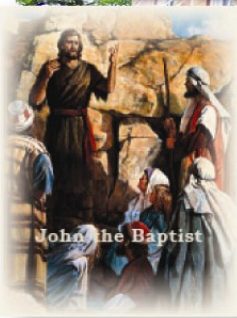
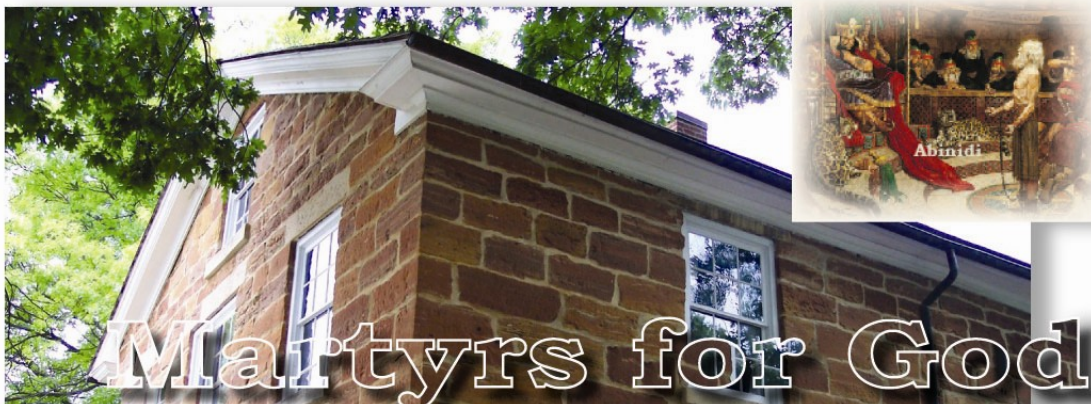
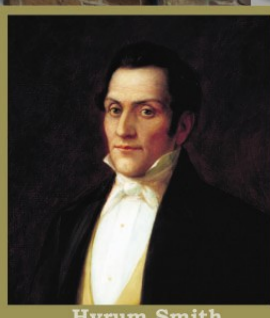




Lesson 32: "To Seal the Testimony", D&C 135; Our Heritage, pp. 62-66.



Joseph Smith, Jr.



Hyrum Smith

Lesson Highlights

- The Prophet Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood.
- The Prophet Joseph Smith did more for the salvation of men in this world than anyone except Jesus.

A study of this lesson will teach us about the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and strengthen our testimonies of his calling as a prophet of God.



The Prophet Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood.

The Saints prospered for a few years in Nauvoo. The Church and the city grew rapidly, work on the temple progressed, and the Prophet Joseph Smith received many revelations. However, during 1843 and 1844, animosity against the Church increased. Enemies both inside and outside the Church began trying to destroy it. This opposition climaxed on 27 June 1844.

This was a dark and mournful time never to be forgotten. Recording her feelings upon hearing of the martyrdom, **Louisa Barnes Pratt** wrote: *"It was a still night, and the moon was at the full. A night of death it seemed, and everything conspired to make it solemn! The voices of the officers were heard calling the men together and coming in the distance made it fall on the heart like a funeral knell. The women were assembled in groups, weeping and praying, some wishing terrible punishment on the murderers, others acknowledging the hand of God in the event."*

Like Louisa Barnes Pratt, many Latter-day Saints remembered the events of 27 June 1844 as a time of tears and broken hearts. The martyrdom was the most tragic event in the Church's early history. However, it was not unexpected.

On at least 19 different occasions, beginning as early as 1829, Joseph Smith told the Saints that he would probably not leave this life peacefully. While he felt that his enemies would one day take his life, he did not know when. As the spring of 1844 became summer, enemies both within and without the Church worked toward Joseph's destruction. Thomas Sharp, editor of a nearby newspaper and a leader in Hancock County's anti-Mormon political party, openly called for the Prophet's murder. Citizens' groups, apostates, and civic leaders conspired to destroy the Church by destroying its prophet.

Next Week

#33 President Brigham Young Leads the Saints (D&C 107:22-24; Our Heritage, pp. 66-71)

The governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, wrote to Joseph Smith, insisting that the city council members stand trial before a non-Mormon jury on a charge of causing a civil disturbance. He said that only such a trial would satisfy the people. He promised the men complete protection, although the Prophet did not believe he could fulfill his pledge. When it appeared that there were no other alternatives, the Prophet, his brother Hyrum, John Taylor, and others submitted to arrest, fully aware that they were guilty of no crimes.

As the Prophet prepared to leave Nauvoo for the county seat of Carthage, about 20 miles away, he knew that he was seeing his family and friends for the last time. He prophesied, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning."

D&C 135:4–5. D&C 135 was written by **Elder John Taylor**, who was wounded during the attack on the Prophet Joseph.

D&C 135:1–2. Announcement of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and Hyrum Smith the Patriarch.

Following is an account of the martyrdom by **Elder Willard Richards**. Elder Richards was a friend of the Prophet and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. He was in Carthage Jail when the Prophet was martyred. His account begins as the mob arrived at the jail just after 5:00 p.m. on the afternoon of 27 June 1844:

"A shower of musket balls were thrown up the stairway against the door of the prison in the second story, followed by many rapid footsteps. ...

"... A ball was sent through the door, which passed between us, and showed that our enemies were desperadoes. ...

"... Joseph Smith, Mr. Taylor and myself sprang back to the front part of the room, and ... Hyrum Smith retreated two-thirds across the chamber directly in front of and facing the door.

"A ball was sent through the door which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose, when he fell backwards, extended at length, without moving his feet.

"From the holes in his [clothing], it appears evident that a ball must have been thrown from without, through the window, which entered his back on the right side, and passing through, lodged against his watch. ... At the same instant the ball from the door entered his nose.

"As he struck the floor he exclaimed emphatically, 'I am a dead man.' Joseph looked towards him and responded, 'Oh, dear brother Hyrum!' and opening the door two or three inches with his left hand, discharged one barrel of a six shooter (pistol) at random

in the entry. ... A ball [from the musket of one of the mob] grazed Hyrum's breast, and entering his throat passed into his head, while other muskets were aimed at him and some balls hit him.

"Joseph continued snapping his revolver round the casing of the door into the space as before ... , while Mr. Taylor with a walking stick stood by his side and knocked down the bayonets and muskets which were constantly discharging through the doorway. ...

"When the revolver failed, we had no more firearms, and expected an immediate rush of the mob, and the doorway full of muskets, half way in the room, and no hope but instant death from within.

"Mr. Taylor rushed into the window, which is some fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. When his body was nearly on a balance, a ball from the door within entered his leg, and a ball from without struck his watch ... in his vest pocket near the left breast, ... the force of which ball threw him back on the floor, and he rolled under the bed which stood by his side. ...

"Joseph attempted, as the last resort, to leap [from] the same window from whence Mr. Taylor fell, when two balls pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward, exclaiming, 'Oh Lord, my God!' ... He fell on his left side a dead man" (History of the Church, 6:619–20).

Elder John Taylor was shot four times but recovered from his wounds. In fulfillment of a prophecy that the Prophet had made more than a year before, Elder Willard Richards received no wounds. Elder Richards recalled that in this prophecy, the Prophet had told him that *"the time would come that the balls would fly around him like hail, and he should see his friends fall on the right and on the left, but that there should not be a hole in his garment"* (History of the Church, 6:619).

• **D&C 135:6.** Consider what your feelings are as you think about the sacrifice the Prophet and his brother Hyrum made for their testimonies of the gospel.

Before **Joseph Smith Sr.** died, he gave the Prophet a blessing and told him: *"You shall even live to finish your work. ... You shall live to lay out the plan of all the work which God has given you to do"* (quoted in Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 309–10).

Joseph Smith valiantly completed his mission, doing all that God asked him to do.

Gordon B. Hinckley:

"How great indeed is our debt to [Joseph Smith]. . . . It was he who brought us a true knowledge of God, the Eternal Father, and His Risen Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . He brought us the marvelous Book of Mormon as another witness for the living reality of the Son of God. . . . Through him were restored the keys of the holy temples, that men and women might enter into eternal covenants with God and that the great work for the dead might be accomplished to open the way for eternal blessings."

(A Season for Gratitude,"
Ensign, Dec.
1997, 2.)



The Prophet Joseph Smith did more for the salvation of men in this world than anyone except Jesus.

D&C 135:3. Joseph Smith, Jr.'s major accomplishments. His work blessed not only the Saints of this dispensation, but also the billions of people who have lived at all other times without receiving the blessings of the gospel or the saving ordinances of the priesthood. We can better appreciate the Prophet's life and mission when we review how his many contributions bless our daily lives and will bless us eternally.

Truths about the Godhead

D&C 130:22–23; Joseph Smith—History 1:17. Truths about the Godhead were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

In a sermon given at the funeral of Elder King Follett on 7 April 1844, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught:

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 345).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "*Knowledge of God is the greatest truth in all eternity. ... Joseph Smith came to reveal God, in a day of almost total spiritual darkness, in a day when men no longer knew the nature and kind of Being whom they should worship*" ("This Generation Shall Have My Word through You," *Ensign*, June 1980, 55).

The authority of the priesthood

Through Joseph Smith, heavenly messengers restored the Aaronic Priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood, and keys of the priesthood (**D&C 13; 110:11–16**). As the Restoration unfolded, the Lord gave revelations about priesthood offices, organization, covenants, ordinances, duties, and blessings. We would not understand the priesthood or how it operates without these revelations.

For more information about the priesthood, see lessons 8 and 25.

Truths about our origin and relationship to God

Truths about our origin and relationship to God were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith including that we are literally

the spirit children of God and that we lived with Him before we were born on earth. (See **D&C 76:23–24; Abraham 3:22–28**.)

Scriptures

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said that the Prophet Joseph Smith "*has given to our present world more holy scripture than any single prophet who ever lived*" (*Ensign*, May 1976, 95). These scriptures include the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.

While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve, **Elder Gordon B. Hinckley** said: "*[Joseph Smith] translated and published the Book of Mormon, a volume of 522 pages which has since been retranslated into [many] languages and which is accepted by millions across the earth as the word of God. The revelations he received and other writings he produced are likewise scripture to these millions. The total in book pages constitutes the equivalent of almost the entire Old Testament of the Bible, and it all came through one man in the space of a few years*" (*in Conference Report, Apr. 1977, 96; or Ensign, May 1977, 65*).

For more information about these scriptures, see lessons 1, 4, and 13.

Truths about the plan of salvation
Truths about the plan of salvation were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

For more information about the plan of salvation, see material in lessons 19 and 20.

Truths about the salvation of the dead

Truths about the salvation of the dead were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. One truth is that we can perform vicarious baptisms in temples for those who died without receiving this ordinance. (See **D&C 128:18**.)

The salvation of the dead is one of the most enlarging and inspiring doctrines restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

For more information, see lessons 29 and 39.

The building of temples and the performance of temple ordinances

Joseph Smith restored knowledge of the blessing of eternal families, which is made possible by the sealing ordinance in the temple.

Other contributions of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the blessings they bring to our lives:

- The Church was restored through him (see lesson 9).
- He began the work in this dispensation of taking the gospel to all nations and gathering Israel (see lesson 12).
- The law of consecration was revealed through him (see lesson 14).
- The Word of Wisdom was revealed through him (see lesson 22).
- Information about the building of the latter-day Zion was revealed through him (see lessons 27 and 46).
- He wrote the Articles of Faith.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- From what you know about the Prophet Joseph Smith's life, what impresses you most about him?

