

JOSEPH SMITH JR:
A TESTIMONY OF THE RESTORED GOSPEL
PART 1

by

April LaJune ©

Based on the writings of
Joseph Smith Jr in
Joseph Smith Jr Tells His Own Story

PART 1

AUDITION SCRIPT

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INT. DAY - BACKDROP IS A DARK BLUE CURTAIN WITH AN OLD FASHIONED CHAIR WHERE JOSEPH SMITH JR WILL BE SITTING. THERE IS A WOODEN STAND/TABLE HOLDING A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH OF EMMA SMITH ON A LACE DOILY. AN OIL LAMP AND A BOOK ARE ALSO ON THE TABLE.

SCENE 1
IN THE BEGINNING

JOSEPH SMITH JR

(Takes off his scarf and sets it on the table)

I'd like to start at the beginning so you'll understand my background as well as how I came about to be praying in a grove near my home.

I was born in 1805 on the 23rd of December in Vermont. My father, Joseph Smith Senior, moved us to Palmyra in the state of New York when I was in my tenth year.

Four years later, we moved to Manchester which is in the same county as our previous residence.

In my father's family were 11 souls: My father, Joseph, my mother, Lucy, who's last name used to be Mack, my brothers Alvin, Hyrum, then myself, Samuel Harrison, William, Don Carlos and my sisters, Sophronia, Catherine and Lucy.

Some time in the 2nd year after moving to Manchester, there was an unusual excitement regarding the subject of religion.

It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became a general movement among all religious sects in that region of the country.

Indeed the whole district of the country seemed affected by it. Great multitudes united themselves to different religious parties creating no small stir! Division was great amongst the people, some crying "Lo, here" and some "Lo, there." Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian and some for the Baptists.

SCENE 2
THE VISION IN THE GROVE

JOSEPH SMITH JR

(...cont)

The excitement in the religious movement was so great and I being fairly young, was having a difficult time making a choice as to which of these groups I should join.

It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of 1820. It was the first time in my life I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties, I had never as yet, made the attempt to pray vocally.

After I had retired to the place I had previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God.

I had scarcely done so when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such astounding influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak.

Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such a marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being.

Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun. It descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound.

When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spoke to me, calling me by name and said as he pointed to the other, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him."

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the religious sects was right that I might know which I should join.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight and those professors were all corrupt. He said, "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

He again forbade me to join with any of them and many other things did He say unto me which I cannot say at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven.

Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in the company with one of the Methodist preachers who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement. Conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took the occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had.

I was greatly surprised at his behavior. He treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there was no such things as visions or revelations in these days, that all such things had ceased with the apostles and that there never would be any more of them.

I soon found however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion and was the cause of great persecution which continued to increase, and though I was an obscure boy only between 14 and 15 years of age and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world; yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me and create a hot persecution and this was common among all the sects all united to persecute me.

It has often caused me serious reflection both then and since, how ever strange it was that an obscure boy of a little over fourteen years of age, ane one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, so as to create in them a spirit of the hottest persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and was often cause of great sorrow to myself.

However it was, nevertheless a fact that I had had a vision. I have thought since that I felt much like Paul when he made his defense before King Agrippa and related the account of the vision he had when he "saw a light and heard a voice," but still there were but a few who believed him.

Some said he was dishonest. Others said he was mad and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision. He knew he had and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew and would know until his latest breath that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking to him and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

So it was with me. I had actually seen a light and in the midst of that light, I saw two personages. And they did speak to me, or one of

them did. And though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision yet it was true. And while they were persecuting me, reviling me and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart, "Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision and who am I that I can withstand God?"

Or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen?... for I had seen a vision. I knew it and I knew that God knew it and I could not deny it, neither dare I do it! At least I knew that by so doing I would offend God and come under condemnation.

I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned, that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but I continued as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true...that if a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, he will obtain and not be upbraided.

I continued to pursue my common avocations in life until the 21st of September, 1823, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision.

END PART 1