

Doctrine and Covenants 124-126

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General Introduction

After being forced from their homes in Missouri in the winter of 1838-1839, Latter-day Saints moved east across the Mississippi River, landing at various locations in western Illinois and eastern Iowa. Due to the generosity of its citizens who showed great empathy for the displaced refugees, Quincy became a principle gathering point. As they contemplated their next move, the Saints received Joseph Smith's letter from Liberty Jail that directed them to "secure to themselves the contract of the Land which is proposed to them by Mr. Isaac Galland,"¹ which was in what was then called Commerce, Illinois, on a peninsula at a bend in the Mississippi River north of Quincy and Warsaw.

Once Joseph Smith and the other imprisoned men were freed in spring 1839, they arrived in Illinois and began to look for a more permanent housing situation. Initially, there was much discussion about the merits of gathering again, and the scattered condition of the members of the Church in many counties seemed to alleviate some of the concerns that arose in Missouri when they congregated in close locations. But Joseph Smith's vision for the new home of the Church still included a temple, and for that to happen, there had to be a gathering.

Purchasing land in Commerce from Galland and other local speculators, the Church called for many to come to the new town, rechristened Nauvoo, the City Beautiful. Leveraging the sympathy of the residents of Illinois at their plight, the desire of state officials to court their votes, and some new friendships with legislative influence, mainly through newcomer John C. Bennett, in December 1840, the state legislature granted and the governor signed a city charter for Nauvoo that gave them a large degree of self-governance, the right to organize a branch of the state militia, and a university. The Church seemed poised to move forward into an era of peace and prosperity they had not enjoyed for many years.

In the meantime, the Twelve departed for their mission to Britain that they had officially started on 26 April 1839 at Far West, Missouri (having snuck back into the state and held their meeting just after midnight to fulfill the requirements of D&C 118:4-5). None were in good financial shape or physical condition, with sickness common among the Twelve and their families. But their mission to England brought thousands of new converts who would migrate to Nauvoo and later Utah and buoy up the Church greatly impacted by apostasy in 1837-1839.²

The other effort that happened in late 1839 was the expedition to Washington D.C., to appeal for the help of the federal government in getting some restitution for their Missouri losses. The delegation included Sidney Rigdon, Elias Higbee, a former judge, Joseph Smith, and Orrin Porter Rockwell. The group added Dr. Robert D. Foster in Springfield, Illinois, to help care for the ailing Sidney Rigdon (like so many, he was suffering from malaria). They departed from Commerce on 29 October 1839, almost exactly one year after Bogg's extermination order and the arrest of dozens of Church leaders. Seeing Sidney was not improving, Joseph and Elias Higbee left the rest of the group in Columbus, Ohio, with Sidney turning over his letters of introduction to the Prophet, adding his own endorsement. Arriving in Washington, D.C. at the end of November, Joseph and Higbee quickly got down to business. On Friday, 29 November, they walked up to the door of the White House and requested an audience with the President, Martin Van Buren. Joseph was introduced by John Reynolds, the former governor and current congressman from Illinois. The outcome of the meeting was mixed: the President at first declined to help, considering it a state matter for Missouri, but after more conversation, reconsidered and offered some support. However, a second visit in late January or early February 1840, ended with the President reportedly saying he could not help them or he would lose the vote of Missouri, after which Van Buren just walked out and left them. Joseph Smith left disappointed and even angry at the President, as much by the abrupt dismissal as the answer.³

While we have very few of Joseph Smith's speeches prior to Nauvoo and many revelations, after 1839, the amount of content shifts, with many talks and few revelations. Only three of the Prophet's revelations canonized in his lifetime were

¹ *JSP*, "Letter to Edward Partridge and the Church, circa 22 March 1839," [1](#).

² "[Take Special Care of Your Family](#)," Revelations in Context.

³ Ronald O. Barney, "Joseph Smith Goes to Washington," in Holzapfel and Jackson, *Joseph Smith*, 390-420.

received in Nauvoo, and only nine sections in our current Doctrine and Covenants came during the Nauvoo period. In addition, several of those are letters of instruction as opposed to “Thus saith the Lord” revelations. That context makes the three revelations in this lesson all the more significant.⁴

Summary Chronology

- **Tue, 16 Apr 1839** – Joseph and the other Liberty Jail prisoners were allowed to leave Missouri and join their families in Illinois, where they arrived on 22 April.
- **Fri, 26 Apr 1839** – The Twelve meet just after midnight at the Far West temple site, ordain new apostles and conduct other business, then depart back to Illinois to prepare for their missions to Great Britain.
- **Thu-Fri, 9-10 May 1839** – Joseph Smith moves to Commerce (later Nauvoo), Illinois.
- **Aug-Sep 1839** – Most of the Twelve leave for their missions to England (others will leave in March 1840).
- **Tue, 29 Oct 1839** – Joseph Smith leaves for Washington, D.C.
- **Fri, 29 Nov 1839** – Joseph Smith first meets with U.S. President Martin Van Buren.
- **Sat, 11 Jan 1840** – The first apostles arrive in England.
- **Tue, 21 Apr 1840** – Commerce officially renamed Nauvoo.
- **Wed, 27 May 1840** – Edward Partridge dies.
- **Sat, 13 Jun 1840** – Don Carlos Smith, Joseph and Emma’s son, is born.
- **Sat, 15 Aug 1840** – The doctrine of baptism for the dead is introduced to the Saints.
- **Mon, 14 Sep 1840** – Joseph Smith, Sr. dies.
- **Wed, 16 Dec 1840** – Nauvoo city charter granted by the state of Illinois.
- **Tue, 19 Jan 1841** – Revelation on the Nauvoo temple and Nauvoo House (D&C 124)
- **Mon, 1 Feb 1841** – First Nauvoo general elections
- **Early Mar 1841** – Revelation on gathering in the Iowa Territory (D&C 125)
- **Fri, 9 Jul 1841** – Revelation given to Brigham Young (D&C 126)
- **Sat, 7 Aug 1841** – Death of Don Carlos Smith, Joseph’s brother
- **Sun, 15 Aug 1841** – Death of Don C. Smith, Joseph and Emma’s son (1 year old)

D&C 124 – Vision for Nauvoo

Setting

Received Tuesday, 19 January 1841, at Nauvoo, Illinois.

After getting the Nauvoo City Charter secured from the Illinois legislature and governor in December 1840 and with the incorporation of the Church in that state nearly complete (it was done 2 Feb 1841), Joseph Smith sought the Lord’s will concerning their new city and the future of the Church. This was his first recorded revelation since his arrest and stay in Richmond and Liberty Jails and the longest of all the D&C sections. It could be considered an ecclesiastical charter much like the city charter granted by the state.⁵

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is Book of the Law of the Lord (19 January 1841), 3-15. It was first published in the *Times and Seasons* (1 June 1841), then as Section 103 in 1844.

Outline

- Proclamation to rulers (1-14)
- Commendations and warnings (15-21)

⁴ “[Organizing the Church in Nauvoo](#),” Revelations in Context; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 3-119.

⁵ Harper, *Making Sense*, 455-456.

- Nauvoo House and temple (22-28)
- Baptisms for the dead (29-36)
- Temples as holy places (37-44)
- Jackson County work excused (45-55)
- Nauvoo House details (56-83)
- Nauvoo, not Kirtland (84-91a)
- Hyrum Smith calling (91b-96)
- Calls and labors (97-122)
- Priesthood officers and duties (123-145)

Proclamation to rulers (1-14)

1 *I am well pleased with your offering and acknowledgments.* Joseph Smith came out of his five-month incarceration and trials with a renewed spirit of purpose and commitment. Now, more than a year and a half later, he is leading the Church with strength and authority, even though this is the first revelation he has recorded in quite some time.

1 *show forth my wisdom through the weak things of the earth.* If Joseph Smith had any power to move the work forward, it was from the Lord's wisdom through him, as one of the "weak things" of the world.

2 *make a solemn proclamation.* Just four days previous to this revelation, the Church had published a proclamation to the Saints outside of the Illinois/Iowa area. This proclamation had a different purpose and audience, explained in the next few verses.

3 *to the honorable president-elect.* In the election just held in 1840, Martin Van Buren was defeated, who was the president Joseph Smith visited twice in the White House and who declined to offer them any support in their quest for retribution for wrongs in Missouri. Troubled by a poor economy and with his plans for improved national financing hampered by a non-supportive congress, he was a one-term president. He was succeeded by William Henry Harrison, who took office on 4 March 1841.

4 *in the spirit of meekness and by the power of the Holy Ghost.* Though the proclamation was to say some bold things, the Lord still required it to be done with humility and as directed by the Spirit, good direction in any case.

5 *what shall befall them in a time to come.* The Spirit would direct the writers of the proclamation about what to say in relation to future events impacting world leaders.

6 *the set time has come to favor her.* The purpose of the proclamation is first to announce to world leaders that Zion is established on the earth and they need to support her.

7 *fearing them not, for they are as grass.* Drawing on imagery from Isaiah 40:6-8, boldness was encouraged in the proclamation because though great leaders have broad power, in the end they are transitory and only serve for a short time, like grass that withers away in the hot sun.

8 *visit them in the day of visitation.* This language refers to the Second Coming, when the Lord will "unveil" his face and judge the wicked and those who reject the prophets.

9 *I will visit and soften their hearts.* There are many stories of the leaders of nations softening their hearts to allow the gospel message to be shared in their part of the world. There are also more stories to come as we wait to take the gospel into the remaining nations where we have no missionary force.

10 *where shall be the safety of my people.* To prepare for the Second Coming, the Lord established the Church in the last days, to provide safety and refuge for those who heed the message.

11 *come ye, with your gold and your silver.* The Lord requests not only the support of the leaders of the earth in allowing the preaching of the gospel but their monetary support as well.

11 *to the house of the daughters of Zion.* The "daughter of Zion" is a common reference in Isaiah. In the last half of his book, the story generally alternates between "servant songs" about a suffering servant and messiah and "daughter of Zion" songs (Isaiah 48-54), with the daughter of Zion going from debased to exalted and the servant going from a place of honor to the tomb.

12 **Robert B. Thompson.** Having served as both a clerk of a court and a newspaper writer, Thompson had good writing experience. He was called as “General Church Clerk” in October 1840 and helped with the petition to Congress. He was promised great blessings in conjunction with this assignment (v. 13). However, Thompson died unexpectedly at the age of twenty-nine on 27 August 1841, just a few months after this revelation and before any known work was done on the proclamation.

Commendations and warnings (15-21)

15 **blessed is my servant Hyrum Smith.** Hyrum Smith is praised because of his integrity and love of the right.

16 **John C. Bennett.** In contrast, John C. Bennett is promised blessings with several “ifs”: if he receives counsel; if he continues (v. 17). Bennett, of course, will not remain in favor in the Church very long.

18 **my servant Lyman Wight.** Lyman Wight, who suffered with Joseph in Liberty Jail, was called to replace David W. Patten (v. 19) in the Quorum of the Twelve. He remained faithful until the Prophet’s death in 1844, at which time he led a group of Saints to Texas to start their own church.

19 **who is with me.** This verse mentions three who had recently passed away: David Patten, a member of the Twelve killed at the Battle of Crooked River; Edward Partridge, the first bishop of the Church, died the previous June; and Joseph Smith, Sr., Church patriarch, died the previous October. The Lord says they are all with him and sitting with Abraham.

20 **George Miller is without guile.** George Miller was called to replace Edward Partridge as bishop (v. 21) but was not able to get established in Far West before the Saints were driven out. Later he was called with three others (Newel K. Whitney, Isaac Higbee, and Vinson Knight) as bishops over wards in Nauvoo in March 1841. This was later divided into ten wards with a bishop over each, establishing the pattern we still follow today.

Nauvoo House and temple (22-28)

22 **build a house.** The house (“house for boarding” in v. 23) or as it was shortly called, the Nauvoo House (v. 60), is discussed in vv. 22-24 as a hotel for travelers to come and learn about the Church and the Saints. The Lord declared that it was time for the Church to move from a closed community to an open one where outsiders were welcome.

25 **let all my saints come from afar.** The Lord had called Saints to gather to Ohio, then Missouri, and now Illinois.

26 **Come ye, with all your gold.** The Lord instructed Church members to send “chosen messengers” (missionaries) throughout the world to not only teach the gospel but to invite them to gather and bring their personal wealth, supplies, and knowledge to accomplish the great work. This is Old Testament language calling the people to support the work.

27 **build a house to my name.** Also in Ohio, where the Saints had accomplished it, and in Jackson Country, Far West, and Adam-ondi-Ahman, where they had not, the Lord required them to build a house of the Lord, a temple. The purpose of the temple was to restore “the fulness of the priesthood” (v. 28).

Baptisms for the dead (29-36)

29 **baptized for those who are dead.** This is the first mention of baptism for the dead in a published revelation (though Joseph Smith had written to the Twelve about it while they were in England).

30 **this ordinance belongeth to my house.** The Lord taught that a baptismal font needed to be built in the house of the Lord for these ordinances for the dead to be acceptable, though he allowed a period of time for them to perform them outside the temple (vv. 31-36). The first wooden baptismal font in the basement of the Nauvoo temple was completed in November 1841 and baptisms were done there starting at that time.

Temples as holy places (37-44)

37 **your washings.** Not only baptisms but washings needed to be done in the temple. Washings had been performed in the Kirtland temple.

38 **for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle.** Establishing the case for temple ordinances, the Lord reminded them of Moses’ commandments to build a tabernacle and the later construction of the Jerusalem temple (vv. 37-38).

39 **ordained by the ordinance of my holy house.** All the ordinances of the Lord's "holy house" should take place in the house the Lord, as people are always commanded to build.

39 **your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi.** It's not clear what ordinance this has reference to. The sons of Levi made sacrifices in Old and New Testament times, but there is no record of the Saints of our day making "memorials" to those earlier temple activities.

40 **reveal mine ordinances.** Kirtland had washings and anointings; baptism for the dead had just been revealed. But the other ordinances listed in v. 39 and more the Lord didn't discuss would come as the Nauvoo temple was being built and then given broadly to the Saints as soon as it was ready to use for that purpose.

41 **things which have been kept hid.** Sometimes we position the restoration as the New Testament church being brought back, but that is an incomplete picture. Some things were "hid from before the foundation of the world" only to come forth in this, "the dispensation of the fulness of times."

42 **I will show unto my servant Joseph.** The Prophet was still the Lord's chosen vessel, in spite of apostasy and rejection by many leaders and members. Thousands stood by Joseph and the Lord teaches here that he does, too.

43 **the place where you have contemplated.** They were to build it in the place they had already been considering (on the bluff above the flats) and if they gave it their best effort, the Lord will consecrate it or make it holy (v. 44).

Jackson County work excused (45-55)

45 **if my people will hearken.** Nauvoo could be a permanent home if the people hearkened to the Lord, but if they did not, "they shall not be blest" (v. 46).

47 **if you build a house unto my name.** A big part of the expectation of obedience was to build a house of the Lord, as expressed above.

49 **do a work unto my name.** The principle that when the Lord's people do their best to obey a commandment but are hindered by their enemies, they are excused from that commandment is given here, and their offering is accepted (v. 51). Thus, the efforts to build up Jackson County were now excused and their enemies would be judged for how they hindered it.

54 **have been slain in the land of Missouri.** Those killed by their enemies, either directly or indirectly through exile and suffering, and who are "pure in heart" are promised salvation.

55 **I command you again.** For the third time, the work on the temple in Nauvoo is stated as what is required.

Nauvoo House details (56-83)

56 **my boarding house.** Returning to the topic of the Nauvoo House, the Lord directed that Joseph and his family were to have a place there, as a blessing for his service.

58 **as I said unto Abraham.** Like Abraham, Joseph Smith and his seed would bless the inhabitants of the earth.

60 **Nauvoo House.** The name of the house of boarding is given as Nauvoo House, a place where the Lord's servants might teach others of the gospel (v. 61).

62 **George Miller . . . Lyman Wight . . . John Snider . . . Peter Haws.** The council to oversee the construction of the Nauvoo House was appointed. These men were to sell stock in the house to raise the funds to build it (v. 63), no less than \$50 per share and no more than \$15,000 from any one investor (vv. 64-65). There was to be no debt for this building as there was for the Kirtland temple and other projects previously, and no one could invest without payment (vv. 66-69).

70 **only in that house.** The money raised for the Nauvoo House was not to be used for any other purpose. Neither the four men collecting the money nor any Church leader could do anything but use it to build the house.

71 **repay four-fold for the stock.** The Lord anticipated a four-fold repayment to investors, a very nice return.

72 **let my servant Joseph pay stock.** Certain men are specifically called out as potential investors: Joseph Smith; Vinson Knight (vv. 74-75); Hyrum Smith (v. 77); Isaac Galland (v. 78-79); William Marks (v. 80); Henry Sherwood (v. 81); and William Law (v. 82), who was instructed not to go back to Kirtland (v. 83).

Nauvoo, not Kirtland (84-91a)

84 **Almon Babbitt**. Almon Babbitt was chastised for setting up “a golden calf” to divert people from the truth. He was the leader in Kirtland at the time and was counseling people not to go to Nauvoo, contrary to what the Prophet taught (vv. 84-86).

87 **my servant William**. William Law was ready to return to Kirtland, mainly because he was worried about the sicknesses in Nauvoo. The Lord instead called him to preach in the Nauvoo area (v. 88).

89 **publish the new translation**. Law was to help get the Bible translation published that Joseph had produced back in 1830-1833. This unfortunately never happened in Joseph Smith’s lifetime.

91 **as counselor unto my servant Joseph**. Law was to take Hyrum Smith’s place as a counselor in the First Presidency (Hyrum’s calling comes in the following verses).

Hyrum Smith calling (91b-96)

91 **the office of Priesthood and Patriarch**. Hyrum Smith was called to two offices: “the office of Priesthood” and “Patriarch.” The first was Oliver Cowdery’s former position as Second Elder or Assistant President (vv. 94-96), an office only held by Oliver and Hyrum in the history of the Church. The second calling was to replace his father as Church patriarch (vv. 92-93) after Joseph Smith Sr.’s death in September 1840.

Calls and labors (97-122)

This and the next section give specific calls to a number of people, more than any other section of the D&C. Only some are noted below.

97 **William Law**. Law was called to be a member of the First Presidency (vv. 87-91a) and was now given more promised related to that calling (vv. 97-102), such as healing the sick and even raising the dead. Sadly, Law rebelled against the Church and was excommunicated in 1844, after which he started a newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which printed things that caused the city council to order its destruction, which led to the arrest and murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

103 **my servant Sidney**. Sidney Rigdon was invited to resume his role in the First Presidency if he would humble himself and repent. He was instructed to move into town and not go live in the east, and continue to be a spokesman and preach. He was promised that all would be well if he did so (vv. 103-110). He was invited to help write the proclamation (v. 107; the proclamation was outlined in vv. 1-14).

111 **Amos Davies**. Amos Davies was instructed to invest in the Nauvoo House and prove himself faithful (vv. 111-114). He appeared to have done this but later stayed in Nauvoo when the Saints went west.

115 **Robert D. Foster**. Foster had contracted to build a house for Joseph Smith but had not done that yet, so was called to repent and do it, as well as invest in the Nauvoo House and obey the First Presidency (v. 115-118). He was later excommunicated in April 1844 and joined William Law’s efforts to destroy Joseph Smith.

119 **unless he shall be a believer in the Book of Mormon**. Those investing in the Nauvoo House should do so out of their testimonies of the Book of Mormon and Joseph’s other revelations and should help pay for the committee (“quorum”) overseeing its construction (vv. 121-122).

Priesthood officers and duties (123-145)

After the scattering of the Missouri persecutions and the loss of leaders and members, it was time to reconstitute priesthood quorums, which the rest of the revelation does. This is similar to a sustaining of Church officers done at General Conference.

123 **the order of Melchizedek**. The higher priesthood is known by this name now.

124 **Hyrum Smith**. Hyrum Smith is called as patriarch (v. 91) which means to “hold the sealing blessings of my church.”

125 **my servant Joseph**. Joseph Smith is a presiding elder, but also a translator, revelator, seer, and prophet.

126 **First Presidency**. Sidney Rigdon and William Law are counselors in the First Presidency.

127 *the Twelve traveling council*. Brigham Young was to serve as president of the Quorum of the Twelve, or the “traveling council,” who hold the keys of taking the gospel to the earth (v. 128). The other members of the Twelve (one short at this time) are listed in v. 129.

130 *David Patten I have taken*. David Patten was killed at the battle of Crooked River. The Lord declares that he holds his priesthood even into the next life.

131 *a high council*. The members of the high council of Nauvoo are named in v. 132.

133 *Don C. Smith*. Don Carlos Smith is sustained as president of the high priest quorum, to oversee the “standing presidents” of the various stakes (vv. 133-135), with Amasa Lyman and Noah Packard as counselors (v. 136). This is not an office we have today as stake presidents are called by members of the Twelve or Seventy.

137 *the quorum of elders*. The presidency of the elders is given, John A. Hicks, Samuel Williams, and Jesse Baker.

138 *the quorum of the seventies*. The seven leaders of the Seventies are listed (with vv. 139-140 explaining the division of labor between elders and seventies).

141 *the bishopric*. Vinson Knight, Samuel H. Smith, and Shadrach Roundy are the bishopric, with other presidencies in v. 142.

144 *approve of the names which I have mentioned*. All of these officers should be sustained at the next general conference and given rooms for offices in the temple when it is done (v. 145), meaning that like in Kirtland, the temple also served as an office building for Church leadership.

Results

Hyrum Smith was ordained as Assistant President and Patriarch of the Church on Sunday, 24 January 1841, replacing Oliver Cowdery and his own father, Joseph Smith, Sr., respectively in their offices.

On 3 February, the first Nauvoo city elections were held. Most of the offices were filled by well-known Church leaders, including Joseph Smith as a city councilman, but some ‘old-timers’ from the Commerce area were also elected. A few days later, Joseph was appointed lieutenant general in the Nauvoo Legion by the governor.

John C. Bennett, promised a great reward if he would follow counsel, left the Church just a year and a half after this revelation, becoming a bitter persecutor of Joseph Smith and the Church after Bennett’s hypocrisy and adultery were exposed. Bennett’s efforts to slander Joseph Smith included accusing him of planning the attack on Lilburn Boggs in Missouri, resulting in Joseph Smith having to go into hiding for many months as authorities tried to arrest him for that crime.

The proclamation to the world lost its assigned author, Robert B. Thompson, who died in August 1841, and partner, with Bennett’s apostasy. Though some attempts were made in subsequent years, no real progress was made until 1844 when William W. Phelps compiled twenty-two manuscript pages that he said were approved by Joseph Smith. After the martyrdom, Parley P. Pratt tackled finishing it on behalf of the Twelve, publishing it in 1845.⁶

The revelation called for two significant buildings in Nauvoo, the temple and the Nauvoo House. Though the cornerstones for the temple were laid on 6 April 1841, and work on Nauvoo House began that fall, neither was finished in Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Building both with equal priority taxed the resources of the struggling Church, after the losses of Missouri, even with thousands of new converts joining the Church from England and other parts of the United States. In the end, the temple was not fully completed in time for the departure from Nauvoo, and then it was put up for sale to help fund pressing financial needs. It never sold and in 1848 was destroyed by fire.

The Nauvoo House was left undone as the Saints moved west, though its cornerstone contained the original Book of Mormon manuscript, the likely original of D&C 124, and other important Church documents. Lewis Bidamon, Emma Smith’s second husband, took the stones from the unfinished larger house and used them to complete a smaller building on part of the foundation, known as the Riverside Mansion, which the family used starting in 1871 and which is still there today.

The Lord’s vision for Nauvoo, as expressed in D&C 124, motivated great action and commitment and blessed the lives of thousands, even though they had to flee their beloved City Beautiful before all its charges from the Lord were fully met. It

⁶ You can see the printed version and read the whole text on BYU’s online library site: <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/2818> (accessed 22 April 2017).

nevertheless oriented the Prophet and the Church in a marvelous direction with blessings they could have experienced no other way.⁷

D&C 125 – Instructions for Iowa

Setting

Received in early March 1841 in Nauvoo. As the Saints gathered in Nauvoo, some settled across the river in Iowa Territory because Isaac Garland offered the Church a great deal—\$2 per acre, paid over 20 years, no money down.⁸ There were about 750 Saints in Iowa Territory about this time who had settled on land the Church had purchased. But the land in Commerce was more expensive and Church leaders realized they would have to sell some of the land they had acquired to make the payments, including lots in Iowa. There were also concerns for the safety of the Iowa Saints, given that they were scattered across a large area. Memories of places like Haun’s Mill in Illinois made them wonder if gathering in one place might be safer?⁹ This revelation was received after asking the Lord what those Iowa Saints should do.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is from the Book of the Law of the Lord, p. 16 (between 20 Mar and 7 Apr 1841). It was first published in the Times and Seasons on 19 Jan 1841, then as Section 125 in 1876.

Commentary

1 ***What is the will of the Lord.*** The question may have been prompted by a visit on 11 March 1841 of John Smith, Joseph Smith’s uncle and the president of the stake in Zarahemla, Iowa.

2 ***essaying to be my saints.*** “Essaying” means trying or striving. Thus the revelation is directed to those “who call themselves by my name” and are striving to be disciples of Christ, not to others in Iowa who live all around Church members.

2 ***let them gather themselves together.*** Gathering continued to be an important activity, whether it was for safety or temple building or just creating community. The overarching reason stated was “that they may be prepared for that which is in store.” This gathering also allowed unused land to be sold to make payments on other land.

3 ***Zarahemla.*** Zarahemla was already an established town, named after the Nephite capital in the Book of Mormon. The call to the Iowa Saints was to move in or closer to Zarahemla in order to build a temple and support each other.

4 ***as well as in the city of Nashville.*** The Saints gathering to the Illinois/Iowa area could gather in Nauvoo, Zarahemla, Nashville (a few miles south of Zarahemla), or any other established stake.

Results

This revelation was read to the Saints at a General Conference on 6 April 1841. As a result, many in Iowa immediately made preparations to leave their land and move to Zarahemla.

D&C 126 – My Servant Brigham

Setting

Received Friday, 9 July 1841. On 1 July 1841, Brigham Young, along with Heber C. Kimball and John Taylor, had just returned from a very successful two-year mission to England where they converted thousands and gathered many of them to Nauvoo. Before that, he had served many other missions, before and even more after his call to the Twelve. Brigham’s

⁷ “Organizing the Church in Nauvoo,” in *Revelations in Context*; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “The Nauvoo Temple,” in Holzapfel and Jackson, *Joseph Smith*, 421-424.

⁸ Harper, *Making Sense*, 462.

⁹ Griffiths, *Scripture Central Commentary*, 4:180.

family had suffered in his absence. When he returned from England, he found them living cramped in an unfinished log cabin. He set to work immediately to improve their situation. Joseph Smith came to see him on 9 July and received this revelation in his behalf.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in the Book of the Law of the Lord (17 Dec 1841), page 26. It was first published in the *Deseret News* on 18 April 1855 and was then published as Section 126 in 1876.

Commentary

1 ***it is no more required at your hand to leave your family.*** Young's wife and children had suffered after his departure to England in 1839. His wife, Mary Ann, did not complain but supported her husband in his calling. But they had experienced poverty, hunger, and illness. The Lord tells Brigham that such departures are no longer required.

2 ***I have seen your labor and toil.*** The Lord acknowledges Brigham's diligent efforts to serve and grow the Church. He had seen great results from his mission—converts that would literally save the Church in the coming years. But it all required sacrifice and huge effort on his part.

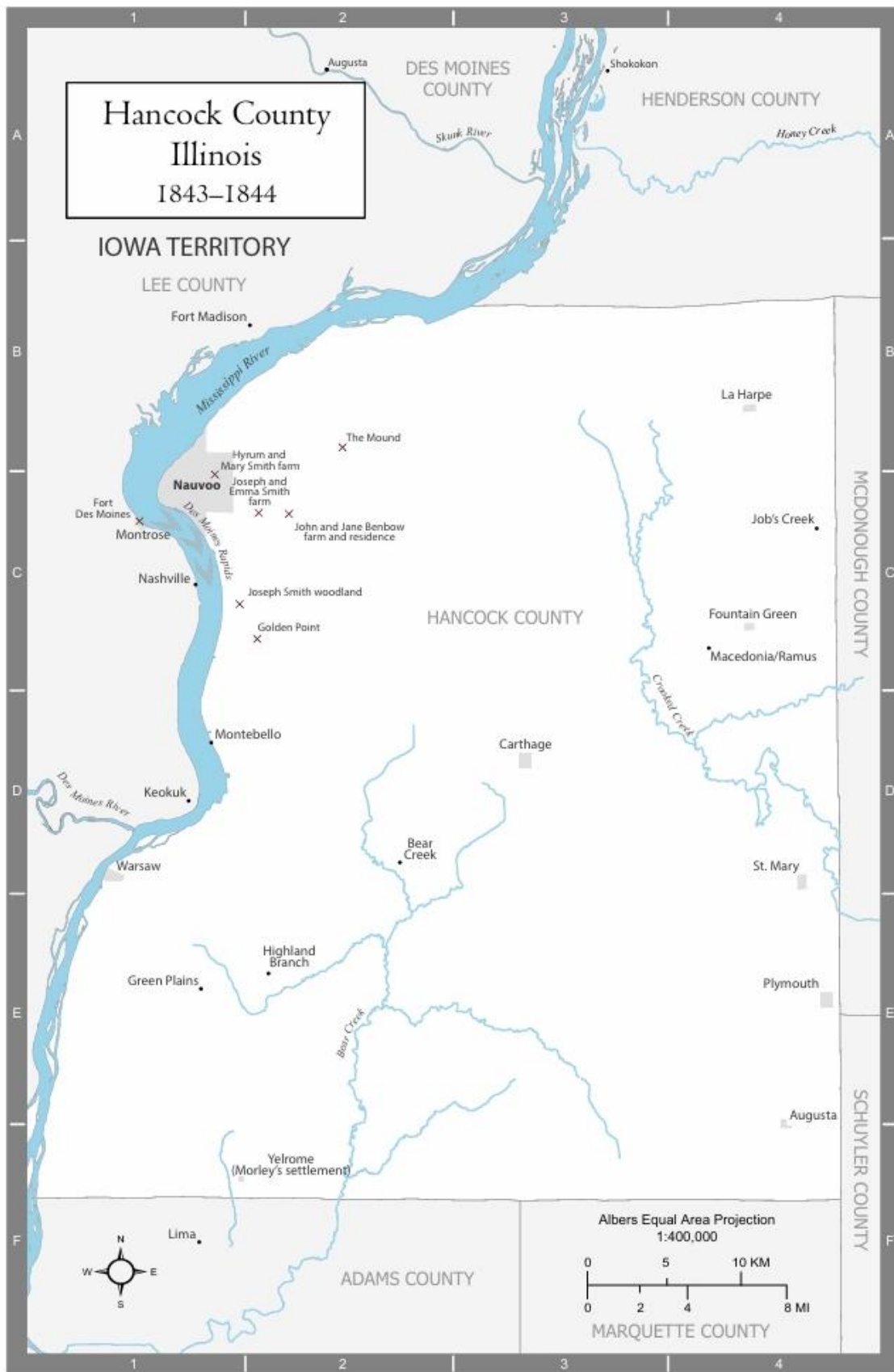
3 ***take especial care of your family.*** It was time for Young to care for his family first, which still honoring his calling as president of the Twelve.

Results

Brigham did stay in Nauvoo after this revelation, with the exception of a mission to support Joseph Smith's run for U.S. President in 1844. During the Nauvoo period, he was able to not only solidify the mission of the Twelve and orchestrate their efforts from his central location, but it gave him significant time with Joseph Smith, hearing him preach, teach, and run the Church. It also allowed Joseph to bestow keys on the Twelve and have them run the affairs of the Church and be prepared for Joseph's death, so the Church could continue to fully function without its founding Prophet.

Images

Image #1: Hancock County, Illinois, 1843-1844



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Works Consulted

For text and publication notes:

RB1 – Revelation Book 1, from *JSP*, MRB:8-405.

RB2 – Revelation Book 2, from *JSP*, MRB:407-665.

EMS – *The Evening and the Morning Star*, June 1832-May 1833, from *JSP*, R2:202-299.

NKW – Newel K. Whitney papers (various Dx volumes)

SGN – Sidney Gilbert Notebook (various Dx volumes)

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