

ing words of the book of Deuteronomy reflect this singularity: “Not has arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom God knew face to face” (Deut. 34:10 [author translation]; cf. Ex. 33:11). And Yahweh would talk to Moses face to face, as men and women talk to their companions (cf. also Num. 12:8): “Mouth to mouth I speak to him . . . and the shape of Yahweh he beholds” (author translation).

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DAVID NOEL FREEDMAN

PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

[Joseph Smith, Jr., *Prophet and first President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, is the primary subject of several entries and is mentioned prominently in many more. For a brief biography and articles on his teachings and writings, see Smith, Joseph: The Prophet. See also History of the Church: c. 1820–1831 and c. 1831–1844 and numerous articles relating to Joseph Smith cross-referenced there. For a history of Joseph Smith’s prophetic ministry prepared under his direction, see History of the Church.

Regarding Joseph Smith’s early prophetic experiences, see First Vision; Moroni, Visitations of; and Sacred Grove. During one of Moroni’s visits in 1827, Joseph Smith received the Gold Plates from which he translated by the “gift and power of God” the Book of Mormon; see Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith. For other visions and visitations, see Visions of Joseph Smith.

In company with Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith received divine authority; see Aaronic Priesthood: Restoration of, and Melchizedek Priesthood: Restoration of. Thus authorized, they proceeded with the Organization of the Church, 1830. Numerous Revelations given through Joseph Smith guided the infant organization; see Book of Commandments and Doctrine and Covenants. For other scripture that came through the Prophet Joseph Smith, see Book of Abraham; Book of Mormon; Book of Moses; Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST); and Pearl of Great Price.

Joseph Smith’s mission focused on the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, including the First Principles of the Gospel and its Ordinances; he encouraged the

Gathering of the Saints and laid the foundation for the establishment of Zion and the New Jerusalem in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ. The Articles of Faith provides a summary statement of some of the principal doctrines of the gospel.]

PROPHET, SEER, AND REVELATOR

“Prophet, seer, and revelator” is the threefold title applied to all who have received the fulness of the KEYS of the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD associated with the apostleship. Ordinarily, those to whom this title applies are members of the FIRST PRESIDENCY or the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. All members of these two governing bodies are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators by the Latter-day Saints in a public congregational vote (see COMMON CONSENT).

Though there are technical distinctions between the functions of a PROPHET, a SEER, and a revelator (cf. Mosiah 8:12–18), this threefold term is applied in its entirety to describe all these leaders. It was applied to Hyrum SMITH when he was made Assistant President of the Church and Patriarch to the Church, and to Joseph SMITH in his role as President of the Church (D&C 124:94). Also, at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836, Joseph Smith invited the members of the Church to acknowledge the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators (TPJS, p. 109).

LEWIS R. CHURCH

PROTESTANTISM

Christian Protestantism may be viewed as the product of late medieval “protests” against various elements of the Roman Catholic church. Though there were always persons within Catholicism pressing for reforms, the beginning of the Protestant Reformation is usually dated to 1517 when Martin Luther (1483–1546), an Augustinian monk in Wittenberg, Germany, published his ninety-five theses against papal indulgences. The theses challenged the authority of the pope and by extension of the Roman Catholic church. Protestants since that time are generally considered to be those Christians who are neither Roman Catholics nor Eastern (or Russian) Orthodox.

Although Protestant theology is varied today, it can be characterized by four basic beliefs: (1) the

Bible is the Word of God and all authority resides within its pages as it bears witness to Jesus Christ; (2) the Bible should be in the language of the people, who, by the power of the HOLY GHOST, can gain their own understanding of God's Word; (3) all church members hold the priesthood and should be involved in the total life of the church, meaning that no mediatorial priesthood is necessary; and (4) people are saved by their faith, through the grace of God, and not by any works they may do apart from or in addition to faith.

While Latter-day Saints share with Protestants a conviction of the importance of the scriptures, an extensive lay priesthood (but given only by the LAYING ON OF HANDS by those having proper priesthood authority), and the primacy of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as the first principle of the gospel, they differ from them by affirming a centralized authority headed by a latter-day PROPHET and by a number of other doctrines unique to the Church, i.e. temple ordinances for the living and the dead, and the eternal nature of the marriage covenant. Despite some important differences, Latter-day Saints actually share much in doctrine, heritage, and aspiration with Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants. Even so, they view themselves as embodying an independent Christian tradition standing on its own apart from these other traditions. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a *reformation* of a previously existing ecclesiastical body but is instead a RESTORATION through heavenly ministrations of authority and of truths, structures, and scriptures that God returned to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors.

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JOHN DILLENBERGER
ROGER KELLER

PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The sixteenth-century Reformation was a major religious upheaval that has had repercussions to the present day. When Martin Luther challenged the Catholic doctrine of the sacraments, boldly

declaring that salvation comes not by human works but by the grace of God alone through faith in Jesus Christ, he set in motion a complex series of events that not only broke the religious stronghold of the Catholic church but also had a profound impact on political, social, and cultural events as well.

LDS perspective regards the Protestant Reformation as a preparation for the more complete restoration of the gospel that commenced with Joseph SMITH. Thus, the Protestant Reformation initiated a return to pure Christianity, a work that could not be completed without divine revelation and restoration. The leaders of the Reformation are honored as inspired men who made important progress, but without direct revelation they could not recover the true gospel or the priesthood authority to act in God's name. That was the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Perhaps the greatest legacy of the Reformation was the increased attention to freedom, one's own freedom more than that of others. This concern eventually grew into religious toleration and the desire for greater political self-determination. The ending of the single, "universal" church and the proliferation of new churches and sects had echoes in the political arena, most notably in the independence of the United States of America. A great many factors contributed to the establishment of the United States, but the political and religious heritage of the Protestant reformers was certainly among them.

The restoration of the gospel through Joseph Smith took place within the context of this post-Reformation world. Yet Joseph Smith is not considered a successor to the reformers in the sense of building on their teachings. He claimed to receive his knowledge and priesthood authority directly by revelation, not by the study of other writers, thus initiating a new dispensation of the gospel rather than a continuation of the Reformation.

The religious environment of early-nineteenth-century America was predominantly Protestant. That environment encouraged religious differences and resulted in many rival churches. Among the characteristics of that religious revivalism was an emphasis on the Bible and Bible reading, a feature that was first promoted by the sixteenth-century humanists and reformers. The Bible used by Joseph Smith and others of his day was the English King James Version of 1611. It was his own reading of the Bible (in particular James