “blessed to open the last dispensation,” and we are blessed that he did.

My purpose this day and always is to testify of Jesus Christ, that He is the Son of God, the Creator and Savior of the world, our Deliverer and Redeemer. Because “the fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ,” today I share with you my knowledge and testimony of the Savior as they have been strengthened and deepened by the life and teachings of one key apostle and prophet.

The Beginning of Wisdom

On the morning of a beautiful clear day early in the spring of 1820, 14-year-old Joseph Smith entered a grove of trees near his family’s home to pray about his sins and to ask which church to join. His sincere prayer, offered with unwavering faith, received the attention of the most powerful forces in the universe, including the Father and the Son. And the devil. Each of these had an intense interest in that prayer and in that boy.

What we now call the First Vision marked the beginning of the Restoration of all things in this last dispensation. But for Joseph, the experience was also personal and preparatory. All he wanted was forgiveness and direction. The Lord gave him both. The instruction to “join none of [the churches]” was directive. The words “Thy sins are forgiven thee” were redemptive.

Joseph Smith “alibarikiwa kufungua kipindi hiki cha mwisho,” nasi tumebarikiwa kutokana na yeye kufanya hivyo.

Kusudi langu siku ya leo na daima ni kushuhudia juu ya Yesu Kristo, kwamba Yeye ni Mwana wa Mungu, Muumbaji na Mwokozi wa ulimwengu, Mponyaji na Mkombozi wetu. Kwa sababu “Kanuni za msingi za dini yetu ni ushuhuda wa Mitume na Manabii, kuhusu Yesu Kristo,” leo ninashiriki nanyi uelewa na ushuhuda wangu juu ya Mwokozi kama vilivyoimarishwa na kufanywa kwa kina kupitia maisha na mafundisho ya mtume mmoja mkuu na nabii.

Mwanzo wa Hekima

Mnamo asubuhi ya siku tulivu na angavu mapema kwenye majira ya machipuko ya mwaka 1820, Joseph Smith mwenye miaka 14 alikwenda kwenye kijisitu karibu na nyumba yake ili kusali kuhusu dhambi zake na kuuliza kuhusu kanisa la kujiunga nalo. Sala yake ya dhiti iliyotolewa kwa imani thabiti, ilipokea usikivu wa nguvu kubwa sana kushinda zote za ulimwenguni, ikijumuisha Baba na Mwana. Na ibilisi. Kila moja ya nguvu hizo ilikuwa na shauku ya juu kuhusu sala ile na kuhusu mvulana yule.

Kile ambacho sasa tunakiita Ono la Kwanza kilianzisha mwanzo wa Urejesho wa vitu vyote katika kipindi hiki cha mwisho cha injili. Laki-ni kwa Joseph, uzoefu ulikuwa pia wa kibinafsi na wa maandalizi. Vyote alivyokuwa akitaka ni msamaha na mwongozo. Bwana alimpa vyote. Maelekezo ya “kutojiunga na [kanisa] lolote” ya-likuwa ya kimwongozo. Maneno, “Dhambi zako zimesamehewa” yalikuwa ya ukombozi.

For all the beautiful truths we might learn from that First Vision, perhaps Joseph's main takeaway was simply, "I had found the testimony of James to be true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain."

As one scholar noted: "The real resonance of the First Vision today is to know that it's the nature of God to give to those who lack wisdom. ... The God that reveals Himself to Joseph Smith in the sacred grove is a God who answers teenagers in times of trouble."

Joseph's experience in the grove gave him confidence to ask for forgiveness and direction for the rest of his life. His experience has also given me confidence to ask for forgiveness and direction for the rest of my life.

Regular Repentance

On September 21, 1823, Joseph earnestly prayed for forgiveness, confident that because of his experience in the grove three years earlier, heaven would respond again. And it did. The Lord sent an angel, Moroni, to instruct Joseph and inform him of an ancient record he would later translate by the gift and power of God—the Book of Mormon.

Almost 13 years after that, Joseph and Oliver Cowdery knelt in solemn, silent prayer in the newly dedicated Kirtland Temple. We do not know what they prayed for, but their prayers likely included a plea for forgiveness, for, as they arose, the Savior appeared and declared, "Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me."

In the months and years after this experience, Joseph and Oliver would sin again. And again. But in that moment, for that moment, in response to their plea and in preparation for the glorious restoration of priesthood keys that was about to happen, Jesus made them sinless.

Joseph's life of regular repentance gives me confidence to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that [I] may obtain mercy." I have learned that Jesus Christ truly is "of a forgiving disposition." It is neither His mission nor His nature to condemn. He came to save.

Pamoja na uzuri wa kweli zote tunazoweza kujifunza kutoka lile Ono la Kwanza, pengine kwa Joseph kitu muhimu alichojifunza kilikuwa ni kwamba "Nilijua ushuhuda wa Yakobo ni wa kweli—kwamba mtu aliyepungukiwa na hekima angeweza kumuomba Mungu na kuipata."

Kama mwanazuoni mmoja alivyosema: "Sababu muhimu ya Ono la Kwanza hivi leo ni kujua kwamba ni asili ya Mungu kuwapa wale wanaopungukiwa hekima. ... Mungu aliyejifunua Yeye mwenyewe kwa Joseph Smith kwenye kijisitu kitakatifu ni Mungu ambaye huwajibu vijana katika nyakati za changamoto."

Uzoefu wa Joseph kwenye kijisitu kitakatifu ulimpa ujasiri kuombamsamahanamwongozoka tika maisha yake yote. Uzoefu wake pia umenipamimiu jasiri wa kuomba msamaha na mwongozo maisha yangu yote.

Toba ya Kila Mara

Mnamo Septemba 21, 1823, Joseph alisali kwa dhiti kwa ajili ya msamaha, ujasiri ambao ulikuja kwa sababu ya uzoefu wake kwenye kijisitu miaka mitatu iliyopita, mbingu zingejibu tena. Na ndivyo ilivyokuwa. Bwana alimtuma malaika, Moroni, kumpa mwongozo Joseph na kumfahamisha kuhusu kumbukumbu ambayo baada angeitafsiri kupitia kipawa na nguvu za Mungu—Kitabu cha Mormoni.

Takribani miaka 13 baada ya hapo, Joseph na Oliver Cowdery walipiga magoti kwa unyenyekevu, kwenye sala ya kimya kimya kwenye hekalu jipya lililowekwa wakfu la Kirtland. Hatujui walisali kwa ajili ya kitu gani, lakini sala zao inawezekana zilizumuisha kusihi kwa ajili ya msamaha, kwani, wakati wakinyanyuka, Mwokozi aliwatokea na kutamka, "Tazama dhambi zenu zimesamehewa; nanyi ni wasafi mbele zangu."

Katika miezi hiyo na miaka baada ya tukio hili, Joseph na Oliver wangetenda dhambi tena. Na tena. Lakini katika wakati huo, kwa ajili ya wakati huo, katika kujibu kusihi kwao na katika maandalizi kwa ajili ya urejesho wa funguo za ukuhani ambao ulikuwa karibu kutokea, Yesu aliwataka dhambi zao.

Maisha ya Joseph ya toba ya mara kwa mara hunipa ujasiri wa kukikaribia kiti cha neema ili [nami] nipate rehema." Nimejifunza kwamba Yesu Kristo kweli ni "mwenye hamu ya kusamehe." Si dhumuni Lake wala asili Yake kuhukumu. Yeye alikuja kutuokoa.

Inquiring of the Lord

As part of the promised “restitution of all things,” the Lord, through Joseph Smith, brought forth the Book of Mormon and other revelations that contain the fulness of His gospel. Vital truths were given clarity and completeness as Joseph repeatedly inquired of the Lord for direction. Consider the following:

The Father and the Son have bodies “as tangible as man’s.”

Jesus took upon Himself not only our sins but also our sicknesses, afflictions, and infirmities.

His Atonement was so excruciating it caused Him to bleed from every pore.

We are saved by His grace “after all we can do.”

There are conditions to Christ’s mercy.

As we come unto Christ, He will not only forgive our sins, but He will also change our very nature so “that we have no more disposition to do evil.”

Christ always commands His people to build temples, where He manifests Himself unto them and endows them with power from on high.

I testify that all these things are true and necessary. They represent only a fraction of the fulness that was restored by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith in response to Joseph’s recurring requests for direction.

Rolling on This Kingdom

In 1842, Joseph wrote of amazing things that would come to pass in this last dispensation. He declared that during our day, “the heavenly Priesthood will unite with the earthly, to bring about those great purposes; and whilst we are thus united in the one common cause, to roll forth the kingdom of God, the heavenly Priesthood are not idle spectators.”

To his friend Benjamin Johnson, Joseph said, “Benjamin, [if I die] I [would] not be far away from you, and if on the other side of the veil, I [would] still be working with you, and with a power greatly increased, to roll on this kingdom.”

On June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith and his

Kumuuliza Bwana

Kama sehemu ya ahadi ya “urejesho wa vitu vyote,” Bwana, kupitia Joseph Smith, alileta Kitabu cha Mormoni na mafunuo mengine ambayo yana utimilifu wa injili Yake. Kweli muhimu zilitolewa kwa uwazi na kwa ukamilifu kwa kadiri Joseph alivyorudia rudia kumuuliza Bwana kwa ajili ya maelekezo. Zingatia yafuatayo:

Baba na Mwana wana miili “yenye kushikika kama ya mwanadamu.”

Yesu alijichukulia juu Yake Mwenyewe si tu dhambi zetu, bali pia magonjwa, mateso na udhaifu Wetu.

Upatanisho Wake ulikuwa wa maumivu makali yaliyo sababisha Yeye kutokwa damu kwenye kila kinyweleo.

Tunaokolewa kwa neema Yake “baada ya kufanya yote tuwezayo kufanya.”

Kuna masharti kupata rehema ya Kristo.

Tunapokuja kwa Kristo, Yeye si tu atatusamehe dhambi zetu, bali pia Yeye atabadilisha asili yetu “kwamba hatuwi tena na hamu ya kutenda uovu.”

Kristo mara zote huamuru watu Wake kujenga mahekalu, ambamo Yeye hujidhihirisha Mwenyewe kwaona huwajalia wao nguvu kutoka juu.

Ninashuhudia kwamba vitu hivi vyote ni vya kweli na muhimu. Vinawakilisha sehemu ndogo tu ya utimilifu ambao ulirejeshwa na Yesu Kristo kupitia Joseph Smith kama itikio la ombi la kujirudia rudia la Joseph la kutaka mwongozo.

Kuendeleza Ufalme Huu

Mnamo 1842, Joseph aliandika vitu vya kustaajabisha ambavyo vingekuwa kutokea kwenye kipindi hiki cha mwisho. Alitangaza kwamba wakati wa siku zetu, “wenye ukuhani walio mbinguni wataungana na wale wa duniani, ili kutimiza malengo hayo makuu; na wakati tukiwa tumeungana kwa kusudi moja, kuendeleza ufalme wa Mungu, wenye ukuhani walio mbinguni si watazamaji wasiofanya chochote.”

Katika tamko linalohusiana na hilo kwa Benjamin Johnson, rafiki yake, Joseph alisema “Benjamin [kama nitakufa] sitakuwa mbali nawe, na kama ningekuwa upande mwingine wa pazia, [ningekuwa] bado ninafanya kazi nawe na kwa nguvu iliyoongezwa sana, ili kuendeleza ufalme huu.”

Mnamo Juni 27, 1844, Joseph Smith na

brother Hyrum were murdered. Joseph's body was laid to rest, but his testimony continues to reverberate around the world and in my soul:

"I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it."

"I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught."

"The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it."

What was said of John the Baptist might also be said of Joseph Smith: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was [Joseph]. ... He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light," "that all men through him might believe."

I believe. I believe and am sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I testify that the living God is our loving Father. I know this because the voice of the Lord has spoken it to me, and so has the voice of His servants, the apostles and prophets, including and beginning with Joseph Smith.

I testify that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God, a witness and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was "blessed to open the last dispensation," and we are blessed that he did.

The Lord commanded Oliver and all of us, "Stand by my servant Joseph, faithfully." I testify that the Lord stands by His servant Joseph and the Restoration wrought through him.

Joseph Smith is now part of that heavenly priesthood of which he spoke. As he promised his friend, he is not far away from us, and on the other side of the veil, he is still working with us, and with a power greatly increased, to roll on this kingdom. With joy and thanksgiving, I raise my voice in "praise to the man who communed with Jehovah." And above all, praise to Jehovah, who communed with that man! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Hyrum kaka yake waliuawa. Mwili wa Joseph ulizikwa, lakini ushuhuda wake unaendelea kupiga mwangwi tena na tena kote ulimwenguni na katika nafsi yangu:

"Nilikuwa nimeona ono; nilijua hilo, na nilijua kwamba Mungu alijua, na sikuweza kukataa."

"Kamwe sikuwaambia nilikuwa mkamilifu; lakini hakuna kosa katika funuo ambazo nimefundisha."

"Kanuni za msingi za dini yetu ni ushuhuda wa Mitume na Manabii, kuhusu Yesu Kristo, kwamba alikufa, akazikwa, na akafufuka tena siku ya tatu, na amepaa mbinguni; na mambo yote mengine ambayo yanahusiana na dini yetu ni viambatisho tu."

Kile ambacho kilisemwa juu ya Yohana Mbatizaji kingeweza pia kusemwa juu ya Joseph Smith: "Kulikuwa na mtu aliyetumwa kutoka kwa Mungu, ambaye jina lake lilikuwa [Joseph]. ... "Huyo hakuwa ile nuru, bali alikuja ili aishuhudie ile Nuru," "kwamba wanadamu wote wapate kuamini kwa yeye."

Ninaamini. Ninaamini na nina uhakika kwamba Yesu ndiye Kristo, Mwana wa Mungu aliye hai. Ninashuhudia kwamba Mungu aliye hai ni Baba yetu mwenye upendo. Ninajua hili kwa sababu sauti ya Bwana imesema hivyo kwangu, na vivyo hivyo sauti ya watumishi Wake, mitume na manabii, ikijumuisha na kuanzia na Joseph Smith.

Ninashuhudia kwamba Joseph Smith alikuwa na ni nabii wa Mungu, shahidi na mtumishi wa Bwana Yesu Kristo. "Alibarikiwa kufungua kipindi hiki cha mwisho," nasi tumebarikiwa kutokana na yeye kufanya hivyo.

Bwana alimuamuru Oliver na sisi sote "Sima pamoja na mtumishi wangu Joseph, kiuaminifu." Ninashuhudia kwamba Bwana anasimama pamoja na Joseph Mtumishi Wake na Urejesho ulioletwa kupia yeye.

Joseph Smith sasa ni sehemu ya wale wenye ukuhani mbinguni ambao aliwazungumzia. Kama alivyomuahidi rafiki yake, yeye hayuko mbali nasi, na kwenye upande wa pili wa pazia, bado anaendelea kufanya kazi pamoja nasi, na kwa nguvu iliyoongezwa, kuendeleza ufalme huu. Kwa shangwe na shukrani, ninapaza sauti yangu "sifa kwa mwanamume aliyenena na Yehova." Na juu ya yote, sifa kwa Yehova, ambaye alinena na mtu huyo! Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.