

**“This Generation Shall Have My Word
Through You” (D&C 5:10)**

Foundation Doctrines Revealed: (1820-1831)

The First Vision:

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “For more than a century and a half, enemies, critics, and some would-be-scholars have worn out their lives trying to disprove the validity of that vision. Of course they cannot understand it. The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. There had been nothing of comparable magnitude since the Son of God walked the earth in mortality. Without it as a foundation stone for our faith and organization, we have nothing. With it we have everything.

“. . . the testimony of the Holy Spirit, experienced by countless numbers of people all through the years since it happened, bears witness that it is true, that it happened as Joseph Smith said it happened, that it was as real as the sunrise over Palmyra, that it is an essential foundation stone, a cornerstone, without which the Church could not be “fitly framed together” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, Deseret Book Co., 1997, 548-549).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “In the process of what we call the Apostasy, the tangible, personal God described in the Old and New Testaments was replaced by the abstract, incomprehensible deity defined by compromise with the speculative principles of Greek philosophy. The received language of the Bible remained, but the so-called ‘hidden meanings’ of scriptural words were now explained in the vocabulary of a philosophy alien to their origins. In the language of that philosophy, God the Father ceased to be a Father in any but an allegorical sense. He ceased to exist as a comprehensible and compassionate being. And the separate identity of his Only Begotten Son was swallowed up in a philosophical abstraction that attempted to define a common substance and an incomprehensible relationship . . .

Then came the First Vision [to the Prophet Joseph Smith]. An unschooled boy, seeking knowledge from the ultimate source, saw two personages of indescribable brightness and glory and hear one of them say, while pointing to the other, ‘This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!’ (JS-H 1:17). The divine teaching in that vision began the restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God the Son told the boy prophet that all the ‘creeds’ of the churches of that day ‘were an abomination in his sight’ (v. 19). We affirm that this divine declaration was condemnation of the creeds, not of the faithful seekers who believed in them. Joseph Smith’s first vision showed that the prevailing concepts of the nature of God and the Godhead were untrue and could not lead their adherents to the destiny that God desired for them” (“Apostasy and Restoration,” *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 85).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “I submit that in the short time of that remarkable vision Joseph learned more concerning Deity than all of the scholars and clerics of the past.

“In this divine revelation there was reaffirmed beyond doubt the reality of the literal Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“This knowledge of Deity, hidden from the world for centuries, was the first and great thing which God revealed to His chosen servant.

“And upon the reality and truth of this vision rests the validity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (*Ensign*, May 2005, 81).

Visitations by other Heavenly Messengers:

President Wilford Woodruff: “Joseph Smith has often been termed an illiterate, unlearned man. He was a farmer’s son, and had a very small chance of education. What primer had he to reveal the fullness of the Gospel to the world? None at all, only as he was taught by the administration of angels from heaven, by the voice of God and by the inspiration and power of the Holy Ghost” (*Journal of Discourses*, 16:34, 35).

President Joseph F. Smith: “Joseph Smith was an unlearned youth, so far as the learning of the world is concerned. He was taught by the angel Moroni. He received his education from above, from God Almighty, and not from man-made institutions; but to charge him with being ignorant would be both unjust and false; no man or combination of men possessed greater intelligence than he, nor could the combined wisdom and cunning of the age produce an equivalent for what he did. He was not ignorant, for he was taught by Him from whom all intelligence flows. He possessed a knowledge of God and of his law, and of eternity . . .” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 484).

Elder Orson Pratt: “. . . during these four years he was often ministered to by the angels of God, and received instruction concerning the work that was to be performed in the latter days” (*Deseret News [Weekly]*, 2 October 1872).

President John Taylor: “The principles which he had placed him in communication with the Lord, and not only with the Lord, but with the ancient apostles and prophets; such men, for instance, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Adam, Seth, Enoch, and Jesus, and the Father, and the apostles that lived on this continent, as well as those who lived on the Asiatic continent. He seemed to be as familiar with these people as we are with one another” (*The Gospel Kingdom*, p. 353).

President George Q. Cannon: “[Joseph] was visited constantly by angels. . . . He had vision after vision in order that his mind might be fully saturated with a knowledge of the things of God, and that he might comprehend the great and holy calling that God has bestowed upon him” (*Journal of Discourses* 23:362).