

COMPARING EARLY ACCOUNTS OF THE FIRST VISION — CHART BY RICHARD P. HOWARD

	JSJ's Age	JSJ's Motivation	Location	Envelope	Struggle with Demonic Powers	Mind Taken Away	Pillar of Light	Personages	JSJ's Sins Forgiven	Denominations	Gospel Fulness	Theophany (Other Instructions)	JSJ's Feelings	Persecution
1831-32 <i>Kirtland Letter Book by JSJ</i>	16	Welfare of my soul, mind distressed, mourn for sins, cry for mercy, existing denominations fell short	In the wilderness	(spiritual captivity)	—	—	Pillar of light above the brightness of the sun rested upon me and I was filled with the Spirit.	(1) Saw the Lord and he spake unto me	Thy sins forgiven thee	None doeth good no not one	—	Go thy way; walk in my commandments; mine anger is kindling.	My soul filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy	I could find none who would believe the heavenly vision; and my father's family have suffered many persecutions.
1834-35 <i>OC/JSJ Letter to WW Phelps*</i>	15, initially, then erroneously refers to JSJ as 17 in 1823 when it should be 18	Had been aroused by Rev. Lane; perplexed over which to join	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9 Nov. 1835 <i>JSJ Private Journal</i>	14	Didn't know who was right, considered of 1st importance to be right	A silent grove	—	Kneeled down a 3rd time; mouth opened, tongue loosed in mighty prayer	—	Pillar of fire appeared above my head, filled with unspeakable joy (very detailed)	(1) A personage appeared	Thy sins are forgiven thee.	—	—	He testified that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.	Leaving his mind in a state of calmness and peace indescribable	—
1840 <i>Orson Pratt "An Interesting Account"†</i>	14 or 15 (about)	For his soul's salvation; to prepare for a future state of existence	A secret place in a Grove a short distance from his house	Severely tempted by the power of darkness	Sought deliverance until darkness gave way, enabled to pray in spirit	A peculiar sensation throughout his whole system; his mind caught away from the natural objects which surrounded him.	A bright and glorious light in the heavens above, rested upon the earth	(2) Two glorious personages	He was informed that his sins were forgiven.	All religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines.	—	—	—	—
1842 <i>Wentworth Letter by JSJ‡</i>	14 (about)	Prepare for the future; God could not be the author of confusion	A secret place in a Grove	—	—	Mind taken away from the objects with which he was surrounded.	A brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon day	(2) Two glorious personages	—	All religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines.	Received a promise that the fulness of the Gospel at some future time be made known	—	—	—
1842 <i>JSJ's "History" in the Times & Seasons**</i>	Gives only an approximation "...early spring of 1820."	Mind greatly excited; power of the scripture	Retired to the woods	Power bound his tongue; doomed to destruction; a power never felt before	Exerting all my powers to deliver out of the power which seized me	—	A pillar of light above the brightness of the sun which descended upon me.	(2) Two personages	—	All creeds were an abomination in his sight.	Received a promise that the fulness of the Gospel at some future time be made known	And many other things that I cannot write at this time.	When I came to myself again I found myself lying on my back, looking up into the heavens.	(expanded #1's comment) "persecuting me, reviling me and speaking all manner of evil against me."

CHART 2.1 — SIX ACCOUNTS OF JOSEPH SMITH JR.'S FIRST VISION COMPARED. This chart illustrates details from six early accounts of the First Vision. See Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Studies I*, "An Analysis of Six Contemporary Accounts Touching Joseph Smith's First Vision," pp. 95-117.

**Messenger & Advocate*, Vol. 1, #3, Dec. 1834:42-43. †Orson Pratt, "An interesting account of several remarkable visions and of the late discovery of Ancient American Records," Edinburg, Scotland. ‡*Times & Seasons*, Vol. 3, #9, [March 15, 1842]:706-07. **"History," *Times & Seasons*, Vol. 3, #10, [March-April, 1842]:726, 748, 771.