

The Joseph Smith Senior 1830 Mission To See His Father Asael Smith

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Long before Joseph's first vision his grandfather Asael Smith had. a premonition which he recorded. "It has been borne in upon my mind and soul that one of my progenitors will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith." (George Q. Cannon p. 26)

Joseph the Prophet says about this prophecy: "My grandfather, Asael smith long ago predicted that there would be a prophet raised up in the family, and. my grandmother was fully satisfied that it was fulfilled in me. My grandfather Asael died Oct 31, 1830 after having received the Book of Mormon and read it nearly through, and. he declared, that I was the very prophet that he had long known would come in his family." (D.H.C. Vol. II p. 443)

JOSEPH SMITH, SENIOR, AND DON CARLOS, VISIT STOCKHOLM VERMONT TO SEE HIS FATHER (From Lucy Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, p.154)

Soon after the Church was organized, my husband set out, with Don Carlos, to visit his father, Asael Smith. After a tedious journey, they arrived at the house of John Smith, my husband's brother. His wife Clarissa, had never before seen my husband, but as soon as he entered, she exclaimed, "There, Mr. Smith, is your brother Joseph." John, turning suddenly, cried out, "Joseph, is this you!"

"It is I," said Joseph, "is my father yet alive? I have come to see him once more, before he dies." For a particular account of this visit, I shall give my readers an extract from brother John Smith's journal. He writes as follows:—

"The next morning after brother Joseph arrived, we set out together for Stockholm to see our father, who was living at that place with our brother Silas. We arrived about dark at the house of my brother Jesse, who was absent with his wife. The children informed us, that their parents were with our father, who was supposed to be dying. We hastened without delay to the house of brother Silas, and upon arriving there were told, that father was just recovering from a severe fit, and, as it was not considered advisable to let him or mother know that Joseph was there, we went to spend the night with brother Jesse.

"As soon as we were settled, brothers Jesse and Joseph entered into conversation respecting their families. Joseph briefly related the history of his family, the death of Alvin, &c. He then began to speak of the discovery and translation of the Book of Mormon. At this, Jesse grew very angry, and exclaimed, 'If you say another word about that Book of Mormon, you shall not stay a minute longer in my house, and if I can't get you out any other way, I will hew you down with my broad axe.'

"We had always been accustomed to being treated with much harshness by our brother, but he had never carried it to so great an extent before. However, we spent the night with him, and the next morning visited our aged parents. They were overjoyed to see Joseph, for he had been absent from them so long, (15 years) that they had been fearful of never beholding his face again in the flesh.

"After the usual salutations, enquiries, and explanations, the subject of the Book of Mormon was introduced. Father received with gladness, that which Joseph communicated; and remarked, that he had always expected that something would appear to make known the true Gospel.

"In a few minutes brother Jesse came in, and on hearing that the subject of our conversation was the Book of Mormon, his wrath rose as high as it did the night before. 'My father's mind,' said Jesse, 'is weak, and I will not have it corrupted with such blasphemous stuff, so just shut up your heads.' Brother Joseph reasoned mildly with him, but to no purpose. Brother Silas then said, 'Jesse, our brother has come to make us a visit, and I am glad to see him, and am willing he should talk as he pleases in my house.' Jesse replied in so insulting a manner, and continued to talk so abusively, that Silas was under the necessity of requesting him to leave the house.

"After this, brother Joseph proceeded in conversation, and father seemed to be pleased with every word which he said. But I must confess that I was too pious, at that time, to believe one word of it.

"I returned home the next day, leaving Joseph with my father. Soon after which, Jesse came to my house and informed me, that all my brothers were coming to make me a visit, 'and as true as you live,' said he, 'they all believe that cursed Mormon book, every word of it, and they are setting a trap for you, to make you believe it.'

"I thanked him for taking so much trouble upon himself, to inform me that my brothers were coming to see me, but told him, that I considered myself amply able to judge for myself in matters of religion. 'I know,' he replied, 'that you are a pretty good judge of such things, but I tell you, that they are as wary as the devil. And I want you to go with me and see our sisters, Susan and Fanny, and we will bar their minds against Joseph's influence.'

"We accordingly visited them, and conversed upon the subject as we thought proper, and requested them to be at my house the next day.

"My brothers arrived according to previous arrangement, and Jesse, who came also, was very careful to hear every word which passed among us, and would not allow one word to be said about the Book of Mormon. They agreed that night to visit our sisters the following day, and as we were about leaving, my brother Asael took me aside and said, 'Now, John, I want you to have some conversation with Joseph, but if you do, you must cheat it out of Jesse. And if you wish, I can work the card for you.'

"I told him that I would be glad to talk with Joseph alone, if I could get an opportunity. "'Well,' replied brother Asael, 'I will take a certain number in my carriage, and Silas will take the rest, and you may bring out a horse for Joseph to ride, but when we are out of sight, take the horse back to the stable again, and keep Joseph over night.'

"I did as brother Asael advised, and that evening Joseph explained to me the principles of 'Mormonism,' the truth of which I have never since denied.

"The next morning, we (Joseph and myself) went to our sisters, where we met our brothers, who censured me very sharply for keeping Joseph over night—Jesse, because he was really displeased; the others, to make a show of disappointment.

"In the evening, when we were about to separate, I agreed to take Joseph in my wagon twenty miles on his journey the next day. Jesse rode home with me that evening, leaving Joseph with our sisters. As Joseph did not expect to see Jesse again, when we were about starting, Joseph gave Jesse his hand in a pleasant, affectionate manner, and said, 'Farewell, brother Jesse!' 'Farewell, Jo, for ever,' replied Jesse, in a surly tone.

'I am afraid,' returned Joseph in a kind, but solemn manner, 'it will be for ever, unless you repent.'

"This was too much for even Jesse's obdurate heart. He melted into tears; however, he made no reply, nor ever mentioned the circumstance afterwards.

"I took my brother twenty miles on his journey the next day, as I had agreed. Before he left me, he requested me to promise him, that I would read a Book of Mormon, which he had given me, and even should I not believe it, that I would not condemn it; 'for,' said he, 'if you do not condemn it, you shall have a testimony of its truth.' I fulfilled my promise, and thus proved his testimony to be true."

George A. Smith was born at Potsdam, St. Lawrence county, New York, on the 26th of June 1817. He was the son of John Smith, the sixth son of Asael and Mary Smith. John Smith was therefore a brother of the Prophet's father, and George A. and the Prophet were cousins. In the fall of 1828, Asael Smith grandfather of the subject of this note, received a letter from Joseph Smith, Sen., informing him of some of the visions the youthful Prophet had received. Soon after this a letter from the young Prophet himself was received by John Smith and read in the hearing of George A. The letter declared that the judgments of God would overtake the wicked of this generation unless they repented. The letter made a deep impression upon George A.

while his father John Smith remarked that "Joseph wrote like a prophet." In August, 1830, Joseph Smith, Sen., visited his brother John bringing with him the Book of Mormon, a copy of which he left at the formers residence. During the temporary absence of his uncle, who was visiting other branches of the family, George A. championed the Book of Mormon, and answered objections urged against it by the neighbors who came in to examine it. Meantime he formulated some

objections of his own which his Uncle Joseph on his return answered to his complete satisfaction: and he never afterwards ceased to advocate the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Notwithstanding this conviction, however, he was not baptized until some two years had elapsed.

(From the Life of George A. Smith)

John Smith's Family History

As related by George A. Smith:

My father had been for several years very feeble in health, and for about six months previous to his baptism had not been able to visit his barn. His neighbors all believed that baptism would kill him. I cut the ice in the creek and broke a road for forty rods through the crust on two feet of snow, and the day was very cold. The neighbors looked on with astonishment, expecting to see him die in the water, but his health continued improving from that moment. That night he had a vision of the Savior entering his room and looking upon him with a smile. The next day he visited his barn. He commenced traveling and preaching through the country—his former Christian friends denouncing him as crazy, saying that the improved condition of his health was the result of insanity and were greatly surprised that a crazy man should know more about the Bible than they did.

An overview of John's life is an insight into the quality of his history. The best summary is fortunately early and based on direct information from family and associates. This is his 1854 obituary, and its full biographical portions follow:

John Smith, Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, after a severe illness of one month, died at his residence in this city at 10 minutes past 11 o'clock, p.m., on the 23d inst.

Father Smith was born in Derryfield (now Manchester), [Hillsborough] County, New Hampshire, on the [16]th of July. A.D. 1781, and was baptized into the faith, which has so long preserved his life in usefulness. on the 9th of January [1832]. and ordained an elder after having been given up by the doctors to die of consumption. The weather was so cold that the ice had to be cut, and from that time he gained health and strength.

In 1833 he moved to Kirtland, Ohio, and in 1838 to Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri, and thence to Adam-ondi-Ahman, in Daviess County, where he presided over that branch of the church until expelled by the mob in 1839, and arrived in Illinois on the 28th of February of that year. He located at Green Plains, six miles from Warsaw, where he put in a crop of corn, split rails, and performed much hard labor unsuited to his health and years but obliged to be done for the support of his family. In June he moved to Commerce (since Nauvoo) and on the 4th of October was appointed to preside over the church in Iowa, and on the 12th moved to Lee County to fulfil that mission.

October 1843 he moved to Macedonia, Hancock County, Illinois, having been appointed to preside over the Saints in that place. In January 1844 he was ordained a Patriarch, and in November of that year was driven by mobbers from Macedonia to Nauvoo, where he continued to administer patriarchal blessings to the joy of thousands until the 9th of February, 1846, when he was compelled by the mob violence of the free and sovereign State of Illinois to again leave his home and cross the Mississippi with his family in search of a peaceful location, far-off, mid savages and deserts in the valleys of the mountains.

After passing a dreary winter on the right bank of the Missouri at a place called Winter Quarters, he again took up the weary ox train march on the 9th of June, 1847, and reached this place Sept. 23d, where he presided over the church in the mountains until Jan. 1st, 1849, when he was Kimball.ordained Patriarch over the Church under the hands of Presidents Brigham Young and Heber C.

In addition to a vast amount of varied and efficient aid to thousands in the way of salvation during his long and faithful ministry, he administered 5,560 Patriarchal Blessings—which are recorded in seven large and closely written books—and has closed the arduous duties of a well-occupied probation and passed to a

position of rest, where his works will nobly follow and honor him, and where he will continue his able counsels for the prosperity and welfare of Zion.

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