

Doctrine and Covenants 106-112

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General Introduction

The revelations in this lesson cover nearly three years, a time full of dramatic changes in Joseph Smith's life and in the Church.

After the disbanding of the Camp of Israel (Zion's Camp) in July 1834, Joseph Smith returned to Kirtland, Ohio, arriving in August 1834. After dealing with Sylvester Smith's accusations of Joseph acting unbecoming a prophet during the Camp of Israel, the Prophet focused on stone cutting for the Kirtland House of the Lord. This continued until he departed with Hyrum on a mission to Michigan in October 1834.

At the end of November 1834, Joseph received a revelation calling Warren Cowdery to a leadership position in his area of New York (D&C 106).

About this time, the printing shop was finished in Kirtland, with the printing business upstairs and room downstairs for the school of the elders, which began to meet there in late 1834. It was during these meetings that the Lectures on Faith were introduced, authored by Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith, and perhaps others, including Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, and Parley P. Pratt.¹ Joseph, Sidney, Oliver, and Frederick were all charged with preparing both these items of doctrine (the Lectures) and the revelations ('covenants') for publication, which they did in 1835, under the new name of Doctrine and Covenants. This effort also occupied much of Joseph Smith's time in the winter and spring of 1834-1835.²

As part of that effort, Joseph Smith took a revelation received in 1831 and added new information he had since learned about the priesthood, creating D&C 107. This revelation reflected changes in Church leadership, including the name of the presidency of the high priesthood formalizing as the First Presidency (relative to other presidencies) and the calling of the Twelve Apostles in February 1835, a responsibility initially given to Oliver and David Whitmer in D&C 18:37-39, with Martin Harris added in February 1835 to include all three of the Book of Mormon witnesses.³ On 28 February 1835, the first of the Seventy were called, organizing that quorum as well.⁴

Before leaving for the Camp of Israel journey to Missouri and back, on 3 May 1834, it had been decided to change the name of the Church from "The Church of Christ" to "The Church of the Latter Day Saints." There was at least one other church using the name "Church of Christ," the group led by Alexander Campbell. Oliver Cowdery explained that they wanted to have a unique name for the Church, and wanted to represent the followers of Christ—Saints, in the New Testament—in the last days. This was reflected in minutes, letters, newspaper accounts, and the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants printed in 1835, where the new name was used. Later, in 1838, it was changed by revelation to "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" (D&C 115:4).⁵

In the first half of 1835, Joseph Smith spent much of his time training the newly called apostles and seventies, and continuing work on the House of the Lord. In July 1835, a man named Michael Chandler came to Kirtland with Egyptian mummies and papyri that he had obtained several weeks earlier in New York. Joseph looked at the papyri and concluded that the Church should purchase them from Chandler, so various members pitched in and made that happen. Much of the Prophet's time that summer and fall were spent with the papyri, eventually producing the Book of Abraham (which was not published until 1842, and then not in full).

In late 1835 and early 1836, several brethren hired a Hebrew teacher, Joshua Sexius (pronounced sesh'-ee-us), from New York, and sat through Hebrew lessons with him through the winter. On 21 January 1836, while in the uncompleted temple

¹ See Larry E. Dahl, "Authorship and History of the Lectures on Faith," in Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *The Lecture on Faith in Historical Perspective* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990).

² *JSP*, D4:234.

³ *JSP*, D4:219-234.

⁴ *JSP*, D4:255-279.

⁵ *JSP*, D4:42-44. In 1876, in conjunction with a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the punctuation and capitalization of the last part was changed to "Latter-day Saints."

with the First Presidency, the Prophet had a vision of the celestial kingdom (D&C 137, which chronologically falls between Sections 108 and 109). Preliminary ordinances, such as washings and anointings, were performed in the unfinished temple in early 1836, which included visions seen by several.

Work on the temple came to an end in March 1836. Joseph Smith and others in the First Presidency and their clerks authored a dedicatory prayer, which the prophet first offered on 27 March 1836 (D&C 109). The temple was a magnificent building, made with the very best efforts of Church members and at great expense. It was used for public meetings, administrative meetings, ordinances, and schools. It was just a week after the dedication, at the close of a public meeting in which the First Presidency had blessed the sacrament and the Twelve had passed it, that Joseph and Oliver Cowdery closed the curtain around the Melchizedek priesthood pulpits and offered prayer, followed by the appearance of Jesus Christ, Moses, Elias, and Elijah (D&C 110).

With the construction of the temple and other activities, the Church continued to struggle with debts. Prayers and pleadings with the Lord were a regular part of their lives, as were efforts to determine how to bring in more money and pay the debts. The idea of forming a bank began to emerge in the summer of 1836 after a trip to Salem, Massachusetts to search for “treasure” (D&C 111), and by the fall of that year, they had procured plates to print notes and started the process of getting a charter from the state legislature. Ultimately the charter was not granted, so they created an “Anti-Banking” Safety Society that issued notes with gold and silver (“specie”) and land as their backing. For a variety of reasons, they prospered at first but after only a few months, the Safety Society failed and closed its doors. The Prophet’s involvement in the enterprise caused many to lose their testimonies of his calling, and Kirtland experienced a great apostasy where many leaders and some members left the Church.

Some of the Twelve and others left for a mission to England in the summer of 1837. Thomas Marsh, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, wondered about his own personal mission, and the Prophet received a revelation in his behalf on 23 July 1837 (D&C 112).

Summary Chronology

- **Tue, 25 Nov 1834** – D&C 106 was received, at Kirtland, Ohio.
- **Sat-Sun, 14-15 Feb 1835** – The Twelve Apostles (“traveling high councilors”) were called and ordained by the three witnesses and the First Presidency.
- **Sat-Sun, 28 Feb – 1 Mar 1835** – The Seventy are called and ordained.
- **About Apr 1835** – D&C 107:1-58 was received, at Kirtland, Ohio (vv. 59-100 were originally received Fri, 11 Nov 1831), at Hiram, Ohio.
- **Sat, 26 Dec 1835** – D&C 108 was received, at Kirtland, Ohio.
- **Sun, 27 Mar 1836** – D&C 109 was delivered as the prayer of dedication for the Kirtland House of the Lord, at Kirtland, Ohio.
- **Sun, 3 Apr 1836** – D&C 110 was received, at Kirtland, Ohio, in the House of the Lord.
- **Sat, 6 Aug 1836** – D&C 111 was received, at Salem, Massachusetts.
- **Sun, 23 Jul 1837** – D&C 112 was received, at Kirtland, Ohio.

D&C 106 – Warren Cowdery

Setting

Received Tuesday, 25 November 1834, at Kirtland, Ohio.

Warren Cowdery, Oliver’s older brother, lived in Freedom, New York. He joined the Church earlier in 1834 (exact date uncertain but between May and August⁶), after a Camp of Israel recruiting visit from Joseph Smith (who stayed with Cowdery) and missionary efforts by Parley P. and Orson Pratt. The missionaries had baptized forty or so people but left no one in charge. Warren aspired to that calling and wrote to his brother, Oliver, about it in October 1834. He said he just

⁶ Some authors indicate that Warren was baptized in 1831 (McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 781; Black, *Who’s Who*, 77). However, a letter from Oliver Cowdery written to Warren in late April 1834 shows he had not yet been baptized (see *JSP*, D4:180n309).

wanted to be “useful in the vineyard of the Lord.” The revelation came shortly after Oliver received the letter. Warren appears to have come to Kirtland in December for his ordination as high priest, then returned to Freedom.⁷

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in RB2 (about 25 Nov 1834), 116. It was first published as Section 99 in 1835, then as Section 100 in 1844.

Commentary

1 ***Warren A. Cowdery should be appointed and ordained.*** Warren Cowdery was born in October 1788, making him forty-six years old at the time of this revelation. He was eighteen years older than Oliver, who was twenty-eight at this time. Warren was a farmer and a physician and respected in his community.⁸

1 ***Freedom and the regions round about.*** The largest group of Saints in the area appear to have been in Freedom, with smaller branches in nearby towns and counties. Cowdery was called to work with them all (also v. 2).

3 ***devote his whole time.*** The call was to full-time ministry, at least in the short-term. Some interpret this verse that he would receive support from the Church, like a general authority. But Harper sees it as “the Lord promises Warren a living if he obeys the revelation,” which could refer to something from the Church or success in his own labors.

3 ***the laborer is worthy of his hire.*** The phrase is from Luke 10:7 but was also used by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18, and previously in the Doctrine and Covenants in 31:5 and 84:79.

4 ***the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*** The message that Cowdery was to preach is outlined in the next few verses, which also explains the ‘why’ behind his call.

5 ***be the children of light.*** Jesus was quoted in both Luke 16:8 and John 12:36 using this phrase to refer to his followers. Paul also used the phrase twice in the same way (Ephesians 5:8 and 1 Thessalonians 5:5). Since Jesus is the light of the world,⁹ those who enter into covenants with him are the children of that light (D&C 103:9).

6 ***joy in heaven when my servant Warren bowed to my scepter.*** The image of a heavenly king from the house of Israel goes back to Moses (Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:17). Warren’s humble submission to the covenant of baptism was symbolically like bowing to the Lord’s scepter.

6 ***separated himself from the crafts of men.*** Before his baptism, Cowdery was likely very focused on his career. Now he was willing to lay aside the things of the world and act in the Lord’s will and interests.

7 ***the vanity of his heart.*** The Lord knew Warren and warned him about this sin that would be trouble for him. Still, he was promised mercy if he would stay humble.

8 ***if he continue to be a faithful witness.*** Many promises from God are conditional on our faithfulness and obedience.

Results

Warren Cowdery came to Ohio and was ordained a high priest and set apart to lead the Church in the Freedom, New York area and surrounding districts. He held conferences in early 1835 and preached in the area, helping the Church grow there.

However, the Lord’s warning of vanity was appropriate. Warren had sought the leadership position that the Lord gave him, perhaps out of vanity as much as out of desire to serve. That fault continued as he boasted in his position and wrote a letter correcting the Twelve. He was chastised, humbled, and repented, and went on to serve in Kirtland in many ways, including as a member of the high council and a scribe to Joseph Smith. In 1838, when his brother, Oliver, was excommunicated, Warren’s pride pulled him away as well. Though he was not excommunicated, he never returned to the Church and died in Kirtland in 1851.¹⁰

⁷ Revelation, 25 November 1834 [D&C 106], in *JSP*, D4:180-181.

⁸ Black, *Who’s Who*, 77-78.

⁹ John 8:12; 9:5; Mosiah 16:9; Alma 38:9; 3 Nephi 9:18; 11:11; D&C 10:70; 11:28; 12:9; 34:2; 39:2; 45:7; 93:9.

¹⁰ Black, *Who’s Who*, 78-79; Harper, *Making Sense*, 394; [Cowdery, Warren A.](#), on The Joseph Smith Papers website.

D&C 107 – On Priesthood

Date and Location

Setting

Verses 1-58 were received between 1 Mar and 4 May 1835, at Kirtland, Ohio. Verses 59-100 were substantially received on Friday, 11 November 1831.

In early 1835, the temple was under construction but the building behind it was just completed. This two story building was both Church printing office upstairs and Church headquarters downstairs, which functioned as both offices for Church leadership and a school and meeting room. On Saturday, 14 February 1835, a meeting of many Church leaders was called, during which Joseph Smith directed Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon—to fulfill the revelation given them in June 1829 (D&C 18) to select twelve men as apostles. Joseph Smith also weighed in on the selection process.¹¹ At the meeting were all the members who were in Kirtland and who had participated in the Camp of Israel march to Missouri and back. Joseph explained, “God had not designed all this [the Camp of Israel experience] for nothing, but he had it in remembrance yet, and those who went to Zion, with a determination to lay down their lives, if necessary, it was the will of God, that they should be ordained to the ministry and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time.” The names of fifty-two men who were in the Camp of Israel were recorded, and after a song and a prayer, they dismissed for an hour.

When everyone returned, the three witnesses prayed, then were blessed by the First Presidency, and announced the Twelve Apostles: Lyman Johnson, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, David W. Patten, Luke Johnson, William E. McLellin, John F. Boynton, Orson Pratt, William Smith, Thomas B. Marsh, and Parley P. Pratt. Each of the men present were ordained by the three witnesses, then confirmed in that ordination by the Presidency. More were ordained the following day, and other apostles were ordained when they returned to Kirtland in subsequent days.¹²

On 28 Feb and 1 Mar 1835, other men from the Camp of Israel were called as Seventies, and ordained and blessed as such.¹³

In March 1835, it was decided that the Twelve should go to the eastern United States to hold conferences, organize branches, and seek donations to help the Church build the House of the Lord and print the revelations. They departed on 4 May 1835. Before they left, they prayed and sought guidance for their mission, and the Lord gave them a revelation (vv. 1-58) through Joseph Smith. While preparing the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the Prophet combined this with a November 1831 revelation on priesthood and added some additional verses about bishops and patriarchs to make it a complete revelation on Church government.¹⁴

Documents and Publication

No manuscript copies exist for the 1835 section of this revelation. The 1831 section is first found in RB1 (between 11 and 20 Nov 1831), 122-123, with other copies in NKW (about Aug 1834) and RB2 (about Aug 1834), 84-86. The oldest copy of the complete revelation is the first publication, Section 3 in 1835, then Section 3 in 1844.

Outline

- Two priesthoods (1-6)
- Melchizedek priesthood officiates (7-12)

¹¹ It's not clear if the selection process had happened prior to the 14 Feb conference or was quickly done during a recess between sessions.

¹² Minutes, Discourse, and Blessings, 14-15 February 1835, in *JSP*, D4:219-234; Minutes and Blessings, 21 February 1835, in *JSP*, D4:237-254.

¹³ Minutes and Blessings, 28 February-1 March 1835, in *JSP*, D4:255-264; Minutes, Discourse, and Blessings, 1 March 1835, in *JSP*, D4:264-279.

¹⁴ Instruction on Priesthood, between circa 1 March and circa 4 May 1835 [D&C 107], in *JSP*, D4:308-321; Harper, *Making Sense*, 395-396.

- Aaronic priesthood administers outwardly (13-17)
- Priesthood keys (18-20)
- Presiding quorums work in unity (21-39)
- Priesthood from Adam to Noah (40-52)
- Adam-ondi-Ahman (53-57)
- The Twelve organize the Church (58-67)
- Bishops are common judges (68-76)
- Highest council (77-84)
- Quorum leadership (85-100)

Two priesthoods (1-6)

1 ***There are, in the church, two priesthoods.*** Though the contents of the first fifty-eight verses were revealed to Joseph Smith, he recorded them as instruction. We don't hear the direct voice of the Lord until v. 60, in the 1831 revelation that was attached to the end of this one.

1 ***Melchizedek and Aaronic.*** The name Melchizedek had been applied to the priesthood previously,¹⁵ and the distinction between two priesthoods had been discussed in D&C 84:18-32. This is the first time the two priesthoods are specifically called out by the two names Melchizedek and Aaronic.

2 ***Melchizedek was such a great high priest.*** See Genesis 14 in the Joseph Smith Translation. Alma 13:19 declares about Melchizedek, "there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater." The name "Melchizedek" means 'my king is righteousness,' no doubt honoring Jehovah as that king.

3 ***Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God.*** See Alma 13:1-11.

4 ***to avoid the too frequent repletion of his name.*** They had such reverence for even the name "the Son of God" that they determined to rename the priesthood after this exemplary high priest instead of repeating Son of God.

5 ***appendages to this priesthood.*** No office or calling is greater than the priesthood. Even president of the Church is an 'appendage' to the greater authority of the Melchizedek priesthood overall.

6 ***two divisions or grand heads.*** With the Melchizedek priesthood is a division of labor that splits broadly into the Melchizedek priesthood and the Aaronic priesthood. That division of labor is explained in vv. 7-17.

Melchizedek priesthood officiates (7-12)

7 ***The office of an elder.*** "Elder" was a common title used in many churches, since it was mentioned in the Bible. In some cases in the Old Testament, such as Number 11:30 or 22:4, it refers to a group of men who were the heads of the community, because of their age and (implied) wisdom. Jesus used it this way as well, associating the term with leadership in the community (for example, Matthew 16:21). But by the time of Paul's missionary journeys, elder was a priesthood office to which someone was ordained (Acts 14:23).

8 ***the right of presidency.*** Or, keys and presiding authority. Presidents hold keys to 'administer spiritual things' and pre-side over "all the offices in the church" under their stewardship (vv. 9-12).

9 ***The Presidency of the High Priesthood.*** Or, the First Presidency, a phrase that came into common use in June 1835, shortly after this revelation.¹⁶ All offices fall under the authority of this presidency.

10 ***High priests . . . have a right to officiate in their own standing.*** Under the direction of the presidency (ultimately the First Presidency but more directly the presidency of the high priesthood in each stake), high priests administer "spiritual things" and can fill any of the lower offices—elder, priest, teacher, deacon, or member.

¹⁵ The Book of Mormon discusses a "high priesthood according to the holy order of God" associated with Melchizedek (Alma 13:14-18). Perhaps more significantly, in the translation of the Bible, Joseph Smith added significant text on Melchizedek in Genesis 14 and modified the content in Hebrew 5:7; 7:3, 20-21, all pointing to the priesthood power exhibited by Melchizedek. This tied to references to Melchizedek in D&C 76:56-57 and D&C 84:14.

¹⁶ JSP, D4:313n487.

11 ***An elder has a right to officiate in his stead.*** If no high priest is available, an elder would preside. This does not mean that an elder can perform all the tasks of a high priest independently but rather that he can “officiate” under the direction of a high priest who is “not present.” For example, I had the rare opportunity to be called to a solemn assembly in the Salt Lake temple when I was a Seventy; all bishopric, high priest group leadership, and elders presidency members were requested to be there as well. It happened to fall in the middle of our sacrament meeting. So following direction from the stake president, the bishop put one of the elders from the ward in charge of sacrament meeting. That did not authorize him to extend callings, do interviews, count tithing, or other bishopric functions, but it did authorize him to conduct that meeting in the absence of all other ward leadership.

Aaronic priesthood administers outwardly (13-17)

13 ***the Priesthood of Aaron.*** The “second priesthood” is named after Aaron because it was conferred upon him and his descendants.

14 ***power in administering outward ordinances.*** These are listed in more detail in v. 20. See also D&C 84:26-27.

15 ***The bishopric is the presidency of this priesthood.*** Bishops in the 1830s were almost solely focused on temporal issues and so presided over the members of the Aaronic priesthood, which were other adult men tasked with helping with local and often temporal needs. Today a bishop still presides over the Aaronic priesthood quorums and is the president of the priests quorum, but his scope as the presiding high priest in the ward is broader in terms of the spiritual needs of the ward.

16 ***except he be a literal descendant of Aaron.*** This was new information in 1835; D&C 68:15-20, first given in November 1831, includes this same language now but did not until it was edited after this was recorded and before the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants was published.

17 ***a high priest . . . may officiate in the office of bishop.*** See D&C 68:19. Bishops are always high priests today in local wards.

Priesthood keys (18-20)

18 ***hold all the keys.*** This does not mean that every Melchizedek priesthood holder holds all the keys (see v. 8), but that the keys only reside in that priesthood, not the lesser or Aaronic.

18 ***all the spiritual blessings.*** Examples of spiritual blessings are listed in v. 19—receive mysteries and revelations and commune with the Church of the Firstborn, Christ, and the Father. These blessings are administered through the priesthood but are available to all who seek them, not just presidencies but all men and women who make covenants through priesthood keys.

20 ***power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood.*** Differing from the spiritual blessings of the Melchizedek priesthood listed in v. 19, examples of the role of the Aaronic priesthood is the ministering of angels (contrast with the Father and the Son in v. 19), and “outward ordinances,” specifically baptism.

Presiding quorums work in unity (21-39)

21 ***Of necessity there are presidents.*** To have order, there must be someone called to preside and direct the larger body of the priesthood.

22 ***three Presiding High Priests.*** This is the First Presidency or “the Presidency of the Church”; see v. 9.

22 ***chosen by the body.*** Originally, the presidency of the high priesthood was sustained by the high priest quorum. With the calling of the Quorum of the Twelve in February 1835, they began to be a presiding quorum “equal in authority” with the First Presidency (v. 24), and thus the ones to select and ordain the members of the First Presidency. This is the pattern followed after the death of Joseph Smith and all subsequent presidents.

22 ***upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church.*** While true of all leaders called to preside, the First Presidency is especially upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayers of all members.

23 ***twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles.*** Having just been called, these twelve men were especially interested in clarifying their calling (see Setting above). Here they are distinguished from the sitting high councilors in Kirtland and Missouri as “traveling councilors,” meaning their responsibility is broad and covers the whole Church

where there is no stake high council. This responsibility will expand with time and soon the Twelve will oversee all stakes and districts in the Church.

23 *special witnesses of the name of Christ.* The Twelve are to declare the name of Christ throughout the world and to see that all things are done in his name—ordinances, teaching, etc. While all seek the testimony of Christ, their role as “special witnesses” is one of seeing that all things are done in order and testify of Christ.¹⁷

24 *a quorum, equal in authority and power.* Combined, the Twelve hold the same keys as the First Presidency, though they do not exercise all those keys except under the direction of the First Presidency. But to reorganize the First Presidency upon the death of the president, the Twelve by necessity must hold the same authority and power.

25 *The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel.* The Seventy work under the direction of the Twelve to preach throughout the world and to be “especial witnesses unto the Gentiles.” The difference in wording with “special witnesses” (v. 23) and “especial witnesses” (here) is not significant, as it is just two versions of the same word. In other words, the Seventy represent the Twelve and have the same responsibilities, when acting under their direction. They extend the authority of the Twelve to a larger group of men who can better cover the earth.

The expansion of the quorums of the Seventy as described in this revelation did not happen for many years. In Nauvoo, there were about three dozen quorums of Seventy, and by 1904, one hundred forty-six, all under the direction of the Twelve. But with the establishment of stakes, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve put the Seventies under the direction of stake presidents in the 1930s. In October 1976, President Spencer W. Kimball indicated that the time had come to reconstitute the quorums of the Seventy. Accordingly, men who had the calling of “Assistants to the Twelve” were moved into the First Quorum of the Seventy. More men were called to be part of that quorum, and the seven presidents functioned as leaders of the group, with the longest serving president as the presiding president. In 1984, President Gordon B. Hinckley (counselor in the First Presidency) announced limited term callings (three to five years) were instituted for members of the Seventy. In October 1986, President Benson announced the discontinuation of Seventies quorums in stakes, and all brethren in those quorums were either put into elders quorums or ordained high priests. Finally, in April 1989, additional quorums of the Seventy were organized, making the First Quorum a lifetime call (though with emeritus status typical) and other quorums with limited time callings, typically five years. Men who were called “Regional Representatives” became “Area Authorities” who, like stake presidents and bishops, maintained their jobs and served for a limited time. In April 1997, President Hinckley changed them to “Area Authority Seventies” and put them in the third, fourth, and fifth quorums of the Seventy.¹⁸

26 *they form a quorum, equal in authority.* The combined quorum of the Seventy have an authority equal to that of the Twelve when it comes to succession, under whose direction they serve (v. 24). In other words, if the entire First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve were somehow to all die at once, the Seventy could reconstitute those higher quorums.

27 *every decision made . . . must be by the unanimous voice of the same.* ‘Majority rules’ is not the pattern of these three quorums; decisions are to be made only when there is unanimity. Sometimes it will take several discussions and meetings to come to that unanimity, but nothing is decided until it is achieved. There is great wisdom in this approach, as a person with a strong agenda cannot force his will upon the others. It forces discussion, even debate, and a collective decision that brings to bear all the experiences and wisdom of the group, and of course, revelation.¹⁹

28 *A majority may form a quorum when circumstances render it impossible to be otherwise.* Travel and other circumstances might make it impossible for all members to be present when a decision is made, so a majority situation is a possibility under such special circumstances. Today, with modern communications and travel, this is likely rarely invoked, except perhaps in cases of poor health.

29 *not entitled to the same blessings.* Decisions not made under the unanimous direction would not be blessed by the Lord, as this is the priesthood pattern from the beginning.

30 *made in all righteousness.* The qualifications for the decision-making process of these quorums are laid out in this verse, none of which involve arm-twisting, strong persuasion, or other tactics that are used in politics and business. The reason for this requirement is clear: they will be blessed with “the knowledge of the Lord” (v. 31).

¹⁷ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 792; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:19-20.

¹⁸ Elder L. Aldin Porter, “[A History of the Latter-day Seventy](#),” *Ensign*, August 2000.

¹⁹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:21-22.

32 *it may be brought before a general assembly*. A process is established to have a larger discussion with all three presiding quorums, should the need arise for a second consideration of the decision of any quorum.

33 *The Twelve are a Traveling Presiding High Council*. In contrast to the local stake high councils, the Twelve both travel (meaning they cover the entire world in their authority) and preside everywhere they go.

34 *building up the church and regulating all the affairs*. The Seventy have the same responsibilities as the Twelve but act fully under their direction, not independently.

35 *to open the door*. The Twelve are the ones with keys and responsibility to make it possible to proclaim the gospel throughout the world. Accordingly, they work with leaders in various countries to secure permission for the Church to function in their lands, dedicate lands for the preaching of the gospel, and oversee the organization of units in those lands.

36 *The standing high councils . . . form a quorum equal in authority*. In 1835, there were only two “standing high councils,” one in Kirtland under the direction of the First Presidency and one in Missouri, under the direction of president David Whitmer. The revelation indicates that these two councils combined formed a quorum equal in authority to the Twelve, which might sound confusing today when we have thousands of high councils. The key is in v. 37: “at the stakes of Zion.” In other words, the stake high councilors function in specific assignments in their stake, but their authority does not extend beyond their stake. Stake high councils do not hold priesthood keys and authority equal to the Quorum of the Twelve or the Seventy, but function in a similar way within their geographical stewardship.

37 *the councils of the Twelve at the stakes of Zion*. The capitalization of “the Twelve” in this verse would seem to refer to the Quorum of the Twelve, but the context (“councils [plural] of the twelve”) shows that it refers to local high councils. In other words, the high council in Zion (not a stake) was equal to the high council in Kirtland (a stake).

38 *the traveling high council to call upon the Seventy*. Because the Seventy can fully represent the Twelve, the latter can call upon the Seventy to help fill needs to preach and administer throughout the world, which they do every week today.

39 *ordain evangelical ministers*. Joseph Smith later taught that an evangelist is a patriarch.²⁰ The office of Patriarch was just starting to be defined in the 1830s. Today, there is a patriarch called in each stake to give blessings to members.

Priesthood from Adam to Noah (40-52)

40 *handed down from father to son*. These verses take us on an excursion into the patriarchal authority of the priesthood.

41 *instituted in the days of Adam*. In the history of the earth, holders of the priesthood seem to be a minority, unlike today when all worthy men can be ordained.

42 *Seth, who was ordained by Adam*. Genesis and the book of Moses both give additional details about these patriarchs’ lives but nothing about priesthood ordinations, making these verses unique, with specific ages and ordination events and even words recorded.

43 *like unto his father in all things*. We learn here that Seth was nearly a twin to his father Adam in appearance, and people could only tell them apart “by his age.”

44 *Enos was ordained . . . by the hand of Adam*. While Adam was alive, he continued to be the one to ordain his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc.

46 *four hundred and ninety-six years and seven days old*. The precision is fascinating—right down to the day for Mahalaleel’s ordination.

48 *Enoch*. Enoch’s case is unique. Not only was he very young (twenty-five) when he was ordained by Adam, but then at age sixty-five, Adam gave him an additional blessing, the purpose of which is not given, except that it is immediately followed by Enoch’s experience of walking with God (v. 49).

51 *Lamech . . . was ordained under the hand of Seth*. Lamech is the first person listed as being ordained by someone other than Adam. Presumably, Adam had died at this point, and so his son Seth was the presiding patriarch, and ordained Lamech.

52 *Noah was ten years old when he was ordained under the hand of Methuselah*. Not only was Noah remarkably young, but he was ordained by Enoch’s son, jumping down several generations from Seth who ordained Noah’s father.

²⁰ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 796.

The reason was probably because all the righteous had been taken with Enoch's city. The Book of Moses indicates that Methuselah "was not taken, that the covenants of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to Enoch" (Moses 8:2).

Adam-ondi-Ahman (53-57)

53 *Three years previous to the death of Adam.* Several commentaries, relying on (unfortunately) inaccurate information in the *History of the Church*, declare that vv. 53-55 were given in a blessing to Joseph Smith, Sr., by Joseph Smith in 1833 and were quoted here. However, the reverse is true: the words were first recorded here, then quoted in the blessing the Prophet gave to his father. The correct date of the blessing was September 1835, several months after this was recorded.²¹

53 *the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman.* This is the first reference, chronologically, to this location. During the editing of revelations to prepare for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, D&C 78:15 was amended to add a reference to Adam-ondi-Ahman (see commentary for that verse). It was also the subject of a popular hymn (sung at the dedication of the Kirtland temple) written by William W. Phelps and published in the first hymnbook prepared by Emma Smith and published in 1835. Then in 1837, the exact location was revealed while Joseph Smith was scouting lands for members of the Church in Daviess county (D&C 116).²² It is interesting to note that this event happened in a valley with this name, but that doesn't require that the place given that same name in Missouri is the same place. In other words, there could be two places named Adam-ondi-Ahman, just as there are two hills named Cumorah—one where the final Nephite battle was fought and one where Moroni buried the plates of the Book of Mormon.

54 *blessed Adam, and called him Michael.* Adam and Michael were revealed to be the same person in D&C 27:11 (August 1830).

55 *a multitude of nations shall come of thee.* This is an interesting promise when you consider that Adam and Eve were the first humans on the earth, and that all nations of the earth come from them. This promise triggered a great prophesy from Adam about his posterity (v. 56).

57 *all written in the book of Enoch.* Not in the Enoch materials that Joseph Smith had already revealed through his Bible translation efforts (Moses 6-8) but in a future revelation (to be testified of in due time).

The Twelve organize the Church (58-67)

58 *the duty of the Twelve.* This is the last verse of the 1835 section. This verse transitions between the two, giving the duty of the Twelve to "set in order all the other officers of the church," referencing a previous revelation, which is the 1 November 1831 revelation on priesthood and quorums.

59 *to the church of Christ in the land of Zion.* Originally, the 1831 revelation was directed to the brethren in Missouri. The Prophet left that introduction in the 1835 edits.

60 *there must needs be presiding elders.* Compare to v. 21. Verses 61-62 continue the logic to priests, teachers, and deacons.

63 *according to the covenants and commandments.* Or, as the 1831 revelation has it, according to the "Church Articles & Covenants," meaning D&C 20.

64 *the High Priesthood, which is the greatest.* In 1831, the office of high priest was the highest authority in the Church. By the time of this revelation, there was a First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, the Seventy, Stake Presidents, High Councils, and Bishops, all of whom were high priests and oversaw, in some way, the activities of high priests.

65 *President of the High Priesthood of the Church.* This was new in 1831, and resulted in Joseph Smith being called to that position shortly after this revelation was received.

67 *administering of ordinances and blessings.* The president of the high priesthood held the keys for all ordinances. In 1831, the only ordinances performed were baptism and the "laying on of the hands" for confirmation and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

²¹ JSP, D4:316n501.

²² [Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman](#).

Bishops are common judges (68-76)

68 ***the office of a bishop is not equal to it.*** Meaning, not equal to the office of president of the high priesthood. The focus of the calling of bishop then was “all temporal things.” While the bishop still has that role today, it is expanded to include many other responsibilities not on the shoulders of the bishops of the 1830s, once the bishop also became the presiding high priest in the ward.

69 ***unless he is a literal descendant of Aaron.*** Starting here until “after the order of Melchizedek” in v. 71, this was added by Joseph Smith in 1835. See commentary on vv. 16-17 above.

72 ***to be a judge in Israel.*** See D&C 58:17, which preceded this by a few weeks. This verse expands the definition of how a bishop is a judge: when doing the business of the church and when listening to cases of transgressors brought before him and his counselors.

73 ***This is the duty of a bishop.*** This verse was added in 1835.

74 ***or in a stake of Zion, or in any branch of the church where he shall be set apart unto this ministry.*** This phrase was added in 1835. There were no stakes or even branches in 1831. At the end of the verse, “in Zion or elsewhere” was also added in 1835.

75 ***other bishops appointed.*** As early as 1831, the Lord anticipated multiple bishops being called, even before there were wards or stakes or other officers.

76 ***a legal right to the presidency.*** This verse and v. 77 were both added in 1835, clarifying that the bishop who is a literal descendant of Aaron can function without counselors. There is no evidence that this has ever happened in Church history.

76 ***where a President of the High Priesthood . . . is tried.*** This verse appears to envision that a bishop’s council would be the place where a member of the First Presidency would be tried in a disciplinary council. That was probably correct in 1831 and perhaps in 1835, but today, that would likely take place with the Quorum of the Twelve, if it ever happened.

Highest council (77-84)

77 ***agreeable to the commandment which says.*** After the insertion of vv. 76-77, the Prophet added this transition phrase to return to the November 1831 revelation.

78 ***the most difficult cases.*** Bishops heard many cases or membership councils (using today’s language). The most difficult ones should be handed over to the First Presidency. Today that would be the local president of the high priesthood, the stake president.

78 ***the bishop or judges.*** The 1831 revelation just has “the judge.”

79 ***power to call other high priests, even twelve.*** See D&C 102 for the process of calling high priests to assist in a decision.

80 ***in remembrance no more before the Lord.*** The decision of the council of the president of the high priesthood, assisted by twelve high priests is the “final decision” for spiritual things. If they determine the person before them is innocent, it will be remembered no more by the Church and by the Lord. The final phrase, “in spiritual matters,” is not in the 1831 revelation.

82 ***he shall be had in remembrance before the common council.*** If a member of the First Presidency committed sin worthy of a disciplinary council, it was to be handled by the “common council,” which apparently refers to the bishop and his counselors. In this case, however, the bishop would call “twelve counselors” from the high priest quorum to assist him. The decision of this council is final (v. 83).

Joseph Smith, Frederick G. Williams, David Whitmer, and Oliver Cowdery were all tried using this method in their lifetimes.²³

84 ***none shall be exempted from the justice and the laws.*** Every position in the church was subject to scrutiny and examination, even the president of the whole Church.

²³ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:29-30.

In the 1831 version, there was apparently a break in the revelation, because after the text in v. 84, it had “Amen,” followed by “A few more words in addition to the laws of the church,” which was followed by the material in verses 85-100.

Quorum leadership (85-100)

85 *preside over twelve deacons*. Each quorum president—deacon, teacher, priest—is given a similar charge for their quorum, “to sit in council with them, and to teach them their duty.” Deacons are in a quorum with twelve members, teachers twenty-four, and priests forty-eight. See also vv. 86-87. Much of this is a repeat from D&C 20:38-59.

87 *the president over the Priesthood of Aaron*. The bishop is the president of the Aaronic priesthood and the president of the priests’ quorum (v. 88 also, which was not in the 1831 version but was wholly added in 1835). Note that “of Aaron” is not in the 1831 version but was added in 1835.

89 *ninety-six elders*. The elders’ quorum can have up to ninety-six members, twice that of priests. Note that today wards often have more than that number on the rolls, but many are less-active or prospective elders, so they don’t count toward the number.

90 *those who do not travel into all the world*. Elders can still be called on missions, but it is not their primary responsibility, unlike the Seventy. All of verse 90 was added in 1835.

91 *preside over the whole church*. Verses 91-92 give information about the duties of the president of the Church, who is to be “like unto Moses” as “a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet” (v. 92). This clarification was probably first explained by Oliver Cowdery in a meeting of the presidency of the high priesthood on 5 December 1834, just a few weeks before this document was composed, where he said, “The office of the President is to preside over the whole Chu[r]ch; to be considered as at the head; to receive revelations for the Church; to be a Seer, Revelator and Prophet—having all the gifts of God: — taking Moses for an ensample.”²⁴

93 *the vision showing the order of the Seventy*. Verses 93-98 were not in the 1831 version but were added in 1835. The vision referred to is not recorded in Joseph Smith’s papers but was mentioned at the 14 February 1835 meeting where the Twelve Apostles were called and first set apart.²⁵

94 *the seventh president of these presidents is to preside*. The Seventy were to have seven presidents, as the First Presidency had three presidents, and also like the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, one was to be the presiding or senior president, who was the one who had been in that calling the longest.

96 *also other seventy, until seven times seventy*. The revealed plan called for up to seven quorums of seventy as “necessity requires it.”

97 *traveling ministers, unto the Gentiles first*. Like Paul in the New Testament, the Seventy were to preach the gospel to the whole world, extending the reach of the Twelve, and going first to the Gentiles.

98 *not under the responsibility to travel among all nations*. The Twelve and the Seventy were called to travel. Other could “travel as their circumstances shall allow,” but that was not their primary role as it was with these two quorums.

99 *let every man learn his duty, and to act*. Every person with a priesthood ordination and calling needs to both learn what his responsibilities are, and then to act on them “in all diligence.”

100 *He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy*. Not learning and not acting diligently in a priesthood calling makes a man unworthy, because taking upon himself the priesthood covenant (D&C 84:33-40) requires effort and action.

Results

The structure of priesthood leadership outlined in D&C 107 is essentially the structure of priesthood leadership in the Church today. As one commentator noted, “From its basic organization in 1830 with two presiding elders (D&C 21), the Church’s structure and organization changed more in the five years before section 107 was given than it has since.”²⁶ This revelation provides structure with expandability, allowing the Church to grow into the millions and still meet its needs. Whether we have one ward or 100,000 wards, the presiding councils can manage it all because the Seventy can expand as

²⁴ JSP, D4:321n537.

²⁵ JSP, D4:321n538.

²⁶ Harper, *Making Sense*, 398.

needed and the local structures continue to take more of the administrative load. It's a marvelous and clearly inspired system.

D&C 108 – Lyman Sherman

Setting

Received Saturday, 26 December 1835, at Kirtland, Ohio.

Lyman Sherman had been a member of the Camp of Israel. He had been at the meeting on 14 February 1835 when the members of that camp were called together and the Twelve Apostles were chosen.²⁷ He was also present at the 28 February to 1 March 1835 meetings when the first Seventies were called and ordained. He himself was called as one of the seven presidents during those sessions.²⁸ His blessing is recorded to have been:

Your ministry shall be great and you shall proclaim to various nations. Your faith shall be unshaken and you shall be delivered from great afflictions. You shall travel much and have power over evils and evil powers. You are a chosen vessel of the Lord, You shall be called a son of thunder, You shall receive many scourgings from the wicked but they shall not kill you, but they chase and you shall hide from them and be delivered. Your eyes are doomed to see desolations great & wonderful. You shall lead a flock to Zion from the abodes of poverty. You shall return to the society of your family and that shall be a scene of rejoicing. You shall teach in ten different tongues. The wicked shall yet stone you and leave you for dead, but you shall be restored & do great Good. <Amen>²⁹

However, he spent the rest of the year wondering how the Lord would specifically use him until he finally determined to go to Joseph Smith and ask. Joseph was studying Hebrew with Warren Parish and Frederick G. Williams on the morning of 26 December 1835, when thirty-one-year-old Lyman walked in and declared, “I have been wrought upon to make known to you my feelings and desires, and was promised ~~to have~~ that I should have a revelation ~~and~~ which should make known my duty.”³⁰ Accordingly, the Prophet inquired of the Lord and received a revelation, which is D&C 108 today.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in Joseph Smith's Sep 1835-Apr 1836 journal, 90.³¹ It was first published in the *Deseret News*, 10 July 1852, then as Section 108 in 1876.³²

Commentary

1 ***Your sins are forgiven you, because you have obeyed my voice in coming up hither.*** Lyman Sherman wanted to know the word of the Lord for his own life and boldly went to Joseph Smith and asked. The Lord's very first comment to him was that his sins were forgiven and that he was commended and inspired to come to Joseph Smith at this time.

2 ***let your soul be at rest concerning your spiritual standing.*** Sometimes people believe that God is not accepting of their life, that they are under some kind of condemnation because they don't have a calling or perhaps don't have the calling they think they should have. The words of the Lord to Lyman should be a comfort and a guide to those feelings.

3 ***be more careful henceforth in observing your vows.*** The “vows” could have related to his baptismal covenants or his priesthood oath and covenant as part of his calling to the presidency of the Seventy.

4 ***Wait patiently until the solemn assembly.*** This refers to the dedication of the Kirtland temple, which was only three months away. He was promised that at the dedication, he would be “remembered with the first of mine elders,” probably meaning he would receive the blessings of the temple with other Church leaders.

²⁷ JSP, D4:226.

²⁸ JSP, D4:255-258; McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 860. However, in April 1837 he was released from that position because it was realized that he had previously been ordained a high priest.

²⁹ Minutes and Blessings, 28 February—1 March 1835, in JSP, D4:260-261.

³⁰ Journal, 1835—1836, 26 December 1835, Saturday, in JSP, J1:137.

³¹ JSP, J1:137-138.

³² Cook, *The Revelations*, 217.

6 you shall have right to preach my gospel. As a Seventy, Lyman's call was to preach, but the temple was expected to endow members with power and give them greater ability to preach to the nations and convert many.

7 in all your conversation. "Conversation" in the New Testament and in the 1830s referred more to how a person acted (conduct) than to words spoken. The Lord was counseling him to watch his actions.³³

Results

Lyman Sherman waited patiently and participated in the dedication of the Kirtland temple in March 1836. He was released from his calling in the presidency of the Seventy in April 1837 because it was realized that he had already been ordained a high priest, but in October 1837 he was called as a member of the Kirtland high council. After moving to Missouri in 1838, he was called to be on the Far West high council. On 16 January 1839, from Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith, the First Presidency, called Lyman by letter to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Lyman had recently visited them and taken sick during the journey. When the letter with the direction to call him to the Twelve reached Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, Lyman was very sick. He died on 27 January 1839, before he could be informed of his call or ordained.³⁴

D&C 109 – Kirtland House of the Lord Dedictory Prayer

Setting

Given Sunday, 27 March 1836, at Kirtland, Ohio.³⁵

The House of the Lord in Kirtland was dedicated in two sessions, the first on Sunday, 27 March 1836 and the second on the next Thursday, 31 March. The day before the first dedication (26 March), Joseph Smith had spent the day in preparation for the event in the Translating or President's Room on the attic floor of the temple. Oliver Cowdery recorded that he helped prepare the written dedicatory prayer that was used, along with Sidney Rigdon and scribes Warren Cowdery and Warren Parrish. They set the prayer in type that evening and printed at least one copy for Joseph Smith to read the next day.

The dedication was a huge event, with reports of up to 1,000 people attending, which probably counts those on both the lower the upper story. It was literally standing room only. An overflow group met in the nearby printing/office building and had their own meeting. Even more were turned away, which was the motivation for a second session later that week. People were standing in line by 7:00am, a full hour before the doors were to open and two hours before the dedication, which was scheduled for 9:00am. Some of the Church leaders entered just after 7:00am and had a small, dedicatory service to consecrate the pulpits to the Lord.

At 8:00am the doors opened and the First Presidency assisted the ushers in seating everyone. They started the program with scripture readings by Sidney Rigdon (Psalms 96 and 24), a choir singing "Ere Long the Veil Will Rend in Twain," by Parley P. Pratt, a prayer by Sidney Rigdon, and another choir song ("O Happy Souls, Who Pray," by William W. Phelps). This was followed by a two-and-a-half-hour sermon by Sidney Rigdon mostly based on Matthew 8:18-20 ("the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head"). He also shared remarks about the "toils, privations, and anxieties" of those who worked on the building. Each quorum was then asked to stand to sustain Joseph Smith as prophet and seer, then the whole congregation was invited to do the same. The choir and the congregation concluded the morning session by sings "Now Let Us Rejoice" by William W. Phelps.

After a 15-minute break, the congregation sang "Adam-ondi-Ahman" by William W. Phelps. Joseph Smith made some remarks, then presented the names of Church officers for sustaining, first by quorums and then the congregation, including the First Presidency (as "Prophets and Seers"), the Twelve (as "Prophets and Seers and special witnesses to all the nations of the earth"), the Seventy, the high councils, bishops, and elders presidents of both Kirtland and Missouri, and the

³³ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 863; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:37-38.

³⁴ "Wrought Upon" to Seek a Revelation, from *Revelations in Context*, <https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-lyman-sherman>, accessed 26 March 2017; Black, *Who's Who*, 261-263.

³⁵ "Minutes and Prayer of Dedication, 27 March 1836 [D&C 109]," and its [Historical Introduction](#). Many of the details come from this account; others from the various commentaries cited in the bibliography.

presidencies of the priests, teachers, and deacons. After another hymn (“How Pleased and Blest Was I,” by Isaac Watts), Joseph Smith read the dedicatory prayer, which is Section 109. After the prayer, The dedicatory prayer was sustained by quorums and the congregation, then the choir sang “The Spirit of God,” which William W. Phelps had written for this occasion. The sacrament was administered to the congregation, blessed by Joseph’s brother, Don Carlos and passed by several elders.

After the sacrament, Joseph Smith spoke briefly about this own mission and Don Carlos bore record of the latter-day work. Oliver Cowdery bore testimony of the Book of Mormon, Frederick G. Williams spoke of the Lord’s house, then Sidney Rigdon offered closing remarks and gave a prayer, then led everyone in rising and giving the Hosanna Shout: “Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna to God and the Lamb, amen, amen, and amen,” repeated three times. Brigham Young spoke in tongues and David W. Patten interpreted what he said, giving a short sermon. Joseph Smith ended by blessing everyone present, and the meeting broke up at about 4:00pm. Many wrote about seeing angels during the meeting.³⁶

That evening, four hundred priesthood brethren returned to the temple where they had their feet washed, received instruction, saw angels and cloven tongues of fire, and heard a sound like a rushing wind, which caused everyone to stand and feel “moved upon by an invisible power.”³⁷

The second dedicatory session followed the same pattern on the Thursday of that same week.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is from a printed copy of the prayer in the Church History Library.³⁸ It was first published in the *Messenger and Advocate*, March 1836, then as Section 109 in 1876.³⁹

Outline

- The house of God (1-21)
- Confound enemies (22-33)
- Power to gather (34-42)
- Deliverance from judgments (43-53)
- Softened hearts (54-58)
- Redemption of Israel (59-67)
- Bless Church leaders (68-71)
- Bless all members (72-80)

The house of God (1-21)

1 ***O Lord God of Israel.*** It is surely not a coincidence that the other temple dedicatory prayer in scripture starts in a similar way to this one. “Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart” (1 Kings 8:23).

2 ***commanded thy servants to build a house.*** The specific command was D&C 88:119; see also D&C 95:11.

3 ***thy servants have done according to thy commandment.*** You can imagine Joseph Smith looking around the temple at the high ceilings, the columns, the pulpits, the carpets, the windows, and all the details that he had seen with his counselors in vision and worked so hard to complete. They had indeed done just what they were commanded.

4 ***accept this house.*** See D&C 110:7.

5 ***out of our poverty we have given.*** The sacrifices of members of the Church to rear this building were huge. Eliza Snow wrote that the effort and sacrifice to build the temple only came because of the assurances of God. Without those, “an at-

³⁶ Backman, *Heavens Resound*, 294-299.

³⁷ Richard O. Cowan, “Joseph Smith and the Restoration of Temple Service,” in W. Jeffrey Marsh, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005), 112-114.

³⁸ “Prayer of Dedication, 27 March 1836 [D&C 109],” p. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers.

³⁹ Cook, *The Revelations*, 218.

tempt towards building that Temple, under the then circumstances, would have been, by all concerned, pronounced preposterous.”⁴⁰ Indeed, when the command was given in 1833, there were about one hundred and fifty Church members in Kirtland, and only ten of them landholders, so their ability to fund and provide labor for the temple was non-existent. But by the time the temple was done, there were 1,500 members in Kirtland, many of whom came in time to help with the building.⁴¹

5 *a place to manifest himself*. Joseph always understood that Christ would be present in the House of the Lord, hence the appropriateness of the name. See D&C 110:1-10.

6 *as thou hast said in a revelation*. Verses 6-9 quote D&C 88:117-120, which was the call to build the House of the Lord.

10 *done to thine honor and to thy divine acceptance*. One of the purposes of the solemn assembly activities in the temple was to honor God and seek his acceptance for all the covenant people. See D&C 110:5-7, especially v. 5 where they are forgiven of their sins and thus acceptable to the Lord.

11 *the promises which thou hast made unto us*. See D&C 38:32; 76:116-118; 88:68; 93:19-20; 97:14, 16; 105:11-12, 18.⁴²

13 *feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it*. Because the Kirtland temple was essentially open to the public, the Prophet prayed that all who came in who feel God’s power and know it was his holy house. Though it is no longer dedicated as a temple, those who enter it of any faith even today sense something special about it.

14 *as thou hast said*. This was not just a place of worship and ordinances but was a school as well, so the quote of D&C 88:118 about learning by study and faith is very applicable.

15 *receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost*. Through the ordinances of the temple, we can receive a fulness of the Holy Spirit which is required for sanctification and exaltation.

15 *be organized according to thy laws*. Verses 15-19 are a near-quotation of D&C 88:119-120.

20 *no unclean thing shall be permitted*. This is not the only reference in the D&C to this idea (see also 94:8-9; 97:15), but it is very common in the Bible (e.g., Leviticus 5:2; Deuteronomy 23:14; Judges 13:7; 2 Chronicles 23:19; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 22:26; 2 Corinthians 6:17) and Book of Mormon (e.g., 1 Nephi 10:21; 15:34; Alma 11:37; 40:26; 3 Nephi 27:19; Moroni 10:30). There is a very direct reference to this in Moses 6:57, which is, of course, a translation of the early chapters of Genesis.

21 *they may speedily repent and return unto thee*. The prayer helps us remember to repent “speedily” because even to procrastinate a short time puts us at great risk.

Confound enemies (22-33)

22 *thy servants may go forth from this house*. Missionaries then and now were and are prepared in part to serve the Lord preaching and sharing the good news of Christ by being in the temple, making sacred covenants, and having a greater portion of the Spirit that comes from being in such places. Armed with that spiritual preparation, “they may bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings” (v. 23).

22 *that thy name may be upon them*. To take Christ’s name upon us is to identify ourselves as fully his, to give ourselves to him, and he fully supporting us. The custom of a woman taking her husband’s name when they are married comes from this same idea.

24 *establish the people that shall worship*. Those that worship in the temple in faith will be ‘established’ or made secure. This is the idea (even if the word is not used) in Ephesians 4:11-14, that God gave priesthood leaders and others who could establish us in righteousness until we are securely unified in faith and not susceptible to “winds of doctrine.”

25 *no weapon formed against them shall prosper*. From Isaiah 54:17 (also 3 Nephi 22:17; D&C 71:9).

25 *diggeth a pit for them shall fall into the same*. A similar phrase is found in Psalms 7:15; 57:6; Proverbs 26:27; Ecclesiastes 10:8. This is the only use of this phrase in the D&C.

⁴⁰ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 867.

⁴¹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:43.

⁴² Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:44.

26 ***no combination of wickedness shall have power***. This could refer to wickedness combining against the Saints, or it could be speaking of actual “wicked combinations” (see 4 Nephi 1:42; Ether 11:7). This is the only use of this phrase in the Doctrine and Covenants.

27 ***thine anger be kindled against them***. By and large, with all the trials Joseph and the Saints had faced in New York, Ohio, and especially Missouri, there had not been much indication of the Lord’s anger being kindled against those who were persecuting the Church. With tensions continuing to build in both Church locations (Ohio and Missouri) and the tremendous loss of property and income and a dramatic increase in debt as a result, this was probably a very heartfelt pleading.

29 ***confound, and astonish, and to bring to shame and confusion***. For all those spreading lies about the Church and its leaders, the Prophet prayed for shame and confusion, but only “if they will not repent.” What they really wanted was “an end to lyings and slanders against thy people” (v. 30) and a “full and complete deliverance” (v. 32).

31 ***innocent before thee in bearing record of thy name***. Compare Ezekiel 16:9 and D&C 88:75, 85, 138.

Power to gather (34-42)

34 ***O Jehovah, have mercy***. We know that we’re to pray to the Father in the name of Christ, and that’s exactly what we see in most of the prayer (especially v. 4). Yet this section is addressed to Jehovah, whom we understand to be the Son today. It could be that this is simply a section of praise that prayerfully offers thanks to Jehovah for his work in our behalf. It was the voice of Jesus that spoke to Joseph Smith, though he spoke the words of the Father.⁴³ It could be that in many circumstances, it’s appropriate to pray to the Son, as the ancient Israelites did and the Book of Mormon people did when Jesus was in their presence. It could also be that the name of “Jehovah” was usable for both the Father and the Son in Joseph’s mind.⁴⁴

34 ***as all men sin, forgive***. Romans 3:23 states that all have sinned. Though he didn’t say this, perhaps a self-referential experience was involved on Joseph Smith’s part, since the first thing Jesus told him about himself a week later was that his sins were forgiven (D&C 110:5).

35 ***the anointing of thy ministers***. Washing and anointing had been going on in the temple since January, in preparation for this day.⁴⁵

36 ***as upon those on the day of Pentecost***. Acts 2:1-12 portrays the scene among the disciples of Jesus on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came upon them, displayed like “cloven tongues like as of fire” (Acts 2:3). Many spoke in tongues and had marvelous spiritual experiences. The Prophet prayed for a similar outcome here, which was experienced at the end of the session and that evening during a priesthood training meeting (see Setting above).

38 ***the testimony of the covenant***. This could have many meanings. It could refer to a belief in the covenants the Lord has restored in our day. It could relate to the bearing of testimony or the power of a testimony that brings us to make and keep covenants. Or it could be a testimony in the scriptures as a witness of God making covenants with this people in all ages.

39 ***that they may gather out of that city the righteous***. The prayer included a plea for the peace and salvation of God to be upon a receptive city, that many could be gathered “to Zion, or to her stakes.”

41 ***let it be upon that city***. For those who reject the testimony of the servants of God, who made every effort to warn them, they prayed that the judgments spoken of in the prophets could come upon them.

42 ***deliver . . . thy servants from their hands***. Missionaries were harassed or even imprisoned at this time, hence a prayer for their deliverance.

Deliverance from judgments (43-53)

43 ***their souls are precious before thee***. Turning attention away from the Church, the prayer continued on behalf of the people of the world who had not yet heard and embraced the gospel message. Alma prayed similar words (Alma 31:35).

⁴³ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 865-866.

⁴⁴ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:48; the identification of “Jehovah” as the Son alone seems to not have been secured until the early 1900s when the First Presidency issued a statement on the Father and the Son (“The Father and the Son,” *Ensign*, April 2002).

⁴⁵ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 873; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:49.

44 ***Thy will be done, O Lord, and not ours.*** Left to ourselves, we might seek the destruction of many around us. But God's will is kinder, more patient, and full of love, so our prayer instead is that his will is done instead of our own.

45 ***thou hast spoken by the mouth of thy prophets terrible things concerning the wicked.*** From Isaiah to Malachi, the prophetic books of the Old Testament are full of prophecies of punishment for the wicked, so we know that these things will happen. See also D&C 29 and 45.

46 ***seal up the law, and bind up the testimony.*** From Isaiah 8:16, these words are also found in D&C 88:84 where it speaks of preaching to the world as the way to do this.

47 ***driven by the inhabitants of Jackson county.*** Though this illegal persecution was alluded to in previous verses about righting wrongs, this specific request is to remove the "yoke of affliction" borne by the Missouri Saints. Many of them were in attendance at this dedication, having traveled all the way from Missouri for this occasion.

48 ***our hearts flow out with sorrow.*** Though revelations had called out the sins of those involved in Missouri as a reason for their struggles, here the entire focus is on the love and sympathy felt by those in Ohio for their plight.

49 ***O Lord, how long.*** When we are suffering, this is a common question (found seventy-five times in scripture), yet one of the least useful to ask. In fact, patient waiting without asking "how long" can bring great blessings (see Psalms 37:7; 40:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:5).

50 ***Have mercy, O Lord, upon the wicked mob.*** When Joseph said these words, I can imagine some of the Missouri Saints looking up at him and wondering if they heard him correctly. But Joseph's prayer was in line with the will of the Lord and he sought blessings for all of God's children, even those who do evil against the Saints (see the example of Ananias' reaction to the Lord's request to heal and teach Paul in Acts 9:13).

51 ***if they will not.*** But even though mercy was shown, if the Missouri persecutors would not repent, then they prayed that the Lord would move to redeem his people (get their lands back).

52 ***may thine anger be kindled.*** If the Missourians did not repent, they prayed for a full manifestation of God's power against them, "that they may be wasted away." Compare Malachi 4:1.

53 ***inasmuch as they will repent, thou art gracious.*** Joseph again emphasized that even if there is any repentance on the part of the Missourians, that they deserved God's grace and mercy.

Softened hearts (54-58)

54 ***Have mercy, O Lord, upon all the nations of the earth.*** Keeping the theme of God's mercy on other people, Joseph prayed for people in all nations and specifically, the rulers in the United States.

54 ***the Constitution of our land.*** The principles of the Constitution were "honorably and nobly defended" by many during the Revolutionary War and subsequent conflicts, some of whom were in Joseph Smith's lifetime. When this prayer was given, the Constitution was just forty-seven years old.

55 ***the kings, the princes, the nobles.*** First, the leaders and "great ones of the earth" were in the prayer, followed by a similar pleading on behalf of "the poor, the needy, and afflicted ones."

56 ***their prejudices may give way before the truth.*** The prayer for soft hearts and open doors toward missionaries continues to be our prayer today.

57 ***we, thy servants, have heard thy voice.*** The goal is that everyone in the world would know that God speaks to modern prophets and apostles today, again.

58 ***to build a holy city to thy name, as thou hast commanded.*** The purpose of missionary work in 1836 was not just to save people by bringing them to the knowledge of the truth but to gather them to Zion that they can establish the holy city according to the commandments of God.

Redemption of Israel (59-67)

59 ***other stakes besides this one.*** In 1836, there was Zion and there was the Kirtland stake. The growth of the Church would allow other stakes to be built. Today, we have thousands of stakes of Zion, established in many countries in the world, fulfilling this item of prayer marvelously.

61 **a great love for the children of Jacob.** The work of the Church had been among the Gentiles, who were (and still are) the members of the Church today. But the prayer remembers the children of Israel who are scattered across the earth and the promises of their gathering.

62 **that Jerusalem, from this hour, may begin to be redeemed.** To be “redeemed,” especially in the context of Jackson County conversations, means to have the land restored to its proper owners. According to the Covenant of Abraham (v. 64), that is the children of Judah.

65 **cause that the remnants of Jacob.** This language specifically refers to the Native Americans, who were considered to be in a “wild and savage condition.”

67 **all the scattered remnants of Israel.** Not just the Lamanites but Joseph prayed for all members of the house of Israel, scattered wherever they are in the world, to believe in the Messiah, be redeemed by him, and find joy in God.

Bless Church leaders (68-71)

68 **remember thy servant, Joseph Smith, Jun.** No other leader was mentioned by name, but as the prophet of the restoration, the president of the Church, and the one whose vision drove the Saints to complete this temple, it seems entirely appropriate.

69 **his wife and children.** Emma and their two children at this time, Julia Murdock Smith, who was almost five, and Joseph Smith III, who was about three and a half. Emma was pregnant at the dedication; she gave birth to a son in June 1836, named Frederick Granger Williams Smith, showing Joseph’s great affection for his counselor in the First Presidency.

Joseph and Emma’s children can be summarized as follows:

- Alvin Smith, died at birth, 15 June 1828.
- Thadeus and Louisa Smith, both died at birth, 30 April 1831.
- Adopted Joseph and Julia Murdock, born 1 May 1831. Joseph died 30 March 1832, shortly after Joseph’s tarring and feathering. Julia lived until 10 September 1880, passing away just over a year after Emma (30 April 1879).
- Joseph Smith III, born 6 November 1832, lived until 10 December 1914 and had seventeen children.
- Frederick Grangers Williams Smith, born 20 June 1836, died 13 April 1862, at age twenty-five, with one child.
- Alexander Hale Smith, born 2 June 1838, died 12 August 1909, with nine children.
- Don Carlos Smith, born 13 June 1840, died just over a year later on 15 August 1841.
- Thomas Smith, born and died on 6 February 1842.
- David Hyrum Smith, born 17 November 1844, after Joseph Smith’s death. He had one child and died 29 August 1904.

In short, Joseph and Emma had eleven children, nine by birth and two adopted, but four of them died at birth and two more at about one year of age, and another died in Emma’s lifetime. So, Emma buried seven of her eleven children. She gave birth to only one daughter, who died at birth. She had one daughter grow to adulthood, the adopted Julia Murdock Smith, who died one year after Emma.⁴⁶

70 **Have mercy upon all their immediate connections.** Or, close relatives (see footnote). Many of Joseph’s family had joined the Church; Emma’s family did not join the Church, so this prayer was likely directed at them.

71 **the presidents, even all the presidents of thy church.** There were several people with the title “president” in 1836, including the other members of the First Presidency, the stake president, and the presidents of the various priesthood quorums, including the Twelve and the Seventy.

Bless all members (72-80)

72 **Remember all thy church.** Though Joseph and Church leaders got a mention, all members of the Church were blessed as part of the prayer, including their families and “their immediate connections” (their extended families). Joseph prayed for the sick and the poor.

⁴⁶ “Joseph and Emma’s Family, *Ensign*, February 2008.

72 *thou hast set up without hands, may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth*. The reference is to Daniel 2:34-35, which had been previously referenced in D&C 65:2.

73 *fair as the moon, clear as the sun*. See commentary on D&C 105:31.

74 *the mountains to flow down at thy presence*. See Isaiah 64:1-3, which has this happening at God's coming, and D&C 133:22-24.

74 *valleys to be exalted*. The rest of this verse draws on Isaiah 40:4-5.

75 *we shall be caught up in the cloud to meet thee*. Paul used this language in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, and it was also in D&C 76:102. Protestants, especially Evangelicals, call this being caught up the "Rapture," from the Latin term *rapere* used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, which means to snatch or take away. Evangelicals are generally pre-tribulation rapturists, meaning they see the rapture happen years before the actual Second Coming. Latter-day Saints are post-tribulation rapturists, meaning that we believe the righteous will be caught up into the heavens when Jesus comes, not years earlier.

76 *clothed upon with robes of righteousness*. See Isaiah 61:10 and 2 Nephi 4:33 and 9:14. The latter equates a "robe of righteousness" with "being clothed in purity." D&C 29:12 also used this imagery during its description of the fate of the Saints at the Second Coming.

76 *with palms in our hands*. From Revelation 7:9, where waving the palms represent victory and triumph (compare to John 12:13 where the crowds waved palms and greeted Jesus coming into the city).

77 *heaven, they holy habitation*. Verse 77 is a doxology, praise literature that describes the great attributes of a perfect God.

78 *O hear, O hear, O hear us*. The triple repetition of the plea emphasizes the sincerity of it and their deep desire for it to happen. Their plea is for God to accept the dedication Joseph has been reading and the temple itself.

79 *this church, to put upon it thy name*. The plea extended beyond the building to the entire membership of the Church, that they could join with the heavenly host praising God (see Revelation 4:1-7).

80 *thine anointed ones*. Many attending the temple dedication had been anointed with oil and washed to be cleansed; others would yet receive that ordinance now that the temple was dedicated.

Results

D&C 109 became the pattern for future dedicatory prayers, as the Kirtland temple dedication ceremony became the pattern for future temples. After the dedication, as described in the Setting, the Prophet asked for a sustaining vote on the prayer he had just read, which he received, the Hosanna shout was conducted, and Brigham Young spoke in tongues while David W. Patten interpreted. Other saw angels. That night, priesthood brethren were exposed to a great spiritual manifestation. The week following the dedication, the Lord himself appeared along with others to confer keys on Joseph and Oliver, that they might continue to expand the doctrines to include eternal families and even more ordinances.

D&C 109 is also a great model for our own prayers. We don't write out our personal prayers and they aren't typically as long as this, but it's helpful to consider the things the Prophet asked for from the Lord, and how he asked (with patience and faith).

D&C 110 – Visions and Keys in the Temple

Setting

Received Sunday, 3 April 1836, at Kirtland, Ohio.

A week after the Kirtland temple dedication, meetings were held in the temple. In one meeting, the First Presidency blessed the sacrament while the Quorum of the Twelve passed it to those in attendance.

That Sunday was Easter Sunday and was also Passover. Curtains were included in the large assembly spaces to divide them in halves or quarters, as well as to separate the pulpit areas. After the service ended, Joseph Smith and Oliver

Cowdery pulled the heavy curtains around the Melchizedek priesthood pulpits at the east end, and each silently prayed. When they arose from their prayers, the first of a series of four visitations began, now recorded in D&C 110.⁴⁷

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in Joseph Smith's 1835-1836 journal, though written by Warren Cowdery in the third person.⁴⁸ It was first published in the *Deseret News*, 6 November 1852, then as Section 110 in 1876.⁴⁹

Outline

- The appearance of the Lord (1-10)
- Moses and Elias (11-12)
- Elijah (13-16)

The appearance of the Lord (1-10)

1 ***the eyes of our understanding were opened.*** Similar language was used in the introduction of D&C 76:12, 19. In that event, Joseph and Sidney Rigdon saw things that others in the same room did not see. That would explain why even with others in the temple on the other side of the veils, no one else witnessed this event.

2 ***saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit.*** Some of the paintings of this event attempt to portray this, including the “paved work of pure gold” under his feet. Like many accounts of divine manifestations, it’s likely nearly impossible to describe a scene that is completely not of this world.

3 ***eyes were as a flame of fire.*** The description of Christ in this verse draws on the language of Revelation 1:13-15.

4 ***I am he who was slain.*** See Revelation 5:6, 9, 12; 13:8.

4 ***I am your advocate with the Father.*** 1 John 2:1 used this phrase, as did D&C 29:5; 32:3; and 45:3.

5 ***your sins are forgiven you.*** So often when Christ appears, some of the first words out of his mouth are those extending forgiveness to the recipients of the vision.

6 ***let the hearts of all my people rejoice.*** The people in Kirtland had sacrificed much to erect the House of the Lord. The Lord told them to rejoice in what they had done.

7 ***I have accepted this house.*** All of their hard work, sacrifice, and dedication had paid off: the Lord accepted the house as his own, declaring “my name shall be here.” Anything done in Christ’s name is covenantal and binding on us, such as sacred ordinances done in a temple.

8 ***I will appear unto my servants.*** Joseph and Oliver would not be the only ones to see the Savior if the people would keep the commandments and keep the house unpolluted.

9 ***tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice.*** The Church size at this time was not yet tens of thousands, yet multiples of that number would one day rejoice. Why not say millions or even billions? Interestingly, the number ten thousand was the largest number in ancient Hebrew and Greek.

9 ***the endowment with which my servants have been endowed.*** The Saints were promised a blessing of power or an endowment earlier (DC 38:15). They had been performing ordinances, such as washing and anointing in the temple since January 1836, two months before the dedication, as soon as the necessary rooms were completed. These preparatory ordinances were a great blessing and helped made the Saints ready for a fuller endowment of power in the Nauvoo temple later.⁵⁰

10 ***the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands.*** The Kirtland temple is indeed known in many lands, as members of the Church throughout the world learn about Church history or study the Doctrine and Covenants.

⁴⁷ Harper, *Making Sense*, 407; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:57-58.

⁴⁸ 3 April 1836, Sunday, Journal, 1835-1836, in *JSP*, J1:219-222. This vision is the last thing recorded in this journal, with no other journal entries for nearly two years (*JSP*, J1:223).

⁴⁹ Cook, *The Revelations*, 220.

⁵⁰ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 888.

10 *the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out*. The Kirtland temple was a place of preliminary ordinances. Today with hundreds of temples around the world, the blessings are poured out on the heads of the Lord's people in many nations.

Moses and Elias (11-12)

11 *Moses appeared before us*. The vision of the Savior closed up and another appeared in its place, this time with Moses. Though the account does not say so explicitly, hands were likely laid upon heads as this was the pattern in other experiences when keys were being bestowed.

11 *the keys of the gathering of Israel . . . the leading of the ten tribes*. Missionary work requires key, and the power to take the gospel to the whole world is encompassed in the keys that Moses gave to the two men.

12 *Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham*. It is not known who this Elias was; Elias could be a title rather than a name. Whoever the individual was, he evidently held keys to the dispensation of the patriarchs and to the Abrahamic covenant, which was probably related to eternal families and related ordinances.⁵¹

Elijah (13-16)

13 *Elijah the prophet . . . stood before us*. Moses and Elijah together represented the Law and the Prophets. Their appearance on the same day here is reminiscent of the Transfiguration of the Savior in Matthew 17:1-9 and Mark 9:2-9.

13 *taken to heaven without tasting death*. This is alluded to in 2 Kings 2:11-12.

14 *the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi*. The reference is to Malachi 4:5-6, and this was one of the first prophecies Moroni made to Joseph Smith on the night of 21-22 September 1823 (Joseph Smith—History 1:38-39), changing the verse to refer to Elijah coming to “reveal unto you the Priesthood.” That event was fulfilled on this Passover day when Jews all around the world were setting an extra place at their tables for Elijah to return—he did so, in the House of the Lord in Kirtland.

Results

Many promises are fulfilled by this experience, from Moroni's first promises of Elijah's coming to the young Joseph Smith, to the promise of a great endowment of power that would come through temple building. The keys they received drove missionary work to foreign lands just weeks after this experience and expanded the vision of temple ordinances until they reached their full capacity in Nauvoo and Salt Lake City. Families and couples were sealed and blessings were indeed poured out on the heads of the Latter-day Saints, which continues to this day.

One criticism sometimes heard with this visionary experience is that it was not published until the 1850s. As a result, some critics have accused Church leaders of fabricating it after Joseph Smith's death. However, Joseph Smith Papers scholars have identified a version that was included as the last entry in his 1835-1836 journal, written by the Prophet's scribe, Warren Cowdery, perhaps the very day it happened. That documentary evidence for this event in March 1836 is powerful and refutes the claims of later and non-Joseph Smith origins.

D&C 111 – Salem Treasure

Setting

Received Saturday, 6 August 1836, at Salem, Massachusetts.

Several events had left the Church in great debt. The Kirtland temple had been completed by borrowing thousands of dollars, which was coming due. The Church had to purchase new lands in Clay County, Missouri, without selling any in Jackson County, resulting in a shortage of cash. The Prophet anticipated news that the Saints would soon need to leave Clay County and find a new home, necessitating additional costs. With this and a desire to spread the gospel to eastern

⁵¹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:66.

cities, the First Presidency, consisting of Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith,⁵² and Oliver Cowdery determined to travel to New York City and Boston, leaving 25 July 1836.

The first stop was New York where, among other things, Oliver Cowdery looked into having plates made and purchasing dyes to be used in printing bank notes. At this time, Church leaders were exploring opening a bank to help alleviate their financial pressures. It could be that Oliver ordered and purchased the plates and dyes at this time, as when he returned to Kirtland in October, he was reported to have the plates in hand.⁵³

An account written in 1889 says that they were motivated to go to Salem by a member from the east named William (or perhaps Jonathan⁵⁴) Burgess who claimed to know of a house in Salem, Massachusetts in which was deposited a large treasure. He claimed to have unique knowledge of this house and would lead them to it. Though the story isn't collaborated well, a 19 August letter from Joseph Smith to Emma, written during this time from Salem, appears to confirm at least some of the details:

With regard to the great object of our mission, you will be anxious to know. We have found the house since Bro. [William] Burgess left us, very luckily and providentially, as we had one spell been most discouraged. The house is occupied, and it will require much care and patience to rent or buy it. We think we shall be able to effect it.⁵⁵

The brethren were able to rent the house but found no treasure in it.⁵⁶ On 6 August, Brigham Young and Lyman Johnson, who were preaching in the area, came to see the men in Salem. While they were there, this revelation was received.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is from William W. Phelps journal (6 Aug 1836), 35-37.⁵⁷ It was first published in the *Deseret News*, 25 December 1852, then as Section 111 in 1876.⁵⁸

Commentary

1 *not displeased with your coming this journey.* Though there is no indication that the journey to Salem was an inspired decision and was perhaps a 'folly,' the Lord assured them that he was not unhappy with their being there.

2 *much treasure in this city . . . and many people.* Though the brethren came looking for treasure of gold or silver, the Lord called out the greatest treasure of Salem: the people.

The stories of buried treasure in the area were widely known and reported in local newspapers, with tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne and other stories of treasure in the ground or in buildings.⁵⁹

3 *form acquaintance with men in this city.* Getting to know some of the locals and leaving a positive impression would help with future efforts to build the Church in Massachusetts.

4 *they shall not discover your secret parts.* Meaning, things that would be embarrassing or shameful—in this case, the reason for their coming to Salem in the first place.

4 *its wealth pertaining to gold and silver shall be yours.* This may yet have a future fulfillment.

5 *Concern not yourselves about your debts.* The Lord had already promised the leaders that he would resolve their financial issues; they just need to trust in him (D&C 104:79-86).

⁵² Hyrum replaced Frederick G. Williams in the presidency, first as an assistant counselor and then as second counselor; see Black, *Who's Who*, 281.

⁵³ Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 470.

⁵⁴ Cook, *The Revelations*, 221.

⁵⁵ [Letter to Emma Smith](#), 19 August 1836. Also, in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 390.

⁵⁶ Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 389.

⁵⁷ "Revelation, 6 August 1836 [D&C 111]," p. 35, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed 26 March 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-6-august-1836-dc-111/1>.

⁵⁸ Cook, *The Revelations*, 221.

⁵⁹ See <https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-salem-treasure-erastus-snow>, note 2, accessed 26 March 2017.

6 **Concern not yourselves about Zion.** As with their debts, the Lord did not want the brethren to spend their energy worrying about the Saints in Missouri. That doesn't mean not to take action, but it does mean to trust the Lord to take care of the outcome, whatever it might be.

7 **Tarry in this place.** Not for long but long enough to do the things required in the revelation.

8 **by the peace and power of my Spirit.** They should be led not by the hopes of treasure or the persuasions of men but by the Spirit of the Lord, which would bring them comfort and the power to accomplish everything the Lord needed.

9 **inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders.** As part of their assignment, they were to understand what they could about the history of the city and the people there.

10 **there are more treasures than one.** People, relationships, information—all of these and more were 'treasures' they could enjoy as a result of coming to Salem.

11 **be ye as wise as serpents and yet without sin.** Jesus counseled his disciples to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Here the Lord invited them to be wise and without sin.

Results

The brethren sought to follow the Lord's commands and did some preaching in the Salem area, though with no converts at that time. They visited people in the area as well as museums to learn more, and tried not to worry overly much about Church finances, as they had been directed. They all departed from the east coast by 25 August 1836. In 1841, Erastus Snow and Benjamin Winchester came back and converted over one hundred people.⁶⁰

D&C 112 – Thomas B. Marsh

Setting

Received Sunday, 23 July 1837, at Kirtland, Ohio.

It had been more than a year since the glorious days of the dedication of the Kirtland temple. Missionary work had increased, the Saints in Missouri had found a new home in Caldwell County, with headquarters in their new city of Far West, and the new Church organization, created in 1835, was functioning well.

To deal with the debts of the Church, to provide independence from the world, and to spur on the economy, Church leaders had decided to pursue the creation of their own bank in Kirtland. In late 1836, they secured plates to print notes from New York, began to collect money from investors, and started the process of getting a state charter for their "Kirtland Safety Society." However, the timing in the legislature couldn't have been worse; their charter was turned down, along with many others doing the same thing at this time. Seeing the potential benefits, leaders decided to open it anyway as a "financial corporation" on 2 January 1837, calling it the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company.

At first, things went quite well. The Society had some specie (gold and silver) in its vaults but was mostly secured by real estate, which was climbing in price due to high demand in western Ohio at this time. Many borrowed money from the Society to purchase lands, pay for new construction, buy goods, and more. The Kirtland economy began to be very active, with notes changing hands as deals were made. Everyone expected to repay loans as prices increased and people came to the area, ready to buy land at the higher prices. This optimism led to a spirit of speculation, with some over-extending themselves in the hopes of a large return.

Several factors worked against the effort. First, a local non-Mormon chair manufacturer named Grandison Newell, who was opposed to the Church, began buying up notes from the Safety Society and going to the bank to cash them in for specie. Getting others to join him, their goal was to create a run on the bank and clean them out of all gold and silver. The Church sought additional investors and preached against speculation, but Newell's efforts had the result of decreasing confidence in the Society and the Society had to quit paying out notes by the end of January. Second, their third attempt to get a state charter failed in February, partly because of the run, partly because of influence from other nearby banks who did not want competition, and partly because of the continuing discussion in the state about how best to manage banking.

⁶⁰ Cook, *The Revelations*, 221; Harper, *Making Sense*, 413.

Third, the general economy of the region collapsed, with land prices falling, mainly due to a dramatic policy change from U.S. President Andrew Jackson, who wanted to curtail speculation and break up state power with banking. He simply required that all land purchases from the federal government be paid for in gold or silver coin—no notes from any bank. The result was the collapse of a number of banks and financial corporations throughout the country, including the Safety Society, as people withdrew their funds from the banks to purchase lands. Church leaders attempted to shore things up with a partnership with the Bank of Monroe in Michigan, where Oliver Cowdery became a director. But the Bank of Monroe was also heavily invested in real estate, and the partnership did not help either institution in the end.

The Safety Society continued to limp along through mid-1837, but the notes lost tremendous value as faith in the institution diminished, and in the end, the investors lost almost everything. Anger at the failure of the Safety Society was directed at Church leaders, especially Joseph Smith, by many such investors, who thought he had crossed a line by putting himself into financial affairs and not just spiritual ones. (Of course, the Law of Consecration and Stewardship had always put the Church in the middle of financial affairs, but not as a lender and investor, which is where critics apparently drew the line.) Joseph and Sidney Rigdon went into hiding for a time, staying with Martin Harris in New York, seeking the support of members who could still shore up the Society.

Warren Parish was the leader of the opposition against the Prophet. He had a prominent role in the day-to-day operations of the Safety Society, and he apparently did several things to alter the books to his own benefit during the collapse. As Parish spoke out against Joseph, others defended him, including Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff. Emma wrote in a letter that everyone was turning against Joseph except Newel Knight. With confidence eroded, members began cashing out their notes. Joseph's return to Kirtland did not help, as everyone turned to him either for direction or in anger. Many thought Joseph had prophetically promised them the institution would not fail; he reminded them that he had said that but only if "the institution was conducted upon righteous principles."

Joseph and Sidney Rigdon, the two principle shareholders, withdrew in early June, leaving their shares and debts in the charge of Oliver Granger and Jared Carter, who worked with creditors to pay off all the debts in their behalf. The extended Smith family were the greatest losers in the whole venture, as they had the largest investments. With Joseph down with smallpox (and some fearing for his life because of the severity his illness), some spread the rumor that God was punishing him for his sins. When he recovered, some saw it as vindication, but critics were silent.

Warren Parish took over leadership of the Society. But it never recovered, and the value of the notes went down to a small percentage of their original value. Some said that Parrish attempted to revive the Society by issuing new notes or even forging signatures on old ones to circulate them. Whatever happened, the Society closed its doors in September 1837 and a large number of leaders ultimately left the Church, forming a new Church of Christ (which did not last a year).

The majority of Church members in Kirtland sustained Joseph Smith—one study notes that at most fifteen percent of the Church withdrew. But dissidents came from Church leadership, resulting in about one-third of Church leaders falling away. Some of those who left included the Three Witnesses (Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris), four of the Twelve Apostles (John Boynton, Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and William McLellin), three of the original presidents of the Seventy (Hazen Aldrich, Leonard Rich, and Sylvester Smith) and two subsequent presidents (John Gould and John Gaylord), and a member of the First Presidency (Frederick G. Williams). Other leaders included John Johnson and John Whitmer. Some, like brothers Parley P. and Orson Pratt and Orson Hyde, were disgruntled and nearly left, but ended up humbling themselves and staying with the Church. About half of them eventually returned, but the damage to Church leadership in 1837 and 1838 was severe.⁶¹

In the middle of all this, Joseph had called Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde, two of the Twelve, and some other brethren, including Willard Richards and Joseph Fielding, to journey to England on a mission. They left shortly after Joseph had pulled out of the Safety Society. Thomas B. Marsh, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, was in Missouri during this time. Hearing some of the news, he called for a meeting of the Twelve on 24 July 1837. He believed that only he had the authority to call members of the Twelve on missions. He and David Patten, also of the Twelve, came to Kirtland in July 1837. The day before his planned conference, and humbled a bit after counseling with Brigham Young, Marsh met with Joseph Smith, who received this revelation in his behalf, with Thomas Marsh acting as scribe. Coincidentally, on the same day, Heber C. Kimball preached the first sermon outside of North America, in Preston, England.⁶²

⁶¹ Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 435-558; Backman, *Heavens Resound*, 310-341.

⁶² Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:79-82; Harper, *Making Sense*, 414.

Documents and Publication

The oldest partial copy is from Vilate Kimball, Heber Kimball's wife, dated 6 Sep 1837 (vv. 16-22 are missing). The oldest full copy is from Joseph Smith's journal, Mar-Sep 1838, 72-74.⁶³ It was first published as Section 104 in 1844.⁶⁴

Outline

- The Twelve preach the gospel (1-10)
- Marsh should lead with love (11-15)
- Sustain the First Presidency (16-20)
- Believers are saved (21-29)
- Holders of keys (30-34)

The Twelve preach the gospel (1-10)

1 ***I have heard thy prayers.*** Marsh did not come in anger but in concern for the direction of the Church and in the end, in humility, ready to learn from Joseph Smith. Those feelings were sincere and heard by the Lord.

1 ***thy brethren, who were chosen to bear testimony.*** Referring to Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde, who had left for England several weeks previous.

2 ***some few things . . . not well pleased.*** There was going to be some gentle correction, in spite of the sincerity of his heart.

3 ***all thy sins are forgiven thee.*** The correction would be for learning because he had already been forgiven by a gracious and loving God for any sins committed.

4 ***thou shalt bear record of my name.*** One of Marsh's concerns was apparently that he wanted to be the one to first take the gospel message outside of the United States and Canada.⁶⁵ This was likely one of the things with which the Lord was not pleased (v. 2), but still he was assured that he would have plenty of opportunity to bear record of Christ, the primary mission of the Twelve.

4 ***thou shalt send forth my word.*** As President of the Twelve, he was also assured by the Lord that he would have a role in directing the missionary work of the Twelve "unto the ends of the earth."

5 ***let thy warning voice go forth.*** Marsh was to cry day and night the message of the restored gospel.

6 ***Let thy habitation be known in Zion.*** Having moved several times in previous years, the Lord counseled Marsh to stay put in Far West to better be able to communicate with Church leaders and perform his calling.

7 ***thy path lieth among the mountains, and among many nations.*** This may be an allusion to Isaiah 52:7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings."⁶⁶

10 ***Be thou humble, and the Lord thy God shall lead thee.*** We get Hymn #130 from this verse. It's a beautiful message and image of the Lord taking our hand and walking us through our challenges, giving full answer to our prayers.

Marsh should lead with love (11-15)

11 ***Be not partial towards them in love above many others.*** Love the Twelve but not more than others; love them like yourself, then love all as you love them.

12 ***let them be admonished for all their sins.*** Marsh was charged to speak particularly to the members of the Quorum who were in apostasy at this time and as their President, work to help them repent.

13 ***I will heal them.*** If the troubled apostles could be humble, the Lord would allow them to suffer some tribulation but would, in the end, convert and heal them.

⁶³ Revelation for Thomas B. Marsh, 23 July 1837, Journal, March-September 1838, in *JSP*, J1:306-309.

⁶⁴ Cook, *The Revelations*, 224.

⁶⁵ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:82-83.

⁶⁶ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 899.

14 **take up your cross, follow me, and feed my sheep.** Combining scriptures from Matthew 16:24 (or Mark 8:34; 10:21; Luke 9:23), Matthew 4:19, and John 21:16-17, the Lord called on Marsh to call on the Twelve to do his work.

15 **rebel not against my servant Joseph.** The Lord reassured Marsh that Joseph was not a fallen prophet, as some of the rebellious were saying, that he still held keys, which Marsh also held, and would continue to be the chosen prophet.

Sustain the First Presidency (16-20)

16 **thou art the man whom I have chosen.** It was not a mistake that Marsh was in the calling he had; he was called of God to hold keys and send the Twelve throughout the world.

17 **unlock the door of the kingdom.** This was a clarifying verse of the role of the First Presidency and the Twelve: the latter were to open doors in nations where the First Presidency could not go. In other words, the Twelve take their direction from the First Presidency.

17 **my servant Hyrum.** Hyrum Smith is mentioned in conjunction with the First Presidency and Frederick G. Williams is missing. During this time, Hyrum was serving as an assistant counselor to the First Presidency, along with Joseph Smith, Sen., Oliver Cowdery, and John Smith. Though it wasn't until November 1837 that Hyrum officially replaced Williams as second counselor, at the time of this revelation, Williams was under scrutiny for potential wrong-doing and Hyrum was acting in that role "for a little season" (v. 18).⁶⁷

19 **whithersoever they shall send you, go ye.** Again, the emphasis is that the First Presidency presides over and directs and actions of the Twelve, even the president of the quorum (also v. 20).

Believers are saved (21-29)

21 **whosoever you shall send.** That still allowed Marsh, as president of the quorum, to send people on various assignments to preach and administer. This is the pattern in the Church today, with letters and directions from the President of the Quorum of the Twelve managing various Church affairs, such as stake conferences.

23 **darkness covereth the earth.** From Isaiah 60:2, though here the "gross darkness" covers the "minds" of the people.

23 **all flesh has become corrupt.** See Genesis 6:12, which is what the Lord said about the earth before the flood. Also, D&C 38:11.

24 **a day of wrath.** Pronouncing judgments on the "inhabitants of the earth, the Lord laid out the many forms that judgment could take—burning, desolation, weeping, mourning, lamentation, and a whirlwind.

25 **upon my house it shall begin.** Though the judgments were aimed at the world, it would start with the covenant people themselves, an allusion to persecutions already suffered in Missouri and Kirtland, and to even more severe ones yet to come. Marsh did not yet know the role he would play in the latter, which he would deeply regret.

26 **have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house.** Many of those against Joseph Smith had gathered in the Kirtland temple and even tried to take control of it by force.

27 **trouble not yourselves concerning the affairs of my church in this place.** Kirtland's time was nearly up. In just a few months, Joseph would leave permanently, never to return to Ohio, and the Saints would leave in a mass exodus to Missouri.

28 **purify your hearts before me; and then go.** Missionary work requires preparation; no missionary can be truly successful without a pure heart.

Holders of keys (30-34)

30 **the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders.** To be clear and avoid confusion, Marsh was plainly taught that the First Presidency was to direct the Twelve and him as its president.

31 **those who have received a dispensation at any time.** The keys and authority that Marsh held, with the other apostles and the First Presidency, were like those received in any dispensation of the gospel "from the beginning of the creation."

⁶⁷ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 904-906, Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 4:87-88.

32 *the keys . . . have come down from the fathers*. Echoing D&C 107, given two years previous, Marsh was reminded that priesthood keys had started with Adam and come down initially through a patriarchal structure, preserved by righteous priesthood holders on both sides of the veil, until “last of all,” they were “sent down from heaven unto you.”

33 *how great is your calling*. Marsh should not get petty about small issues when the greatness of his calling was to lead a quorum of special witnesses directed to take the message of the gospel to the whole earth. He was focused on personal position and authority, but instead he needed to focus on cleansing himself from “the blood of this generation.”

34 *I come quickly*. The Second Coming is the ultimate message of Christ’s witnesses, whenever it may be. Because we need to always be prepared, he reminds that he comes quickly, though from our mortal perspective, that may yet be a long time.

Results

Thomas Marsh was humbled by this revelation, and covenanted to obey it. Yet from the beginning, he showed selective obedience. He went to Vilate Kimball, Heber C. Kimball’s wife, and said her husband would not be successful on his mission to England unless Marsh said so. He liked the parts of the revelation that made his calling sound important but ignored the ones that called for continued humility and submission. In the fall of 1838, he criticized decisions of Church leaders, especially Joseph Smith, defended his wife in a disputation of milk strippings (even though all evidence was that she was wrong), and ended up signing an affidavit that accused Joseph Smith of treason, helping pave the way for the Missouri extermination order of 1838, the driving out of 15,000 Church members and the incarceration of Church leaders, including Joseph Smith. He was excommunicated in 1839.

In 1857, after his wife had passed away, Thomas Marsh came out to Utah and requested reconciliation. He had previously written to the missionary sent to England that he declared would not be successful in 1837, Heber C. Kimball, that he had received a mission from the Lord in D&C 112 but had “never filled it and now I fear it is too late but it is filled by another I see, the Lord could [get] along very well without me and He has lost nothing by my falling out of the ranks; but O what have I lost?” After arriving in Utah, Brigham Young invited him to speak to the people. Said Marsh, “If there are any among this people who should ever apostatize and do as I have done, prepare your backs for a good whipping, if you are such as the Lord loves. But if you will take my advice, you will stand by the authorities; but if you go away and the Lord loves you as much as he did me, he will ship you back again. . . . for when men apostatize, they are left to grovel in the dark.”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Harper, *Making Sense*, 416-417; Black, *Who’s Who*, 188-189; McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 900-901.

Images

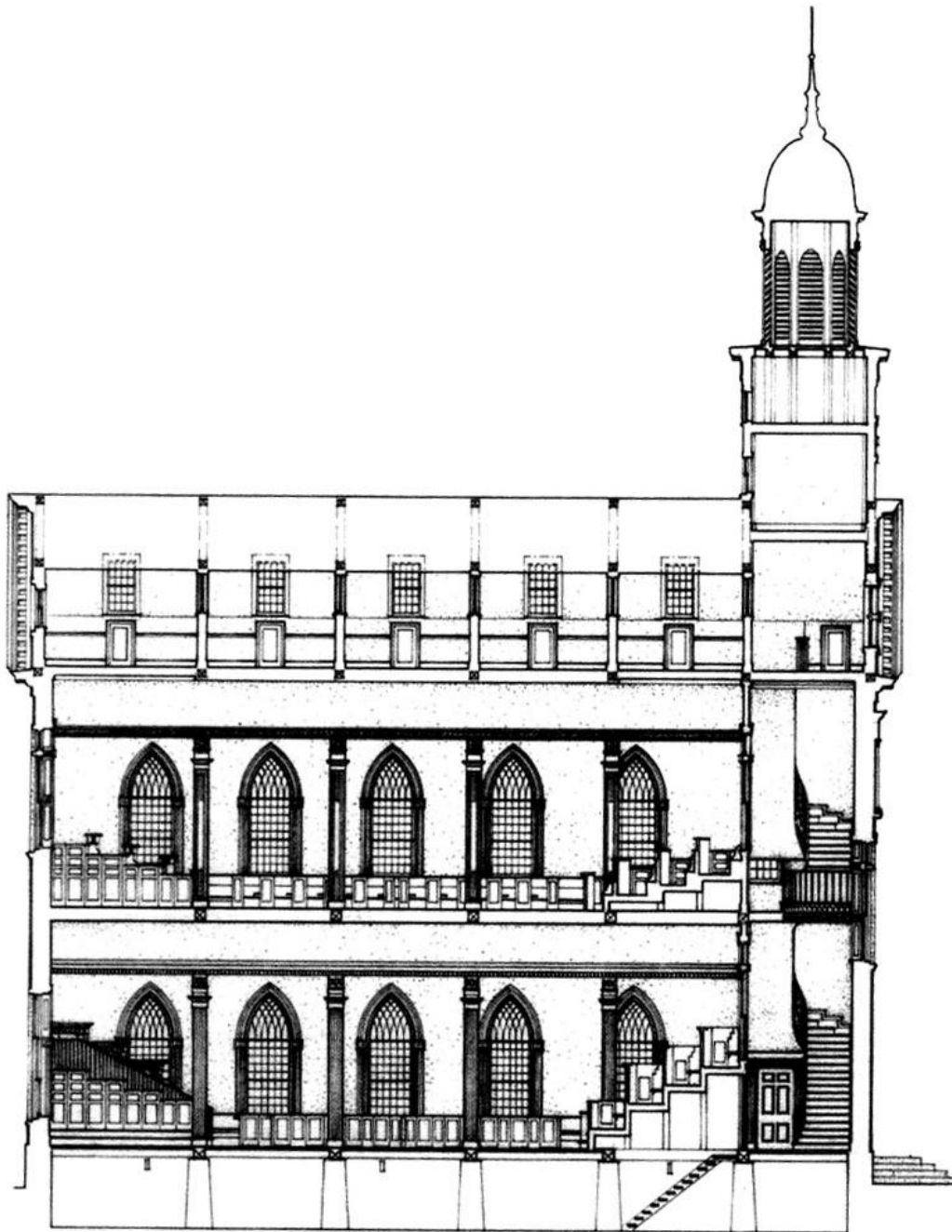


Image #1: Cut-away of the Kirtland temple, showing three floors, two for assembly and the attic for offices. Image from architectural drawings made by the US Government when it was declared a national treasure.

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