

# Joseph Smith Ministries

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“LAY DOWN THE FENCES AND FIND COMMON GROUND”

## ✠ The Willing & Obedient ✠

*“For this purpose have I established the constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land.” (D&C 98:10h)*

### THE PURPOSE

America will celebrate its independence in a few days. Its liberty stirs the hearts of people here and abroad. Dedicated patriots spilled their blood for it.

God blessed them. He had a purpose. He said, “*It is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another*” (D&C 98:10i).

America fought another war to end slavery. That victory gave freedom to millions. What jubilation and prosperity followed. The great American Experiment, common people governing themselves, has proved a blessing to the world.

What does American liberty mean today? The Lord told the saints. “*Abide ye in the liberty wherewith ye are made free; entangle not yourselves in sin, but let your hands be clean, until the Lord come*” (D&C 85:24a).

The world calls us. Paul warned, “*Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another*” (Gal 5:13).

If we serve our flesh, we place ourselves in bondage. Sin becomes our master. The best way for free people to celebrate their independence is to remain free from sin. We do that by serving others in love.



### Joseph F. Smith

*is the son of Arthur Smith, the grandson of Alexander Smith, and the great-grandson of Joseph Smith, Jr. He comes in Christ's name to invite all those who believe in the Book of Mormon and the restored gospel to prepare for Zion's redemption.*



### Guide at Nauvoo

*Joseph will be in Nauvoo from Saturday July 12 through Saturday July 19 at the Corner Stone of Zion, the Restoration Visitor's Center. If you are in Nauvoo, stop in and see him.*





## The Needed Ingredient

*“For whosoever receiveth, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever continueth not to receive, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they, seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand” (Matt 13:10-12).*

Mankind seems to pass characteristics down from one generation to another. How people act in one age is often very similar to how they act in another. I want to consider the Jews when our Lord lived among them and how they treated His teachings. You would think that people who had seen so many miracles by Jesus would surely want to hearken to His words. So many Jews refused to understand and others were slow. They had a hard time seeing who He was and what He taught.

Nicodemus is a good example. John wrote that he *“came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him”* (John 3:1). Why did Nicodemus call Jesus a teacher? Why not the Son of God? Perhaps the Jews never thought that God could send His Son to earth as a person, born as a baby and raised in a family. Some expected Him to appear in the sky and save their nation. God’s Son born into our flesh was a hard thing to conceive. Although it had been prophesied many times, their ears and eyes seemed closed. Why were they not open when He appeared? Had they been willing to receive before? Were they now willing to receive and understand when He came?

From the time that the Hebrews left Egypt the Israelites had always found it hard to hear and obey the Lord. Their eyes were blind and their ears closed. No wonder they did not understand. Well did Isaiah say: *“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider”* (Is 1:3). Today, Israel remains unchanged, Even latter-day Israel, safely gathered here in the promised land of Zion, does not sufficiently know her Master. (Continued on next page)

### Support Joseph

Joseph has a message and a plan. The time of tribulation is near and Zion’s redemption is now. You, along with fellow believers, can begin preparing for it today.

Taking this message and promoting this plan takes money. We depend on your contributions. They will help send Joseph where he is needed. All contributions are tax deductible. Please send your contributions to **The Joseph Smith Support Fund**, PO Box 774, Blue Springs, Mo 64013. Thank you for your support.

### Follow Joseph on the Web

For those who use the Internet, you may find up-to-date information at our website. Either [www.josephsmithministries.org](http://www.josephsmithministries.org) or [www.jfsm.org](http://www.jfsm.org) will take you to it. You may contact us through that site or write us at the address to the left.

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## *The Needed Ingredient (con't)*

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When we look at the Restoration movement today, what do we see? Do we see the saints basking in the sunshine of divine light? Are we living up to our calling: “*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, in one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope*” (Eph 4:3-4)? Or do we see confusion, disruption, disorganization, and fragmented segments scattered around the country? Even if our eyes were opened, and our ears unstopped, we lack understanding, for we have failed to recognize the divine work of God's hands in these last days.

Jesus clearly identified the problem that the Jews had in His day. He said, “*For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them*” (Matt 13:14). I interpret the phrase *waxed gross* to mean *filled with things of this world that they think are important*. They even thought that being part of the Roman Empire was more important than being a part of the kingdom of God. The chief priests and Pharisees reasoned, “*If we let him [Jesus] thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation*” (John 11:48). Do we suffer the same ailment as those Jews? Do we refuse unity with the saints for fear that we may lose our reputation or position? Have we closed our eyes and stopped our ears to that plea?

When I look at the history of the various organizations that have come out of the fountain of 1830, I wonder how well they continued dutifully in the pathway originally laid out by revelations. Have they held fast to the divine light once delivered to the Church? Have they made changes, lowered their standards, wandered off into false paths, or exchanged the words of God for the philosophies of the world?

In September 1832, the Lord told the church, “*Your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom, otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay*” (D&C 83:8a-c). What a devastating thing to happen to the church! Only two years and five months after its beginning the Lord told the saints that their minds were “*darkened because of unbelief.*” Why? It was “*because you have treated lightly the things you have received.*” Did they not see the value of what they had been given? Had their understanding been slack? Or, perhaps what they received did not fit their concept of what they thought was best.

The Lord told the saints that they would “*remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written.*” To say and to do, that is OBEDIENCE! God added that if they did not comply with these directions there was “*a scourge and a judgment . . . to be poured out upon the children of Zion.*” One year later, November 1833, the Saints were driven out of the land of Zion.

Confusion, contention and division grew out of the saints' darkened minds. They failed to accomplish much of the work that the Lord had given them. In the 180 years since, the confusion, contention and division has continued and unity is still missing. We continue to struggle coming back under the umbrella of God's approval.

I do not believe that all is lost. God did not begin His work to fail at the end. He said, “*The eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled*” (Mor 4:26).

Joseph F. Smith

# Joseph Smith Ministries

## PREPARING THE FAITHFUL FOR A TIME OF



## TRIBULATION AND ZION'S REDEMPTION

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