

What was God's Intended Role for Joseph Smith?

The Book of Mormon prophecies of a Choice Seer who would be the instrument in bring forth the Book of Mormon. Throughout 2nd Nephi Chapter 2 we read of passages paraphrasing the Bible and the prophesies of the Book of Mormon, the intent of "whispering from the dust" the teachings of the Native American Ancestors who longed to share the Gospel truth to their decedents. There are a couple of passages that point right to Joseph Smith:

2 Nephi 2:12 *And unto him will I give commandment, that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers. 13 And I will give unto him a commandment, that he shall do none other work save the work which I shall command him.*

2 Nephi 2:29 *And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father.*

Both Joseph Smith and his Father were named Joseph. The fulfillment of 2 Nephi 2:12 is found in the Book of Commandments:

Book of Commandments 4:2 *And now, behold this shall you say unto him:--I the Lord am God, and I have given these things unto my servant Joseph, and I have commanded him that he should stand as a witness of these things, nevertheless I have caused him that he should enter into a covenant with me, that he should not show them except I command him and he has no power over them except I grant it unto him; and he has a gift to translate the book and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift.*

From these passages we can see God's primary role for Joseph Smith was to translate the Book of Mormon then after this to pretend to no other gift. This fits with the fact that the Plates and the Interpreters were removed from Joseph's possession soon after the Book of Mormon was finished. Without those tools it is hard to see how Joseph Smith could have been a Seer afterwards. The Book of Mormon spells this out:

Mosiah 5:72 *Now Ammon saith unto him, I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records: for he hath wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date: and it is a gift from God. 73 And the things are called interpreters; and no man can look in them, except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he had not ought, and he should perish. 74 And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called seer.*

Notice that the means to translate requires something to "look" into meaning the translation was a visual process. In Restoration history when Joseph was "looking" through the Interpreters to translate and his scribe misspelled a word, the process would halt until a correction was made. Joseph's role also was to restore the Church of Christ, call and ordain ministers, and bring back the church that had been lost during the great apostasy or Dark Ages. Back when Joseph first restored the Church it was named "The Church of Christ" and had doctrines that mirrored the AD 33 Church of Christ in Israel and the Americas. Unfortunately being young Joseph often yielded to the persuasions of men which led to the alteration of many of the early revelations, changes in the church name and doctrines which brought the church many troubles and grief. The ancient leader Helaman in the Book of Mormon had a similar high Calling and through diligence and faithfulness he was allowed to retain the Plates and Interpreters and was protected throughout many trials in his life. With history laid out as it is, it is hard to say for sure what other roles God may have had for Joseph Smith had he been more diligent.

Book of Commandments 2:2 *Remember, remember, that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men: for although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet, if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at nought the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will, and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him. 2:3 Behold, you have been instructed with these things, but how strict were your commandments; and remember, also, the promises which were made to you, if you did not transgress them; and behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men: for behold, you should not have feared man more than God, although men set at nought the counsels of God, and despise his words, yet you should have been faithful and he would have extended his arm, and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble.*