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Joseph's Journey

A cold winter struck in the month of December,
In the happy Smith home, they had a new member.
Little Joseph was healthy, the fifth in the brood,
A bright little face helped to lighten the mood.

At seven years old little Joseph was weakened.
A fever had left him infected, defeated.
He was brave for the doctor, and brave for his mom,
They shaved out his bone, while his father held on.

In spring eighteen-twenty young Smith was confused,
Beliefs about God were all shuffled, abused.
He wanted salvation so deep in his heart,
Bur sorting through lies left nowhere to start!

Young Joseph fell back on the central book,
The old Holy Bible, from its small dusty nook.
He turned to a verse he had pondered with care,
And considered anew, if his answer was there.

The verse he had opened, was James one verse five,
It concerned each reader, with questions on high.

If any lack wisdom— it spoke to his heart,
But made him quite nervous, for prayer was an art.

He wasn't content with a prayer by his bed,
He searched for a spot in the woods instead.
The right time, the right place, he was fully prepared,
With everything right, he couldn't be scared.

The next morning, he hastened to return to the trees,
He pulled off his coat and he fell to his knees.
He attempted to pray, but hell filled the air.
He gasped for breath, and fell to despair.

With his last breath he cried out to the Lord in the sky,
Then resigned himself lost, and lay down to die.
When through the thick darkness cut like a knife,
A ray of bright light swiftly brought him to life.

Then down from the sky in a pillar of fire,
Came two glorious beings, Joseph sought to inquire.
The first divine being was the Glorious Father,
Then introduced Christ, as our heavenly brother.

Joseph's tongue was unbound, and his question went through,

“Of all of these churches, which one could be true?”

The answer was none, much to Joseph's dismay,

But a new church would rise up in these latter-days.

For the next three years Smith was teased and denied,

“For who could see God? What a scheme he had tried.”

But Joseph was firm, never doubted his prayer,

And waited each day for God's church to appear.

Then one night in bed as he started to sleep,

An angel from heaven his presence did keep.

Three times through the night he was taught from on high,

That an old sacred record lay buried nearby.

Then one tragic eve under the night sky,

Smith's big brother Alvin was poisoned, and died.

Their family was broken and horribly grey,

But into their hearts, they sealed up his name.

For the next couple years, Joseph learned all he could,

He learned from Moroni off deep in the wood.

Each year on the same day he came and they met,

Until the gold plates he was ready to get.

With his newfound possession of this ancient writ,
Joseph's trials quadrupled, his friends on him quit.

He wasn't quite sure of the plates destiny,
Of how he could read them or what they might be.

Through all the trials and all of the pain,
He loved a young woman, Emma Hale was her name.

Her dad disapproved of Joseph's strange ways,
And rejected poor Smith, sent him out in a daze.

But Joseph was a stubborn and resilient man,
And Emma rebelled, they thought of a plan.
Together they left for the state of New York,
They married the next day, then got back to work.

Soon after he wed, Smith received revelation,
The plates were to spread through his own translation.

Joseph sat down with some heavenly tools,
And slowly but surely, translated God's rules.

His methods from heaven oft seemed quite bizarre,
Although no crystal ball and no gazing at stars.
His had a brown stone that he placed in his hat,
And two sacred stones and a breastplate to match.

The words came to him, when his heart was in tune,
And everyone there knew the Lord filled the room.

He said lines aloud, and when they were writ,
They repeated his words, to verify it.

Martin Harris was a settled man,
With patience and money and time on his hands.
When he heard of young Joseph and plates of pure gold,
He offered his service, to write things when told.

He wanted to prove the truth of the plates,
So he took some symbols to intellectual greats.

Charles Anthon signed off on its truth,
Then learning its origin, tore up his proof.

But Martin was settled, he knew it enough,
He mortgaged his farm just to pay for the stuff.
With Martin, Smith translated one sixteen pages,
They carried new doctrine, to last for the ages.

And then Martin fell, to the pressures of sin,
And begged Joseph Smith, to let him show his kin.
Joseph prayed to the Lord and received a firm no,
But Martin persisted, for Joseph to go.

On asking repeatedly, the Lord answered yes,
If only to teach them a lesson in mess.
The pages went home in the glad hands of Martin,
Then were stolen forever, Smith was disheartened.

As a punishment for asking thrice,
The Lord rebuked the prophet's vice.
An angel came to collect the plates,
And put mankind back in its place.

In a few months the plates returned,
Joseph's arrogance had burned.
He committed to the Lord's first word,
And from then on, that's all he heard.

But Martin could record-keep no more,
After his sins, he was shown the door.
Oliver Cowdry was chosen to write,
And under his hand, the scripture saw light.

It was during the months of translating with Cowdry,
Joseph asked for the priesthood, and the Lord answered loudly.
They went to the woods and got down on their knees,
And heavenly messengers came down through the trees.

First John the Baptist, bringing all of his wisdom,
Brought with him the preparatory priesthood of Aaron.
And the gift of baptism and the holy spirit,
To proclaim to the world for all those who would hear it.

Then in a short while came Peter, James and John,
Bringing holier priesthood for the kingdom to build on.
With Melchizedek's power, the ground was prepared,
And the work of the Lord was about to be shared.

At long last it was finished after trial and tear,
The new Book of Mormon was ready to share.
With two groups of witnesses, first three than eight,
The prophet was able to show them the plates.

In spring eighteen twenty the time finally came,
To organize fully under Jesus Christ's name.
A small little crowd, but faithful and true,
They began sending missionaries into the blue.

The next year Smith was told to move the church to Ohio,
They packed up and set out, unsure of quite why though.
But with faith that the Lord had a plan from the start,
They took what they could with a smile in their heart.

In Kirtland the church began rolling for real,
Its organization increased its appeal.
With new members joining and all numbers growing,
The need for some grouping was quite clearly showing.

Soon after they settled Joseph had revelation,
A law would be needed to bring up a nation.
So as to prevent a religion-wide lurch,
The Lord laid down a law for his brand-new young church.

Then Joseph received revelation again,
This time to Missouri his calling had led.
Instead of a place to just rest up their heads,
He was looking for Zion to last till the end.

The Lord's call had led him to Independence, Missouri.
On arrival, it was good, but he started to worry.
The locals were hesitant, and likely to snap,
But Joseph regardless began drawing his map.

Returning to Kirtland for just a short while,
He was called on a mission down south a few miles.
Sydney Rigdon came with him, a good number two,
To share the Lord's word, through all they could do.

On returning to Kirtland they decided to name,
It was time for a president to be sustained.
Joseph Smith was their leader, and had lived through such strife,
An obvious choice, for the rest of his life.

With power comes danger Joseph had learned,
As large angry mobs came to have this man burned.
They hauled him outside in the middle of night,
And stripped, tarred and feathered, a horrible sight.

But Joseph recovered, and then the next day,
He offered a sermon to prove that he'd stay.
While bloodied and torn, and beaten and bruised,
Joseph Smith was a man who stood up to abuse.

The next revelation that Joseph Smith saw,
Concerned mortal life, and how to see God.
A faithful elect, he called on that day,
A School of the Prophets, to help guide the way.

As they learned all the lessons that Joseph Smith taught,
It concerned him that none of them yet had seen God.
He asked of the Lord as to what they could do,
A health code, word of wisdom, a new guide came through.

Then, that same year, eighteen thirty-three,
An integral part of the church came to be.
A first presidency formed, designed to lead millions,
Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G Williams.

Then the temple came, like Israel of old,
They laid the foundations and set cornerstones.
This work would continue for several years more,
As Joseph continued the work of the Lord.

As the church grew larger and so did Kirtland,
They found themselves needing a helping hand.
Joseph Smith prayed, and received a command,
Branch the church into multiple sections by land.

Then Joseph heard some disturbing news,
Mormon settlers in Missouri were being abused.
He began to recruit for a band of strong men,
To help the poor saints find a new home again.

When tales of a strong Mormon army drew nigh,
The Missourians worried that they'd be forced to fly.
An early attack on the Mormons who stayed,
Caused much grief to Joseph, and all his brigade.

A word from the Lord caused his camp to disband,
To return to Ohio, but buy Missouri land.
The kingdom of God will lie there someday,
But the good Lord was patient, and had His own way.

So back to Ohio the Mormons all went,
Their time on the temple was blessedly spent.
Even Joseph Smith labored with his own two hands,
To bring back the house of the Lord on the land.

He organized the quorum of twelve, then more,
A quorum of seventy, to watch evermore.

The offices we know today,
Were slowly but surely underway.

About this time Joseph then bought,
A set of scrolls he valued a lot.
And from their ancient, mystic writ,
The Book of Abraham we did get.

Now the church had plenty of means,
To produce books and other things.
Compiled from all the revelation,
They produced a book for church foundation.

Then one blessed joyful day,
Joseph saw a revealed way,
That people that died without the gospel,
Salvation was for them too, possible.

After years and years of never shirking,
The temple was ready to begin working.
Joseph then prayed to make sacred their test,
Then Christ came down and accepted their best.

Then the men in the church grew to big for their collars,
They created a bank, to replace US dollars.
When the Great Depression caused the bank to fail,
Many thought Joseph had fallen as well.

They survived through the crisis, with the help of the Lord,
It had served as a test with a fiery sword.
Their numbers had lessened, by more than a lot,
But others, more faithful soon came to their spot.

The saints that had fallen had had quite enough,
They wanted the Mormons thrown out on their scruff.
In a frenzy they came to attack Joseph Smith,
But forewarned he fled, far off no one with.

He came to Missouri and proclaimed,
A new home they'd build here, and be not afraid.

He sent for his family and all of the people,
To flee from Kirtland, and the men that were evil.

Out in Far West they began all anew,
A temple and houses and all they could do.
The people of Missouri were mad they were back,
And searched for new ways they could subtly attack.

In Missouri Joseph Smith received more revelation,
Concerning the offerings the Lord would have taken.
While all of life comes from the Good Lord freely,
A ten percent tithing, an offering would be.

But Missouri was brutal, its people were violent,
And soon the poor Mormons could hardly survive it.
Renounced by the government, and chased by the mob,
Denied of their voting, and rejected from jobs.

The violence peaked at the site of Haun's Mill,
The saints there were slaughtered, and driven at will.
The governor had issued a very bold and bad order,
Extinguish the Mormons, or drive them over the border.

The Missouri militia had laid siege to Far West,
They offered a “peaceful” solution to jest.
When Joseph responded they left their false truce,
And took him to prison on treasonous flukes

General Doniphan knew that it wasn’t correct,
And spared Joseph’s life, and risked his own neck.
Then later in jail, a guard let them escape,
He knew they were good, and he just looked away.

It was next to Nauvoo, Illinois that they fled,
A miserable swamp, but safe for a bed.
By the hand of their God, they helped the land nourish,
They packed down the land, built homes, and then flourished.

They started a temple this time right away,
For no sin of theirs did they want to hold sway.
They also prepared for a second great mission,
To England, to tell their glad tale of religion.

Persecution continued for the small group of saints,
With scandalous lies and mischievous complaints.
Joseph Smith was on trial for all sorts on sin,
For situations he literally never was in.

In Nauvoo they were happy and filled with the Spirit,
And anyone listening closely could hear it.
The strength of the saints grew stronger and stronger,
And their hopes of remaining grew longer and longer.

A new ordinance was introduced then,
The salvation of souls, in work for the dead.
Beginning in rivers and wherever it fit,
It moved to the temple to sanctify it.

In Nauvoo they established a whole government
And their governor, Joseph, was always present.
As prophet, governor, retailer and editor,
He was always busy, but always could do more.

He organized the women too,
The Relief Society, all brand new.
Their purpose was to lift and care,
For all the members everywhere.

Brother Joseph was always a fountain of truth,
But some of his teachings were so painful too.
Plural marriage was one that hurt him to handle,
He struggled with this, he had to set the example.

It took an angel with a flaming sword,
To convince him to instigate that word.

He taught it very close to home,
A secret, painful, hard and lone.

Another more delightful station,
Came the concept of Exaltation.
Celestial marriage, sealed in time,
Became a central core, divine.

As his final time began to leech,
He delivered to the people, his final speech.
The King Follett, proclaimed abroad,
Said all men could become like God.

On June twenty-forth, eighteen forty-four,
Joseph Smith bowed his head, and surrendered once more.
He was taken to Carthage with Hyrum his brother,
He knew that his time now soon would be over.

Three days later they heard angry men on the stairs,
They pushed on the door, to block their invaders.
The mob shot through the door, taking Hyrum away,
And Joseph, weeping, cried out in dismay.

He turned to the window and tried to retreat,
And was shot from behind and fell off his feet.

Out of the window and down to the ground,
The prophet of God had gone up for his crown.

The path Joseph led fraught with perils and strife,
Was all for the Lord, his family and wife.
For all of mankind, Joseph lived, and he died,
And just like our Savior he loved you and I.

But unlike our Savior Brother Joseph was human,
And made some mistakes in his life, felt some ruin.
But rather than shun him for what he did wrong,
We look to the blessings he brought and be strong.

Brother Joseph was certainly one of kind,
In studying all of his strengths we can find,
That through Heavenly Father everything can be done,
If we endure till the end, victory's already been won.