

# Joe's Own Story 1

**J**oseph Nephi Nemelka was born August 2, 1909 in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Carl Alois and Elizabeth Nemelka. After sixty-one years of life he left this world for the other experience our Father in Heaven wanted him to have. But during those years, he became an inspiration to all whose lives he touched. This record is written to all, his posterity and others, who will be forever influenced by his love and example. But perhaps most importantly, it is recorded for those who have no memories of him, his children's children and the rest of his posterity, to give them a knowledge of their heritage and an inspired determination to be as diligent in their endeavors as he was in his.

Written in the preface of the biography of Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, are the following words—a direct quote from President Kimball himself.

I might hope that my children will take from my many journals and write a simple little story or biography for me. I would like for my posterity to remember me and to know that I have tried so very hard to measure up and to live worthy.

These words or similar ones might have been spoken by Joseph Nephi Nemelka sometime in the golden years of his life. He, too, was desirous of leaving a record of the story of his life for his posterity to read so that they might know of him and about him.

This feeling was so strong within his heart and soul that Joe spent the last few months of his earthly life compiling, writing, and recording his thoughts. He was to review his material over and over again until he made his final recording just prior to his death. He recorded only the preface of his Life Story and we have used that to begin his story.

This is My Life—my “Book of Remembrance.” It shall be written, recorded on tape, and compiled for my children, my children’s children, and my future posterity. This record is dedicated to my beloved wife, Gayle Cotterell Nemelka, who has blessed me with nine sons and one daughter, who has been my inspiration in this life and the one I love most dearly. She has been perfection itself in her loyal support of my callings in the Holy Priesthood of God, and I shall claim her as my Queen and Priestess in the life to come.

I shall only record the good and noble acts and deeds of my life that they might be an encouragement to those who may read the same. For the mistakes and sins I have committed and may still make I ask my Heavenly Father’s forgiveness, that I may be faithful and true to the end of my life upon the earth.

To my loved ones, those now living upon the earth and those of the future, also to all the world, I bear record and testify by the Holy spirit that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living

God, that Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God having been visited by the Father and the Son, that the Gospel, the Plan of Life and Salvation is here upon the earth if we will accept and live it. I say a testimony of the same shall be yours if you keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father. I testify to all that there is a life hereafter where we shall meet again.

I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon my faithful posterity in the name of Jesus Christ, My Redeemer, My Savior, and My God.

Amen.

If there be any mistakes in this record it is because of my weakness in writing or my use of words.

#### WHY SHOULD WE KEEP A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE?

The Bible tells us that the Lord carried on conversations with Adam, therefore Adam must have been taught the language of God. This language was perfect. It was the language of celestial beings. Not only could Adam, the first man, speak, but he was also taught to read and write. From the Book of Moses we obtain a comprehensive understanding of these facts.

*Thus do the Scriptures read:*

“And then began these men to call upon the name of the Lord, and the Lord blessed them; and a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration; and by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled.” (Mos. 6:4-6)

Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also. Now this prophecy Adam spake, as he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and a Genealogy was kept of the children of God. And this was the book of the generations of Adam, saying: "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;" (Moses 6:4-8)

*When Enoch was called out of the Land of Caanan to preach to those who had rejected the Gospel, he carried with him the knowledge of this book of remembrance, which was of great value to him. These are some of the words he taught the people:*

"For a Book of Remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God; and it is given in our own language." (Moses 6:46)

*Abraham had the records of his fathers. From Abraham's own hand we learn; "But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of the Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me." (Abraham 1:31)*

*A Book of Remembrance was also kept in the days of Moses (Moses 32:31-33). And it came down unto the days of Malachi (Malachi 3:16). And his prophecy was considered of such great importance that the Savior repeated it to the Nephites as follows:*

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that taught upon his name.” (III Nephi 24:16-18)

*Joseph Smith the Great Prophet*, in this last dispensation, also kept a Book of Remembrance which was called “The Book of the Law of God” in which was recorded the names of those who proved valiant in the testimony of Jesus. (D&C 85:7)

Each Latter Day Saint with a full knowledge of the Gospel should keep a Book of Remembrance.

I, as a Latter Day Saint, shall always remember the name of the Lord, and His love and mercy, that my name shall be found in my Father’s Book of Remembrance, which is the Lamb’s Book of Life.

### WHAT’S IN A NAME?

There are people who think very little importance is to be attached to a name. We oft times give too little thought to the meaning of the names we confer; even those we give to our children are frequently bestowed with little thought as to fitness; but we have consolation in the promise that to each of them, if faithful, a name shall be given by the authority of God at the judgment time, which shall be a name conveying all that names given of God do convey—power and authority. The names that possess magic power are those that have been made to stand for something, to represent the good, the great, and the grand. We find that the Lord has been particularly careful in the matter of his use of names.

The names given of God are important. To Zacharias the angel said, "he shall be called John." JOHN means "the gracious gift of God." This was a name bestowed upon he who came foreordained to be the forerunner of the Christ, to prepare the way for the coming of the Savior.

The name of the Savior of mankind was prescribed before his birth. The angel Gabriel informed Mary that the child was to be called "Jesus." JESUS means "A Savior." He was also to be called EMANUEL, which means "God is with us." The terms CHRIST and MESSIAH are distinctive titles meaning "The anointed one."

The Lord changed the name of ABRAM which meant "A high and mighty one," to ABRAHAM which means "The father of a multitude of nations." Jacob's name was changed to ISRAEL which means "A prince who has prevailed with God."

Well, if it be thus important that the name be given aright, have we not reason to be thankful that the Lord has promised unto all who are faithful that if their names are not suitable they shall receive other names that are?

I have been given two great names. JOSEPH reminding me of the great son of Jacob or Israel and NEPHI after the great Book of Mormon prophet and leader. May I honor these two wonderful names.

Isaiah, the Prophet, uttered these words, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."

Doctrine and Covenants 130:11—"And a white stone is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word."

A good name is to be more desired and chosen than great riches, and if it be kept untarnished, it shall be a man's perpetual badge of honor and shall glorify his memory.

#### SOME SCRIPTURES THAT HAVE THRILLED ME

Bible  
John 7:3

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.*

Book of Mormon  
Moroni 10:32-33

*Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness: and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may become perfect in Christ: and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.*

Doctrine and Covenants  
Section 110:2-5

*We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.*

*His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even*

*the voice of Jehovah, saying:*

*I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father. Behold your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice.*

Pearl of Great Price

Moses 1:39

*For behold, this is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.*

Where shall my life story begin? I presume in the pre-existence, but I am unaware and not knowledgeable as to this information except what is recorded in the Holy Scriptures. I think I'll begin by relating an experience of my mother. May I title this "A Child of Faith."

Helene Elizabeth Lucas Nemelka had several miscarriages and was informed by the doctors that her female organs were too weak to carry a child. In faith she sought the Lord for the blessing of motherhood. When the missionaries brought their laundry it contained their Holy Garments. Mother felt that if she could place them upon her body she would be blessed to become a mother in the House of Israel. She put on the garments and later took them off and washed them. When father came home in the evening, she showed him the sleeves of the garments and told him of her desires. He said to her, "If you have the faith, I presume it would be all right." She also sought a blessing at the hands of the priesthood. She was blessed by Brother Richard Kretschmar and promised that she would have children. I, Joseph Nephi Nemelka, her first-born, was the result of this great faith. Mother very



Richard Kretschmar

seldom mentioned this sacred experience. She told two of her friends about it and they had ridiculed her, telling her that she had committed a sin; and so, of course, she had a secret sorrow.

But one day in the general meeting on a fast day in the old Twenty-Sixth Ward on Eighth South and Jeremy Street in Salt Lake City, she felt inspired to share this testimony. When she finished, a voice said to her that Patriarch Schoenfeld, a blind patriarch, would speak about her testimony. A short time later in the testimony meeting, Patriarch Schoenfeld was led

to the pulpit by the German President, Caspar Fetzer. He stood at the pulpit and raised his hands high above his head and said, "Hannah, von alten zeiten," which translated means, "Hannah, as of olden times," and spoke about mother's testimony. May I just remind us of Hannah's promise to the Lord.

Near Shiloh where the temple was, lived a devoted religious couple, Elkanah and Hannah, who had not been blessed with any children. This troubled Hannah, for having no children was considered a great misfortune. Hannah went to the place of worship and prayed to the Lord. "Oh Lord of Hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (I Samuel 1:11) Not long after this a child was born to her and to her husband and she named him Samuel. Hannah was devoted to her little boy especially since he was her only child. But she had made a promise to God which she dared not break. When he was still a small boy she took him to the house of the Lord where Eli was the priest and left him there to learn to do the Lord's work. In explanation to Eli she said, "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there." (I Samuel 1:27-28) And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife and said, "The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord." And they went unto their own home. And the Lord visited Hannah so that she conceived, and

bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord. (I Samuel 2:20-21)

Joe was a child of promise to his parents, and this was one of his favorite songs. It was sung in the October 1947 General Conference of the church by Brother and Sister J. Stewart McMaster.

#### O CHILD OF PROMISE

O Child of Promise. Come with me, to a wonderful place called earth. I need you, want you, love you so. Please do not fear your birth. Your life on earth will bring you new joy, new pleasure in all that you do. We long for a son to cherish and love. Our home is already awaiting you. Tomorrow you start this journey to earth unto our home. A son will then be born unto us, to make our home complete. We will guide you each day. Our love will meet every care. O Child of Promise, come away to a wonderful place called earth. We need you, want you, love you so. Please do not fear your birth. O Child of Promise come with me.

Joe's sister, Esther, with the approval and testimony of her mother Elizabeth Lucas Nemelka as to the correctness of the record, recorded the following in March 1961.

In Germany, right after my mother had joined the church, she was washing the garments for the missionaries and received an inspiration. She realized

how Holy they were (the garments of the priesthood) and she thought that if she would put a pair on for a few hours, they might make her body strong enough inside so she could have a baby. She had already had two miscarriages. She put them on and told Dad about it to see if he thought she was doing a good thing and he said, "If you feel that they are that Holy, I'm sure you are doing the right thing." She kept them on from that morning till evening and then took them off.

Several months later she and Dad tried for another baby. Sure enough, this resulted in a lovely baby boy, my brother Joseph. They attended German L.D.S. meetings here in Salt Lake. At that time a Brother Schoenfeld was the President of the German L.D.S. group.

About four years later, when Joe was five, she went to a German fast day meeting. At this time, Caspar Fetzer was President. Brother Schoenfeld was blind. Brother Schoenfeld came to this meeting this day for a visit. His wife brought him in. As they came in, the spirit said to my mother, "Brother Schoenfeld will talk about your testimony." She was so surprised and wondered what kind of a testimony she would bear. To her surprise, she was inspired to tell of the power of the garments on her body, and how later she did have a normal child. She had never told anyone this testimony before. It was sacred to her.

Then Brother Schoenfeld stood up and reached his hand out to the pulpit and Brother Fetzer took his hand and led him to the pulpit. Brother Schoenfeld raised his hands high in the air and said, "Hannah, like in olden times," then he proceeded to talk about mother's testimony.

Two friends whom she had told about the garments had told mother she had done wrong by putting on the garments, but she now knew better, she had her own testimony.

All her life she wore the old-style, long legs, long sleeved garments. Her endowments were taken out in 1910, so she wore them some fifty-two years.

I shall now continue with Joe's own version of his life story. At this point in the tape Joe makes the following comment. I include it to give the reader greater insight into his personality and mannerisms. "As this is an experimental tape, disregard the harsh s's as I have no back teeth and somehow the s's seem accentuated in my enunciation...."

Joe had great respect for the Patriarchal Order. When his father was still with us, Joe took the boys, Carl, Larry, Duane, Michael, Mark, and Dick, up to Grandpa's rooms in the old Constitution Building, lined them up according to their sizes, and had his father give each of them a Father's blessing. I wish I had recorded what Grandpa said, but I only heard from Joe what went on in those rooms that day. Joe also received a blessing from his father before his father died.

My father gave unto me a father's blessing on September 15, 1950. It was not recorded and written at the time but a short time after the blessing was given I endeavored in my prayer to recall what was said in my father's blessing so I could leave it for my posterity. I should like to record now that which I have written relating to my father's blessing to me.

On Sept. 15, 1950, I visited my father, Carl Alois Nemelka, who then was residing in the Constitution Building about 50 South Main Street, Salt Lake City,

Utah. During this visit he stated that he had a strong desire to give me a father's blessing. We had both been fasting and were still fasting and he requested that we kneel in prayer and invoke the blessing of the Holy Spirit in this sacred hour. As mouth in this prayer, I humbly beseeched the Lord to bless and inspire my good father with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost that I would be blessed and admonished by that Spirit. Father placed his hands upon my head and by the power of the Holy Priesthood told me that I was a child of faith, an answer to many hours of prayer, many days of fasting and the result of great faith by a husband and his wife for a child. He also said "because of your faithfulness you have been a great comfort to me and your mother." I was admonished to be an example to my brothers and sisters. He blessed me that I might have the gift of great patience with them and an abundance of love for my fellow man. He also blessed Gayle, my wife, for her willingness to bear children and create bodies for the sons of God. I was admonished to give righteous counsel to my wife and family and was told that some of my children would be hard to rear but others would be easy to guide through life. I was told that I was a loyal spirit in the spirit world prior to my birth on the earth and that I had been sent from above to carry on the great genealogical work of my father and he conferred upon me this responsibility to see that this great work continues for our kindred dead. In conclusion he said, "I bless you that you shall be true and faithful to the end. I seal these blessings upon you as a father in the House of Israel and in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen."

I shall now record the two Patriarchal Blessings that were given to me with an explanation relative to

these blessings. On September 4, 1914, my parents took me to Patriarch Horn in the Farmers Ward also called the Wilford Ward, later called the McKinley Ward. I was five years of age when this blessing was given and the only thing that I can recall is the fruit orchard that was there at his home and that I helped myself to peaches and plums from his orchard. So now may I record this blessing given when I was five years of age.

Wilford Ward, September 4, 1914. A blessing given by Patriarch Richard S. Horn on the head of Joseph Nephi Nemelka, born the second of August, 1909.

“Brother Nemelka, I give unto you today, this Patriarchal blessing that it may be a comfort and a source of strength to thee throughout all thy life. Thou are blessed to lead a very active life among the children of men. Thy mission is a very important one. Much will be required of thy hands. Thou wilt receive ordination as a deacon, of a teacher, and of a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. When thou shalt reach manhood’s years, thou wilt be ordained an Elder receiving the higher priesthood. Then thou wilt be sent into the world to carry the gospel light to those who sit in darkness. Thou wilt become an able teacher and a preacher of power, and thy teachings and the faithful testimonies thou wilt bear will bring many to a knowledge of the truth and the result of thy mission will be very satisfactory to thee. A beautiful daughter of Zion will be given to thee for time and eternity and will bare thee many children. Thou will be prospered temporally and will be an able provider for thy loved ones and will be greatly loved by them. Thou wilt receive much favor from thy brethren and stand in high places among them. Thy life will be an active

useful one and much good will be placed to thy credit in the records of the church. I seal thee up unto the day of redemption and promise thee all of the blessings to which thou are entitled as a descendant of Ephraim, elected to come forth with the just of the promised children through thy faithfulness, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.”

My second Patriarchal blessing was given dated June 3, 1934. I would like to relate the circumstances relating to this blessing. Brother Ernest L. Snyder and I had been called to the Bishopric. I as First Counselor and Brother Snyder as Second Counselor to William Leary, Bishop, of the Poplar Grove Ward of the Pioneer Stake in February of 1934. I had been suggesting to Brother Snyder, who had never received a Patriarchal Blessing, that he go to the Patriarch and receive his blessing. Finally, he promised to go if I would go with him and so we visited the home of Patriarch Elijah Norman Freeman on Indiana Avenue. Patriarch Freeman gave Brother Snyder his blessing and, inasmuch as he had no one to record it, he requested that I take down his blessing in long-hand which was later, of course, typewritten and a copy given to Brother Snyder after it was recorded in the Patriarch's book. When he had finished with Brother Snyder's blessing, he said to me, “Brother Nemelka, how about your blessing?”

“Oh,” I said, “Patriarch, I received mine when I was five years of age.”

He said, “Brother Nemelka, I feel impressed that I should give you another patriarchal blessing.” Now I had some personal problems that I wanted answered. One was that in my first patriarchal blessing the Lord said my mission would be satisfactory to me. I felt

somewhat frustrated because I had performed only one baptism, during my mission. I felt that I wanted an answer to this, and as the Patriarch laid his hands upon my head I said a silent prayer to Heavenly Father that I might receive an answer to this question and also another one which bothered me as I had made plans of possibly entering into the diplomatic service as a Junior Vice-Counsel with Joseph Sandborn, a grandson of Brigham Young, who had had some very opportune appointments with Senator Taylor from the State of Utah. I did not know whether to go into the service, diplomatic service, or what to do and so I included this in my prayer to Heavenly Father and in the Patriarchal Blessing given by Patriarch Freeman I received my answers to these two questions and also other promises which were a continuation of the first Patriarchal Blessing given when I was five years of age. So may I record this blessing from Patriarch Freeman.

Salt Lake City, Utah, June 3, 1934

A Patriarchal Blessing given upon the head of Joseph Nephi Nemelka, son of Carl Alois Nemelka and Helene Elizabeth Lucas Nemelka, born the second of August 1909, at Salt Lake City, Utah, given by Patriarch Elijah Norman Freeman.

“Dear Brother Nemelka, in the name of Jesus Christ, I place my hands upon your head and give unto you a patriarchal blessing. I say you are of the House of Israel through the loins of Ephraim. I bless you that you may have comfort and joy in the labors that are placed upon you to perform. I say unto you that the Lord accepts your offering as a missionary in the world. I bless you that you may go in that straight and

narrow path that leads to eternal life. I say unto you that you are entitled to receive revelations from God, our Eternal Father. I bless you that you may be prospered in your labors and that you may be qualified in every way for that which is required of you in the Church of God. I bless you that your faith may increase in the promises that have been made unto you by the servants of the Lord. I bless you that you may be quick to discern between good and evil and I say unto you inasmuch as you are faithful, the Lord will reveal unto you what course you shall pursue through life. I bless you with the spirit of discernment that when people come before you, you will know their thoughts, whether they be good or evil, and by this gift you will be able to shun the smears of the wicked. I bless you that you may be able to magnify the responsibilities that are placed upon you and you shall have dreams and visions that will open the way for you that you will fill the days of your life in righteousness. And every good gift you desire in righteousness, you shall receive. I bless you that you may have peace of mind and inasmuch as you are faithful God will assist you to overcome every obstacle in your way and you will have inspiration to know how to act in all the days of your life. I say the Lord has a great work for you to perform and it will be made known unto you by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, and when the time comes that these things will be revealed, you will be eager to fulfill the mission that will come to you. If the spirit shall manifest unto you that you are to prophesy, you will prophesy in the name of the Lord. Dear Brother, I bless you with the blessings of life and health and strength and seal you to come forth in the

morning of the first resurrection, crowned with glory, immortality, and eternal life. Amen.”

Many years after receiving this blessing, Joe attended a German Conference one Sunday and finally received a confirmation of the assurances given to him by the Lord through the patriarch. I don't know if he had talked there at that meeting, offered a prayer, or what, but after the meeting a German brother walked up to Joe, introduced himself, and told Joe that he had attended a funeral in Germany where Joe had given a speech during his mission. The funeral was for a man named Richard Kretchmar, the same brother who had given Joe's mother the blessing that led to Joe's birth. Joe had visited Brother Kretchmar two days before his death and was later asked to speak at his funeral. This German brother was so impressed with what Joe had said at that funeral that he went home, investigated the church, and was later baptized and joined the church together with his entire family. Joe's mission hadn't been as fruitless as he had supposed, and, needless to say, on that Sabbath day, Joe was full of gratitude and comfort that he had been successful in reaching some people's lives while on his mission and that his mission had truly been accepted by the Lord.

