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Many books have been written about Joseph Smith. This one the product of Truman Madsen's deep love for the subject and years of research illuminates specific facets of Joseph Smith's greatness. The topics discussed include Joseph Smith's First Vision; his personality and character (including perspectives on his family life); his spiritual gifts and attributes; his varied trials; his Kirtland Temple experience; doctrinal developments in the Nauvoo era; and the last months and martyrdom. The book is filled with fascinating detail about key events in the Prophet's life and his impact on people. The result is a vivid, riveting portrayal of this remarkable prophet. Those who knew Joseph Smith best testified that he lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people. This wonderful book by a beloved scholar will serve to confirm and strengthen that conviction for Latter-day Saints today.

Joseph Smith the Prophet Details

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From Reader Review Joseph Smith the Prophet for online ebook

Daren says

Maybe not as technical or in depth as could be, but Truman Madsen excels because you can sense the love he has for the prophet and feel that he wants to share and instill the same for the prophet in the listener.

Rich Mccue says

As I believing member of the mormon church I loved this book, but after reading Richard Lyman's Rough Stone Rolling, it's obvious that Truman Madsen decided not to delve in to the less faith promoting details of Joseph's life. The book does a great job of promoting the image Joseph Smith that the LDS church teaches, but is leaves out major themes and incidents from Joseph's life that. I'd recommend Rough Stone Rolling for anyone interested in a more historically accurate look at Joseph Smith's life.

Lotte says

I read this book recommended by my dad and was pleased with the insights and testimonies presented by Madsen. It is not an exhaustive history of Joseph Smith (nor does Madsen present it as such) but reviews/discusses various roles in which the prophet was called to serve in his lifetime. In the introduction, Madsen states that we still wait for the "definitive" work on Joseph Smith. IMO, Rough Stone Rolling has come as close as anything to meeting that challenge. Madsens's book certainly accomplishes what he desires: that it will "move others to look not simply at Joseph Smith but through him to the Master--and, with those insights, to take a searching look at themselves."

Jake says

These lectures ought to be titled: *Joseph Smith the Hero*. By the time Madsen is done painting his portrait, the Mormon Prophet seems more a Greek statue than a human.

When I was a green LDS missionary in rural Maine, my trainer introduced me to this collection of lectures. We listened to them as part of our morning study. My mission boundaries included the birthplace of Joseph Smith, and the town where he had a famous leg operation as a boy. So I was primed to relish these lectures.

Madsen is candid at times, especially about Joseph's introduction of the practice of polygamy. That being acknowledged, this lecture series is first and foremost a testimonial. Madsen even ends each lecture by testifying and closing with the Mormon liturgical coda: "In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

By way of disclosure, I am no longer a practicing Mormon. There is much of Joseph Smith's history that Madsen doesn't cover, or makes no attempt to be objective about. So I do not recommend this book as an academic resource. But as a cultural sampling of how endeared Joseph Smith's memory is to contemporary Mormons, I say don't pass it up.

Todd Lemmon says

My testimony of the prophet Joseph Smith was not quite complete until I read and listened to this several years ago. I drove a truck and wore out the tapes. The experiences and life of the prophet are captured in a way only Brother Madsen can do it. Both he and Joseph Smith are legends in church history. I know without reservation that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God. Reading the book will only strengthen your resolve to be more Christlike, appreciate what the prophet went through to restore the truth to the earth, and give you desires to build the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

Travis Standley says

This is a wonderful set of lectures about the Prophet, Joseph Smith. What a wonderful and foreordained soul he was for the great Work he brought forth. I listed to the audio of these lectures. I am fond of Joseph's capacity to develop the attributes of faith and faithfulness and goodness. He was flawed just like any, but the Lord magnified him in magnificent ways. What a great example for all to follow.

Kassie says

I first read the book several years ago and loved it. I recently listened to audio version with Truman Madsen giving the book as a series of lectures. It was even better than reading it.

Joe says

If you liked the lectures, you will like the book better. There are several little inaccuracies in the lectures, quotes that aren't quite word for word, etc. He fixes all those in the book, great read, great reference.

Tyler says

This book is adapted/transcribed from eight really excellent lectures given by Truman G. Madsen about different aspects of Joseph Smith and his life. I heard the lectures on my mission and really, really liked them and wanted to see the sources for the quotations. The eight lectures can be read fairly quickly, but pondering and really understanding the depths of what is being communicated in them takes a lot more reflection.

Its an excellent book, and a powerful and meaningful tribute to the Prophet Joseph Smith. I really enjoyed it.

Heather says

I liked this book about Joseph Smith. It helps to paint a picture of who he was and some of his experiences. It talks about his personality, talents, and characteristics, as well as some of his spiritual gifts. It also discusses some of the major events in his life - the First Vision, the Kirtland Temple, and then the martyrdom. I appreciated Truman Madsen's testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

It's not a very long book, so it doesn't cover a lot, but there were some insights that I was grateful for. I was glad to be reading Joseph Smith: The Prophet and Seer at the same time. This book is much more comprehensive in helping to paint a bigger chronological picture of the other people and places and things going on that help me to understand even better who he was.

I'm grateful for the Prophet Joseph Smith, his life, his sacrifices, his example, his faithfulness, and all the good that he brought into the world. He truly changed the world by following the Lord.

Here are a few quotes I liked from the book:

"One of the strengths of the history of the Church is that the first family held true to each other (p. 10)."

"Throughout his life the Prophet had important things to say about the power of the evil one, but he never said the evil one was as powerful as the living God. He knew both. Like Moses of old, he was not confused when once he had experienced both and felt their influence (p. 11)."

"The Prophet indicates in the 1835 account that he was filled with that light, but also surrounded by it, that it filled the Grove. Then had adds, 'yet nothing consumed,' perhaps indicating that he expected to be. The Prophet was not harmed by the experience; he was hallowed by it (p. 12)."

"The Son looked like his Father.... they are, in appearance as well as in nature, exactly similar (p. 12)."

"Joseph Smith.... had a brilliant conceptual ability both to see and to understand, to go to the heart of an issue and then to express it so that others would understand (p. 22)."

"You don't know me.... You never knew my heart.... I don't blame any one for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I could not have believed it myself.' In that loneliness, he had to keep to his own bosom...certain deep understandings the Lord had vouchsafed to him with the command that he not share them. 'The reason...we do not have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto us is because we do not keep them but reveal them...even to our enemies.... I can keep a secret till Doomsday.' And so he did (p. 29)."

"The Prophet's home life with Emma included prayers three times a day, morning, noon, and night. It included her leading the family in singing. The 'family' was always larger than Joseph's blood relatives--visitors from different places, immigrants needing temporary accommodation, and so on (p. 30)."

"[Joseph] could sit down at the base of a tree and almost instantly fall into slumber, but almost as instantly snap back to full and alert activity. That may have something to do with a clear conscience and the assurance that God is with you (p. 30)."

"To Robert B. Thompson, his secretary, the Prophet said, 'Robert, you have been so faithful and relentless in this work, you need to relax.' He told him to go out and enjoy himself, to relax. But Thompson was a serious-minded man. He said, 'I can't do it.' Joseph responded, 'You must do it, if you don't do it, you will die.' One of the sorrows of Joseph's life was that Robert B. Thompson had a premature death, and he had to speak at the funeral (p. 31)."

"Lord, we thank thee for this johnnycake and ask thee to send us something better. Amen.' Before the meal was over a knock came at the door, and there stood a man with a ham and some flour. The Prophet jumped to his feet and said to Emma, 'I knew the Lord would answer my prayer.' He shared and shared until he was utterly impoverished (p. 32)."

"Joseph was more susceptible to the continuing impressions and revelations of God. That is, he did not become so rigidly bound to what had been given that he was unsusceptible to what yet had to be given. Yet that is a tendency. Claiming integrity, one can harden on past traditions and can thus become immune to living revelation. And the Prophet tended to judge men with that same openness: that is, not all cases are identical; each individual has his own special differences, and must be brought into harmony with the Lord in ways that recognize these differences. Again, this shows a mind that is not only open but also receptive; and not only receptive, but also obedient, even when the required response seemed to run counter to former assumptions and traditions. This was an essential element for the revelator of our dispensation (p. 33)."

"It is vain to try to hide a bad spirit from the eyes of them who are spiritual, for it will show itself in speaking and in writing, as well as in our other conduct. It is also needless to make great pretensions when the heart is not right: the Lord will expose it to the view of faithful Saints (p. 41)."

"Doctrine and Covenants 128 tells of some of the ancient worthies who manifested themselves to the Prophet Joseph, declaring their keys and glories and dispensations and making possible the welding authorities of this dispensation. He knew Peter, he knew James, he knew John. He knew Adam and Eve. He knew Abraham. He knew Enoch. He knew the Twelve who were on the American continent. 'He seemed to be as familiar with these people as we are with one another,' said John Taylor. He had visions of the past as well as of the future. As a seer, he knew things about the past that are not part of our own scripture, but which he spoke of in discourse (p. 44)."

"A religion that isn't earthbound but that takes account of the vast universe we now know about. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith was revealed a religion for the Space Age, for the cosmos, for the whole universe (p. 45)."

"A final word on his wisdom. 'I made this my rule: When God commands, do it.' That took him all the way to Carthage--and to the glories of the eternities beyond (p. 47)."

"Someone asked the Prophet once, 'What was the first miracle Jesus performed?' He answered, 'He made this world, and what followed we are not told.' Miracle is the term we use for the operation of divine power beyond our understanding. It is not a violation of law. Every miracle that Christ performed, including the creation of the earth, was executed in harmony with eternal principles. We will one day know that whatever we call miraculous was, in fact lawful (p. 49)."

"Several of our historians, Wilford Woodruff included, felt that though the Nauvoo Temple cost much more, it did not require the same level of sacrificial effort. The Kirtland Temple was an unprecedented sacrifice, and it was met with an unprecedented divine outpouring (p. 69)."

"The temple is indeed a house of light where the heavenly and the earthly combine (p. 70)."

"Brother and Sisters, the Savior has been in your midst tonight. I want you all to remember it. There is a veil over your eyes, for you could not endure to look upon Him.' Then they knelt in prayer, which he led. His prayer was so long, Mary records, that several of the people rose and rested and then knelt back down to endure to the end. 'Such a prayer,' she said, 'I have never heard before or since. I felt he was talking to the

Lord, and the power rested upon us all (p. 71)."

"The Prophet had held many meetings to prepare the Saints, and especially the priesthood brethren, for what was going to come. He told them that they must come in purity, come having studied and pondered prayerfully the revelations given on the subject. In section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord said the temple was to be a house of glory, a house of order, a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of God (p. 72)."

"Joseph, what do you want me to do (Brigham Young, p. 88)?"

"As the Savior said: 'Without me ye can do nothing.' That may be intimidating to those of us who are proud, but it is eternally true, and Joseph knew it (p. 88)."

"I have indicated that he occasionally, deliberately, knowingly, put men to a test, almost as if he could discern the spiritual growth and blessing that would ultimately result (p. 92)."

"Abraham needed to learn something about Abraham.' But being tested, all of us will one day know how much our hearts are really set on the kingdom of God (p. 93)."

"One of the great qualities of the Prophet Joseph, not always characteristic of others, is that when he was wrong he acknowledged it. The Lord rebuked him several times. Those revelations are published alongside the revelations in which he is given promises and blessings. Had he been less sincere, less honest--less of a prophet--he might have tried to suppress the personal, private rebukings and let the Church believe that he'd gone along pretty well without lapsings and slippings. But he didn't. And when others found fault with him, instead of confrontation, putting all the blame on them, the spirit of his counsel to himself as to this sister was otherwise: 'Look deeper, Brother, and see if maybe there is a kernel of truth in what they are saying.' That, I suggest, shows wisdom (p. 95)."

"Brother Brigham, this is not arranged right. But we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed, and I wish you to take this matter in hand and organize and systematize all these ceremonies (p. 98)."

"You need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things (Joseph Smith, p. 98)."

"During the winter of 1843-44...he met almost daily and sometimes twice a day with all the faithful members of the Council of the Twelve. Orson Pratt finally complained, 'Why do you give us no rest?' and the Prophet replied, 'The Spirit urges me.' Erastus Snow says of that period that he learned more in a few months in council with the Prophet than he had learned in all his life before (p. 101)."

"No one can ever enter the celestial kingdom unless he is strictly honest.' That's hard one. My own bishop has told me that when he asks individuals whether they are strictly honest, most people reply, 'I try.' Eventually we must do more than 'try (p. 104)."

"A man who has an honest heart... should rejoice (Joseph Smith, p. 104)."

"Speaking of gratitude he once remarked that if you will thank the Lord with all your heart every night for all the blessings that day you will eventually find yourself exalted in the kingdom of God. This is a powerful statement on the spiritual necessity of gratitude (p. 104)."

"If I revealed all that has been made known to me, scarcely a man on this stand would stay with me (Joseph Smith, p. 105)."

"Because he had so often escaped the vilifyings and the attacks of his enemies, some believed that he was invincible (p. 110)."

"Joseph's anxiety about the temple was compounded by his anxiety concerning the records of the Church, that they be kept, preserved, and accurately transmitted (p. 110)."

"If all of the Twelve then in Nauvoo had promptly recorded the meeting in which Joseph rolled off the responsibility from his shoulders upon them and charged them, in what he called his last charge, to go forward in building the kingdom, any claim that he intended someone else to succeed to the Presidency of the Church would be completely refuted by contemporary documents. But only one of the Twelve, Orson Hyde, recorded that meeting at the time (p. 111)."

"Finally there was the Prophet's major concern--that the Saints understand his role and be willing to do what in an extremity they might be required to do (p. 112)."

"If my life is of no value to my friends it is of none to myself (Joseph Smith, p. 117)."

"The spirit that testifies to the souls of men that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and that he gave his life willingly for the redemption of mankind is the same spirit that bears witness to the receptive soul that Joseph Smith was a prophet of Jesus Christ. One cannot truly say he knows the one thing and deny the other. No man can come to a testimony of the prophetic mantle of the Prophet Joseph Smith without knowing that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. And no man can have a testimony that Christ is the divine Savior and Lord without knowing, when he hears Joseph's name and knows even a little about his life, that Christ had a prophet named Joseph Smith (p. 125)."

"If we do not know them now, each of us will at some time come to know these twin truths: Jesus is the Christ, and Joseph is his Prophet (p. 126)."

Lela says

This was a great follow up to reading Saints Vol. 1 earlier this year. My largest complaint is that this book wasn't long enough, but given that it was initially a lecture series I suppose it's a good length for that. I really learned a lot from Madsen about many things that I've wondered about when reading other accounts of the prophet as well as about things I'd never even wondered about. I will definitely want to read/listen to more of his work. This was a very faith and testimony building work.

Karen says

This is a profound book about Joseph Smith. It captures, better than any other book I know, the greatness of Joseph Smith and his largeness of spirit. The reader learns insights into his character traits and personality.

Outside of Mormon circles, there is often confusion about how Mormons view Joseph Smith. It's certain that

we do not worship him. Rather, we revere him as the first prophet of the latter days. We revere him for having restored the full gospel with its saving ordinances. In the book, readers may see a more accurate picture of who Joseph Smith was and gain a meritorious appreciation for the role he played and the many hardships he endured to accomplish his vital calling.

Alan says

I liked the book overall as it had some very interesting quotes in it; however, Madsen's approach to Joseph Smith ends up being (for lack of a better way to say this) quasi idolization of the prophet. When he continually says things like "Joseph was the life of the party", or praises Joseph Smith for his physical strength, the credibility of this book diminished. Is it important for a prophet of God to be "the life of the party"? How is this relevant to any prophet's calling and mission?

Jeni says

This is a great book given to me by a wonderful friend for my birthday. My father is good friends with Truman and so I took interest in reading Truman's writings. I loved reading the lectures on Joseph Smith. It truly brought Joseph to light and provided many quotes by the Prophet that I had not heard before. I enjoyed how he broke down the spiritual gifts the prophet had possessed and also the personality traits of the prophet. The other part that I enjoyed is that the book is full of footnotes that expounds even further the dept of information Truman acquired. I give this book a thumbs up.

Lora says

A really great book that contains oodles of information about the Prophet Joseph Smith. The writing style is easy-going-- not sterile research language-- and all the great little insights and tidbits from the Prophet's life helped me visualize him as a real person. The only flaw I found with the book is that it couldn't possibly hold as much information as I wanted. When I would read about a particular experience or quotation from Joseph Smith, I would wonder, "Well, what happened then?" or "What were the implications on Person X, Y, and Z when he made that statement?" I guess I need the comprehensive guide to Latter-Day Saint Church history... the one that chronicles every event in the Church as well as each individual person's response to it and subsequent actions. Any suggestions? :)
