

D&C 93-96

Lesson 20, Doctrine & Covenants, Adult Religion Class, Monday, 13 Feb 2017

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General Introduction

Church leaders met on Saturday, 23 March 1833, and determined to try and purchase three pieces of property in the Kirtland area. Though in the end, the only one actually acquired was the Peter French farm, missionaries were sent out on that same day to solicit donations to purchase all desired properties (effectively closing down the School of the Prophets for a time). The French farm was desirable for many reasons, including the inn on the property (which was later given to John Johnson, of Hiram, Ohio, as his new home and stewardship business) and the brick kiln, which was needed to build homes for the many Saints coming to the area after joining the Church. The purchase was finalized on 10 April 1833. Shortly thereafter, the nearby tannery was also purchased from Arnold Mason.

Bad feelings had continued between some of the leaders in Missouri and those in Ohio since the weeks after the summer visit of Joseph Smith to Missouri. Bishop Edward Partridge in Missouri called a special council on 26 February 1833 to call everyone to repentance and reestablish good relationships with Ohio. Getting agreement from all, a letter was drafted and sent to Joseph Smith. Joseph wrote back to the Missouri leaders on 21 April 1833, accepting their feelings of remorse and repentance.

A second letter to Edward Partridge, dated 2 May 1833, gave clarifications on living the laws of consecration and stewardship in Missouri, including the need to follow the local laws and the revelations already received on the topics. Partridge had been giving out leases for stewardships instead of outright deeds, which resulted in problems if the person fell away from the Church. Giving stewardships as owned deeds allowed the person to leave the Church and keep the land but not be able to ask for their consecrated property back since that was considered a donation.

On 6 May 1833, a profound revelation was received, expanding on Biblical passages and correcting many common Christian views of the nature of God, Christ, and man. D&C 93 was a profound theological document that still merits deep study and contemplation.

A conference of leaders on 1 June 1833 determined that Doctor Philastus Hurlbut should be excommunicated for sins committed while serving a mission. He appealed that

decision and on 21 June 1833, the presidency of the high priesthood considered his case and determined that the other council had acted appropriately but that his repentance was sufficient to restore him to his former membership.¹ Unfortunately, this was short-lived as Hurlbut was excommunicated just two days later (23 June 1833) when it was discovered (by his own confession to the Thompson branch members) that he had been pretending just to see if he could deceive “Joseph Smith’s God or the spirit by which he is actuated.” Shortly after this, he traveled to Palmyra and collected negative affidavits about Joseph Smith and his family, which ended up as the basis for Eber D. Howe’s exposé called *Mormonism Unveiled*, published in 1834.²

On 6 June 1833, Orson Hyde was called as “Clerk for the presidency of the High Priesthood,” supplementing the efforts of Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams, who had been clerks and who were now presidents after Joseph Smith in that presidency. Hyde has just returned from several missions and immediately took over many clerk duties, including the minutes of the conference where he was called.

On 25 June 1833, the presidency of the high priesthood wrote a letter to the brethren in Missouri, answering some of their questions and giving instruction on various items, including the calling of additional bishops in Missouri, instructions for the bishops in implementing consecration and stewardship, a draft of the plan for the city of Zion, and “a draft of the house to be built immediately in Zion for the presidency as well as all purposes of Religion and instruction.”³

A few days later, on 2 July 1833, another letter was sent to Missouri, with details about the printing of the Book of Commandments (then nearing completion in Missouri), news of Kirtland happenings and people, and the announcement that the Bible translation was complete “a few hours since.” It’s not certain the brethren in Missouri ever saw the latter; by the time it would likely have arrived, the persecutions had already begun there.

On 18 July 1833, residents of Jackson County opposed to the Church’s presence there circulated a document with

¹ Appeal and Minutes, 21 June 1833, *JSP*, D3:116-117.

² Minutes, 23 June 1833, *JSP*, D3:119-120.

³ Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson County, Missouri, 25 June 1833, *JSP*, D3:147-158.

their grievances and stating their determination to remove the Mormons from the county. On 20 July, they met adopted resolutions along these lines, presenting them to Church leaders the same day and insisting on a response in fifteen minutes. The Mormons refused and the mob destroyed the print shop and press (which was also William W. Phelps' home), then tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Partridge and Charles Allen. Three days later, they were back in number about five hundred, declaring that all Church members must leave or die. Having no choice, leaders agreed that half would leave by January 1834 and the rest by April 1834.⁴

Oliver Cowdery quickly left for Ohio, taking copies of all the documents with him written by John Whitmer. He arrived 9 August in Kirtland, and Joseph Smith responded with two letters, one dated 10 August and the other dated 18 August 1833.⁵

Meanwhile, the Prophet continued to receive revelations outlining the plans for sacred spaces and homes and businesses under the law of consecration and stewardship. On 1 June 1833 (D&C 95), the brethren were chastised for making so little progress on the House of the Lord, commanded to be built the previous December. Three days later (D&C 96), instructions were given about how to put the recent purchase of over one hundred acres known as the French Farm to best use, putting Bishop Whitney in charge and

bring John Johnson into the United Firm to take part of that property as his stewardship. And the Lord expanded their vision in early August (D&C 94) about other houses that needed to be built for administrative purposes, in Kirtland. There was much to do and the brethren needed to “make haste” (D&C 93:51-53).

Summary Chronology

- **Sat, 23 Mar 1833** – Church leaders determined and made arrangements to purchase the French Farm, just north of Frederick G. Williams' property. The Kirtland temple will later be built on the southern part of this property.
- **Mon, 6 May 1833** – D&C 93 received, Kirtland.
- **Sat, 1 Jun 1833** – D&C 95 received, Kirtland; Philastus Hurlbut excommunicated; revelation received on the design of the Kirtland temple, which was applied to the Missouri temple as well.
- **Tue, 4 Jun 1833** – D&C 96 received, Kirtland.
- **Fri, 7 Jun 1833** – Work begins in earnest on the Kirtland house of the Lord.
- **Sun, 23 Jun 1833** – Cornerstones laid for the Kirtland house of the Lord.
- **Fri, 2 Aug 1833** – D&C 97 received, Kirtland.
- **Fri, 2 Aug 1833** – D&C 94 received, Kirtland.

D&C 93 – On the Father and the Son

Date and Location

Monday, 6 May 1833, Kirtland, Ohio

Setting

Joseph Smith offered no background to this revelation other than the date. Newel K. Whitney, one of the recipients, wrote on the back of his personal copy, “Revelation to Joseph, Sidny Frederick & Newell by chastisement & also relative to the Father & Son 6 May 1833.”⁶

Though there is a clear textual relationship to the gospel of John in the New Testament, the timing demonstrates that this has nothing to do with the Bible translation of that book, which was completed back in early February. However, D&C 93 addresses several questions that have arisen over the years relative to the Christology (beliefs about Christ's divinity versus his humanity), often from the book

of John. Joseph Smith may have been aware of some of these creedal questions from other Christian faiths through Sidney Rigdon or other sources. But whatever questions led to asking the Lord about the topics discussed herein, if any, the revelation breaks new theological ground, expands our knowledge of both the Father and the Son, and of man's divine and eternal nature, teaching doctrines not taught anywhere else in the Christian world.⁷

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in NKW (6 May 1833), with other copies in RB2 (about Jun-Jul 1833) 56-59, and RB1 (about late 1833) 178-181. It was published as Section 82 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, then as Section 83 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

⁴ Letter from John Whitmer, 29 July 1833, *JSP*, D3:186-187.

⁵ Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson County, Missouri, 6 August 1833, *JSP*, D3:228237; Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson County, Missouri, 10 August 1833, *JSP*, D3:238-243.

⁶ Revelation, 6 May 1833 [D&C 93], *JSP*, D3:83.

⁷ Revelation, 6 May 1833 [D&C 93], *JSP*, D3:83-85.

Outline

- Grace for grace (1-14)
- The record of John (15-18)
- The Church of the Firstborn (19-22)
- The Spirit of truth (23-28)
- Man is eternal (29-35)
- Satan takes away light and truth (36-39)
- To the presidency (40-49)
- To Newel K. Whitney (50)
- Make haste to do right (51-53)

Commentary

Grace for grace (1-14)

1 *see my face and know that I am.* The revelation starts boldly, declaring an amazing doctrine that those who forsake their sins, come to Christ, pray, and obey him will one day see the face of Christ and have a sure knowledge of his existence. But seeing is not understanding, necessarily, and this revelation prepares those armed with this promise to truly know the Father and the Son when they see them.

2 *I am the true light.* John 1:9; see also 1 John 2:8 and D&C 88:50.

3 *the Father and I are one.* A quote from 3 Nephi 11:27; also John 10:30, 3 Nephi 11:36 (where the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one), 20:35; 28:10; D&C 50:43.

4 *The Father because he gave me of his fulness.* Jesus was “in the Father” and “one” with the Father because the Father gave him “of his fulness.” Jesus was fully invested with the Father’s authority in the pre-Earth life and during his mortal existence, such that he would only say or do that which the Father wanted (John 5:30).

4 *the Son because I was in the world.* John 1:14; Jesus “made flesh” his tabernacle (temporary dwelling place) and dwelt among us, which makes him the Son. Nephi understood the willingness of Jesus to submit to the will of the Father and condescend to become mortal as the Son (1 Nephi 11:16-33).

5 *I was in the world and received of my Father.* Jesus was mortal, subject to all the same temptations and challenges we face, and yet he remained without sin, allowing him to be “received of my Father.”

6 *John saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory.* Most commentators and Church leaders who have looked at this have concluded that “John” here is John the Baptist, not John the Beloved, confirming that the latter quoted the

former in much of the first chapter of his gospel, which quotation is certainly implied in John 1:6-9.⁸

7 *the fulness of John’s record is hereafter to be revealed.* We only have partial quotes of John the Baptist’s account in the gospels but the Lord promised a full record at some time in the future.

7 *I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning.* John the Baptist spoke these words, a paraphrase of John 1:1-2.

8 *he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation.* JST John 1:15-16 adds, “for in the beginning was the Word, even the Son” who taught us “immortality and eternal life through his grace.”

9 *The light.* The light that Jesus brings to the world is a consistent theme of the gospel of John, starting in 1:5 and through several references in the book.

9 *Redeemer of the world.* While “Redeemer” is used often in the Bible, this phrase is not. It is found twice in the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 10:5 and 11:27), both in conjunction with Nephi’s vision of the life of Christ.

9 *the world was made by him.* John 1:3; also Colossians 1:16 and Revelation 4:11.

9 *the life of men and the light of men.* John 1:4; also Alma 38:9 and Ether 4:12.

10 *all things were made by him.* John 1:3; also D&C 45:1.

10 *by him, and through him, and of him.* D&C 76:24.

11 *I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten.* John 1:14; also Alma 9:26.

11 *full of grace and truth.* John 1:14; also 2 Nephi 2:6; D&C 66:12; Moses 1:6, 32; 5:7; 6:52; 7:11.

11 *which came and dwelt in the flesh.* Mosiah 15:2; also John 1:14.

12 *received grace for grace.* John 1:16, though it (and Helaman 12:24) is not speaking about Christ. This is the only place in all of scripture where this doctrine is taught, that Jesus progressed during his mortal life, “until he received a fulness” (v. 13).

14 *called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at first.* Looping back to verse 4, Jesus is called the Son because he condescended, became mortal, and submitted himself to the Father, not having a fulness at first. And what is the fulness of the Father? The JST defines the fulness of Christ as “immortality and eternal life through his grace” (JST John 1:16). Applying the same definition, it could mean that Christ did not receive immortality and

⁸ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:178; the Baptist was probably also quoted in Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:4-11; and Luke 3:1-22.

eternal life at first; he had to go through a mortal probation period, he had to atone, and he had to die. Only then could he receive the fulness of the Father's blessings.

The record of John (15-18)

15 *the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended.* John 1:32; also Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22; 1 Nephi 11:27. The Holy Ghost was "in the form of a dove," which could mean in physical appearance or in behavior in some way (came down softly and landed on him?), or something else.

15 *This is my beloved Son.* John 1:34; Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22. Other passages than the direct reference to the baptism where John heard the voice include the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; 2 Peter 1:17) Nephi's experience hearing the Father's voice (2 Nephi 31:11), the people at the temple in Bountiful (3 Nephi 11:7); and the First Vision (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). This is the only time the term is used in the Doctrine and Covenants.

16 *he received a fulness of the glory of the Father.* If the JST definition holds (see v. 14), then this is a testimony that Jesus received all the blessings of immortality and eternal life from his Father.

17 *all power, both in heaven and on earth.* Matthew 28:18; Mosiah 4:9. Having received the fulness of the Father, Jesus has power both in the realm of the gods and of mortals.

18 *you shall receive the fulness of the record of John.* Verse 6 first made this promise, but here it becomes conditional on our faithfulness.

The Church of the Firstborn (19-22)

19 *know how to worship, and know what you worship.* To "worship" is to fall down in abject humility with a sharp recognition of our unworthiness. Knowing that Jesus has received the fulness of the Father compels us to worship him as we do the Father.

19 *in due time receive of his fulness.* D&C 76:20 taught that we can receive "of his fulness" and inherit celestial glory. D&C 76:71 explained that only those of the Church of the Firstborn can receive "the fulness of the Father."

20 *if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness.* The method for reaching the great blessings promised is laid out very simply: keep Jesus' commandments and be glorified in him just as he was glorified in the Father.

20 *you shall receive grace for grace.* By correctly worshipping the Father and the Son and keeping their commandments, we grow and progress, going from grace (a gift from God) to grace (another gift from God) until we

have received all the Father hath to give us (D&C 76:55; 84:38).

21 *I was in the beginning with the Father.* Christ's pre-mortal existence is well-attested in scripture, including John 1:1; Mosiah 7:27; Ether 3:15.

21 *the Firstborn.* Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 12:23; D&C 76:54, 67, 71, 94, 102; 88:5. Curiously, this title is never used in the Book of Mormon relative to Christ, nor in the Doctrine and Covenants until Section 76.

22 *partakers of the glory of the same.* If we are "begotten" through Christ and become adopted into his celestial family, then we of the "church of the Firstborn" and partake of his full glory.

The Spirit of truth (23-28)

23 *Ye were also in the beginning with the Father.* The pre-existence of man is hinted in some scriptures in the Bible and earlier sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, but this is the first clear and unequivocal statement of that doctrine. Man is co-eternal with Christ (more on that starting in v. 29).

24 *truth is knowledge of things are they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.* Truth is not a theory or a possibility but a knowledge of things past, present, and future. It is no coincidence that this concept is introduced just as the Lord is teaching us about our eternal nature; we will understand and embrace it once we understand eternal truth.

25 *the spirit of that wicked one.* If what we are holding onto is not truth about the past, present, and future, then we are grasping at the lies of another eternal being who was there from the beginning (see Moses 4:1).

26 *I am the Spirit of truth.* If lies come from Satan, then all truth comes from Christ; Jesus is full of "all truth."

27 *no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.* See v. 20.

28 *receiveth truth and light.* John 3:21 brings truth and light together as well. More importantly, D&C 88:45 directly tied truth and light and the Spirit of Christ.

28 *knoweth all things.* The ultimate blessing of pursuing truth is to glorified by it and finally know all things. Eternal life is for 'know it alls'!

Man is eternal (29-35)

29 *Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made.* One popular Christian doctrine is that God creates anything he wants *ex nihilo* or out of nothing. Not true, the Lord declared: intelligence cannot be created, even by God!

30 **truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it.** The Lord now explains the eternal role of agency for eternal intelligences or ‘lights of truth’ (v. 29). Without agency and the ability to exercise intelligence and make choices, “there is no existence.”

31 **here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man.** Agency used not to pursue truth and light leads to condemnation because bad choices can cause us to forfeit agency until we are slaves to our choices and have lost the freedom to act.

31 **plainly manifest.** No one is left without excuse because the Lord makes sure that truth and the consequences of our choices are “plainly manifest” to all. Making wrong choices in the face of that declaration means that we reject the light even as we’re looking at it, which leads to condemnation (v. 32).

33 **man is spirit.** John 4:24 teaches that God is a spirit, but we know he is more than just a spirit with no mortal body, so what do both of these passages mean? Simply that we are spiritual beings, eternal beings, and our spirit is an essential part of our eternal, resurrected being (which will have a body).

33 **elements are eternal.** Another thing God does not create: “elements,” which in this context seems to mean the very building blocks of life, because when you join our eternal spirit with our eternal, resurrected “elements,” we “receive a fulness of joy.” With that eternal combination of spirit and “elements,” we can never experience full joy (v. 34).

Satan takes away light and truth (36-39)

36 **The glory of God is intelligence.** Joseph Smith learned in Moses 1:39 that we are God’s glory, and here we learn that God’s glory is “intelligence,” which equates to “light and truth.” So our eternal component, that has always existed and always will is made up of light, which society can’t even define,⁹ and truth, which is essential to joy and the proper exercise of agency.

37 **Light and truth forsake that evil one.** Satan cannot exist in places or lives full of light and truth. Likewise, embracing light and truth—the eternal part of our beings—cause us to give up on evil choices and influences.

38 **Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning.** Just as infants start out innocent and unable to commit or be held accountable for sin, so by some means our eternal spirits were innocent “in the beginning.” Since our intelligences or spirits are eternal, the phrase “in the beginning”

⁹ Scientists have concluded that light is *both* a particle and a wave because it behaves as expected in both types of experiments.

may refer to the beginning of creation, as in Genesis 1:1 or Moses 2:1.

39 **wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth.**

This sums up Satan’s whole method of operating: take away light and truth. He does it in two ways: “through disobedience” on our part—the breaking of righteous commandments either from heaven or men; and through “the tradition of their fathers”—our customs, cultures, practices, etc. There are millions in the world who need to change traditions of their fathers in order to embrace light and truth.

To the presidency (40-49)

40 **bring up your children in light and truth.** The three men of the presidency of the high priesthood were busy men, running the Church, receiving revelations, designing temples and cities, and much more. But when the Lord speaks to them about their own lives, it’s about their families, and their responsibilities to teach their children.

41 **Frederick G. Williams.** Williams and his wife Rebecca had four children at this time, from ages sixteen to nine.¹⁰

42 **not taught your children light and truth.** D&C 68:25-28 instructed parents to teach their children the essential doctrines of the kingdom. That revelation had been given a year and a half earlier. The Lord is telling Williams that he had not sufficiently kept that commandment, such that Satan “hath power, as yet, over you,” and this lack of proper teaching in the home was “the cause of your affliction.”

43 **set in order your own house.** To be delivered from Satan and affliction, the Lord didn’t tell him to dedicate more time to the kingdom or spend more hours at the office—he said to teach and love his family.

44 **Sidney Rigdon.** Sidney and his wife Phebe were the parents of seven children, ages twelve to one.¹¹

44 **in some things.** Rigdon’s chastisement wasn’t so strong as William’s but he still needed to do better relative to his children and “set in order [his] house.”

45 **Joseph Smith, Jun.** Joseph and Emma had two children at this time, Julia (Murdock) and Joseph Smith, III, both very young.

45 **I will call you friends, for you are my friends.** Lest they take the chastisement wrong, the Lord assured them of the supportive nature of their relationship still.

46 **I called you servants for the world’s sake.** They are also the Lord’s servants, dedicated to his work, so that public relationship is important for people to see as well.

¹⁰ Revelation, 6 May 1833 [D&C 93], *JSP*, D3:90n188.

¹¹ Revelation, 6 May 1833 [D&C 93], *JSP*, D3:90n191.

47 *stand rebuked before the Lord*. Joseph Smith does not escape chastisement either. How many times he includes the Lord's rebukes in his revelations is interesting. It is our mistake when start to treat Joseph or any other prophet like a perfect person. The Lord sees their hearts and calls them friends but also calls out their sins when needed. Perfection is a future state.

48 *Your family must needs repent*. Joseph's "family" who would need to repent might include not just Emma but his parents and siblings, as well as other spouses, etc. Hyrum is one who felt some judgment in this period, in his role as a member of the building committee for the temple (see D&C 95).

49 *I say unto one I say unto all*. Lest we believe that these teachings only apply to the presidency, the Lord is clear that this counsel to consider our sins, repent, and teach our children properly applies to the whole Church.

To Newel K. Whitney (50)

50 *Newel K. Whitney*. Whitney was not a member of the presidency, of course, but as the bishop of Kirtland, received attention in this revelation as well. His wife Elizabeth and he had four children at this time, ages nine to eight months.¹²

50 *more diligent and concerned at home*. With the same counsel to step up his game with his family, the bishop was told to be more diligent in that duty and keep praying, or "they shall be removed out of their place," apparently indicating his family.

Make haste to do right (51-53)

51 *make haste*. These last verses convey the sense of urgency and the need to get certain things done quickly.

51 *proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*. From Isaiah 61:2 originally, it was also a phrase Jesus selected to read in the synagogue as he proclaimed his own mission.

51 *your prayer of faith with one consent*. Sidney would be supported in his mission to go preach for a time by their combined, united prayers.

52 *Joseph Smith, Jun., and Frederick G Williams make haste also*. Though not explicitly stated, both are called to go preach as Sidney, though they had to finish up something first.

53 *hasten to translate my scriptures*. The Bible translation was nearly done in May 1833. The brethren were working their way through the final books of the Old Testament, the New Testament having been completed with review in February 1833. The project will be complete on 2 July.¹³

53 *obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man*. For the salvation of Zion, the Lord calls on his servants to learn all they can about the world around them. We function much better as preachers and teachers and representatives of Christ if we know the history and background of those with whom we labor, if we act within the laws and bounds of each country, and if we respect their languages and culture.

Results

D&C 93 affirms many truths in the Bible but also expands others and sets aside other well-known Christian beliefs. Creation didn't come from nothing—certain things are eternal. Man is eternal in a form that is labeled "intelligence." Jesus was not equally human and divine, as some theologians have supposed, but progressed through his human experience step by step until he became fully divine. Man's agency is an eternal principle and though we are created by God, he does not control our actions; we alone are eternally accountable for our choices. Man is not depraved, as some teach, but was innocent in the beginning and will be innocent again through the Atonement. Truth is knowledge of past, present, and future things, not just one thing. Spirit and matter are related eternally and only when joined together can full joy be experienced. Light and truth from God persuade man toward good choices but in the end, we are accountable to follow light and truth or go our own way, suffering the consequences of those choices. Disobedience and poor traditions can lead us away from light and truth, but parents who are concerned about their children will teach them light and truth and encourage them to make good choices.

All the brethren made a concerted effort to teach their families. They also went and preached as the Lord directed, first Sidney, then both Joseph and Frederick G. Williams after the Bible translation was finished in July.

D&C 94 – Other Sacred Houses

¹² Revelation, 6 May 1833 [D&C 93], *JSP*, D3:90n194.

¹³ Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson County, Missouri, 2 July 1833, *JSP*, D3:167 states, "having finished the translation of the bible a few hours since."

Date and Location

Friday, 2 August 1833, Kirtland, Ohio

Setting

This revelation continues to deal with the issues of the French property acquisition. By August, the foundation work was already underway for the house of the Lord being built in the southeast corner of the French property. The presidency of the high priesthood was charged with documenting the design of the house of the Lord, which they did, creating a version of it to send to Missouri, along with a plat map that showed how the city of Zion was to be laid out. D&C 94 called for the same effort to be made in Kirtland.

This revelation was misdated in the Doctrine and Covenants from the first printing in 1835 until the date was corrected in 2013. Because of the incorrect date first assigned (6 May 1833), it was put in the incorrect order, relative to the others after it; chronologically, it should come after D&C 97, being received later on the same day.¹⁴

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in a letter to Edward Partridge and others at Independence, Missouri, 6 Aug 1833, with other copies in RB2 (about 6 Aug 1833) 61-64 and RB1 (about late 1833) 171-172. It was first published as Section 81 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and as Section 82 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

- House for the presidency (1-9)
- House for the work of printing (10-12)
- Lots for the building committee (13-17)

Commentary

House for the presidency (1-9)

1 *the city of the stake of Zion*. Kirtland was the only ‘stake’ at this point and the designation is more metaphorical than administrative, as stake offices do not start to be used in the Church for several years.

1 *beginning at my house*. Everything oriented around the house of the Lord, which was being constructed at the

southeast corner of the French Farm but near the center of the city plan.

2 *according to the pattern which I have given unto you*.

The pattern of the city, as outlined in the plat maps produced by the presidency of the high priesthood (see Image #1).

3 *first lot of the south*. Meaning south of the house of the Lord. That would put this building on the north edge of Frederick G. William’s property (see Image #2).

3 *a house for the presidency*. Not a house to live in but an office space, in which they can work, conduct business and meetings, etc.

4 *fifty-five by sixty-five feet*. This is the same size as the house of the Lord (D&C 95:15). In the plat map for Zion, there were twenty-four “houses” planned in the center of time, each the same size but used for different purposes (Image #7).

5 *a lower court and a higher court*. Again, just like the house of the Lord in D&C 95.

6 *dedicated...according to the order of the priesthood*. Temples and other Church buildings were dedicated in the early days according to a specific pattern, with different priesthood quorums laying the various cornerstones.

7 *for the work of the presidency*. We have a similar building today at 47 East South Temple, called the Church Administration Building. Inside this four-story building are offices for the each member of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, plus offices for their support staff.

8 *my glory shall be there*. These offices were to be considered as sacred as the house of the Lord, wholly dedicated to the Lord’s work and kept clean from “any unclean thing” so that the presence of the Lord can be there.

House for the work of printing (10-12)

10 *the second lot on the south*. To the south of the presidency’s office building.

10 *for the work of the printing of the translation of my scriptures*. Exactly one month earlier, on 2 July 1833, the translation of the Bible was finished. The brethren in Ohio didn’t know it yet, but just a week or so earlier, the printing press in Missouri had been destroyed by an angry mob, so now the Church had no printing press. But the Lord knew it and so instructed them to building a printing house in Ohio,

¹⁴ This is a good example of the value of the Joseph Smith Papers project in determining correct historical circumstances. At least one commentary (Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:199-200) knew of the potential 2 August date but argued strongly based on the date in the *History of the Church* that May was correct. I’m sure the authors would agree to update it now based on

the additional information available, but it shows that even recent commentaries can have incorrect information, and highlights the need to get the latest from the Joseph Smith Papers project to be assured of accuracy.

specifically for the printing of the Bible, but in the end for printing all Church materials.

11 *fifty-five by sixty-five feet*. The same size as the house of the Lord and the house of the presidency, also with two stories like the other two. In other words, the plan was for three identical buildings in size and basic plan, but the interiors would be different because of the different needs.

12 *for the work of printing, in all things whatsoever I shall command you*. Like other two houses, the printing house would be fully dedicated to the Lord to print whatever he commanded.

Lots for the building committee (13-17)

13 *the third lot...Hyrum Smith*. Immediately to the south of the three houses just described, the Lord designated a lot for Hyrum Smith. All the lots other than the three for the temples are half-acre lots.

14 *the first and second lots on the north*. The other two members of the building committee, Reynolds Cahoon and Jared Carter, each received lots just to the north of the house of the Lord.

15 *a committee to build mine houses*. Initially, the committee was tasked with just building the house of the Lord but with this revelation, their responsibility includes all

three houses. As a result of their consecrated efforts, they receive inheritances (stewardships) near the houses they are building for the Lord.

16 *These two houses are not to be built until I give unto you a commandment*. Verse 16 was not in the original revelation but was added before the revelation was printed in 1835, apparently by Frederick G. Williams but certainly with Joseph Smith's consent. By then, it was clear that the two other houses for the presidency and for printing would not be built to the dimensions outlined here because the temple itself was barely funded. This priority, however, was reflected early on, in a 6 August 1833 letter, that declared "the two last mentioned houses are to be built as soon after the other as means can be obtained so to do."¹⁵

17 *no more at this time*. There would be additional revelation but this was sufficient to start projects going.

Results

The lots were allocated as commanded in this revelation, but the house of the presidency and the house for printing were never built, either in Ohio or Missouri. Instead, in their need, they built a small office to the west of the temple that served both purposes—office of the presidency and print shop, as well as a small school.

D&C 95 – Build the House of the Lord

Date and Location

Saturday, 1 June 1833, Kirtland, Ohio, School of the Prophets room, Newel K. Whitney store

Setting

In the end of December 1832, the Lord had commanded the church in Kirtland to be a house of the Lord to use for multiple purposes, including the School of the Prophets (D&C 88:117-127). On 4 May 1833, a committee was formed to start to raise money for the building, consisting of Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon. But by 1 June, nothing else had happened.¹⁶ On that day, a conference of high priests met first to deal with the reported misconduct of Doctor Philastus Hurlbut, who had been

serving a mission but was charged with inappropriate sexual conduct with a woman, or as Orson Hyde put it, "for an attempt at seduction and crime."¹⁷

After the decision to excommunicate Hurlbut, the conference asked the question about the dimensions of the house of the Lord that was to be built in Kirtland. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, the presidency of the high priesthood, were charged with designing the temple. The minutes record that they "received a revelation" that it should be fifty-five feet wide and sixty-five feet long, and gave them the task of preparing the plans for the interior, based on their vision, which they did.¹⁸

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in RB2 (between 6 June and 30 Jul 1833) 59-60, with another copy in RB1 (about late 1833)

¹⁵ Revelation, 2 August 1833-B [D&C 94], *JSP*, D3:207n277.

¹⁶ Revelation, 1 June 1833 [D&C 95], *JSP*, D3:104-105.

¹⁷ Minutes, circa 1 June 1833, *JSP*, D3:103.

¹⁸ Though the plans are not fully preserved, fragments of them were used to mount some of the Joseph Smith Egyptian papyri purchased in 1835, and those fragments appear to be original designs for the temple. See Plan of the House of the Lord in

Kirtland, Ohio (Fragments), circa June 1833, *JSP*, D3:91-102.

From a later second-hand account, Frederick G. Williams is reported to have explained that the three men prayed and had a vision of the building from the outside. They had "a good look at the exterior" and then the building in vision moved closer so they could see the inside (Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:206.

181-182. It was first published as Section 95 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and as Section 96 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

- Chastened for not building the house (1-6)
- Blessings promised from the house (7-12)
- The size and use of the house (13-17)

Commentary

Chastened for not building the house (1-6)

1 **whom I love I also chasten.** The Lord addressed the revelation to “you whom I love” but then reminded them that to love is also to chasten and correct, if it can lead to forgiveness of sins and deliverance from temptation.

2 **you must needs be chastened.** The Saints in Kirtland were in need of chastening relative to the work on the house of the Lord, which had been commanded them for several months with no progress toward making it happen.

3 **the great commandment in all things.** Great promises had been given in relation to the completion of this house. Their inaction showed that they either did not appreciate the value of these blessings or they did not have sufficient faith to move forward. Either way, they had “sinned against me a very grievous sin.”

4 **For the preparation.** One of the stated purposes of the temple was to prepare the members of the Church to take the gospel out to the world “for the last time” and that the Spirit might be poured out in preparation for the Second Coming (see D&C 88:74-80; 117-126).

4 **bring to pass my strange act.** From Isaiah 28:21, where “strange” means something foreign or alien—in other words, something unknown or mysterious.

5 **few of them are chosen.** From Matthew 20:16 and 22:14. This is the first instance of this phrase in the Doctrine and Covenants. The most ‘famous’ citation using it is in D&C 121:34-40, which comes from Joseph Smith’s future Liberty Jail letter. In this case, the “called” ones are those ordained to priesthood office but who are not living up to their ordination.

6 **walking in darkness at noon-day.** Though not an exact match, Psalm 91:6 uses similar language, speaking of a time when Israel will not be afraid of “the pestilence that walketh in darkness” or “the destruction that wasteth at noonday.” Though there are many references in the Bible and Book of Mormon speaking of walking in darkness, this and v. 12 are the only occurrences of this phrase in the

Doctrine and Covenants. Here it refers to being without the house of the Lord.

Blessings promised from the house (7-12)

7 **you should call your solemn assembly.** See D&C 88:117.

7 **the Lord of Sabaoth.** The Hebrew word referenced here usually is translated “hosts” or “armies,” referring to a large group of warriors prepared for battle. The Lord offers to alternative translations here. First, “the creator of the first day.” One commentary suggests this is because the root word is the same as Shabbat, referring to the first day of the week in the Christian world. It’s also “the beginning and the end,” which they suggest could be related to the Christian Sabbath being at the beginning of the week and the Jewish at the end.¹⁹ Another commentary suggests that the power to command hosts is related to the authority to create worlds and to be the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega.²⁰

8 **you should build a house.** This is, of course, the second commandment to do this. The other is in D&C 88:119 (also 90:7-9).

8 **endow those whom I have chosen with power.** To “endow” is to give a gift; in this case, the promised gift is “power from on high.”

9 **the promise of the Father.** The promise of blessings and a promise that will be kept, as the Father always keeps his word.

9 **tarry, even as mine apostles at Jerusalem.** ‘Stay in Kirtland for a time, even as I had my apostles stay in Jerusalem for a time after my resurrection.’ See Luke 24:49.

10 **contentions arose in the school of the prophets.** We are unaware of these contentions but perhaps it was related to the commandment to build a house of the Lord and was behind the conference and revelation of this day.

11 **it is my will that you should build a house.** Lest there be any misunderstanding, the Lord gives the commandment a second time in this revelation.

11 **If you keep my commandments you shall have power to build it.** There were very few members in Kirtland at this time, and even fewer with funds to support construction of such a large building. The Lord counseled faith and obedience and the blessing to be able to accomplish his commandment would be made available to them.

12 **the love of the Father shall not continue with you.** Nothing building the house of the Lord would cause the decline of the Father’s love and cause them to “walk in darkness” (also v. 6).

¹⁹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:209.

²⁰ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 690-691.

The size and use of the house (13-17)

13 *not after the manner of the world*. This likely doesn't reference some new building technique unknown to the world as much as the manner of the building. Some of the brethren had proposed making a log building or a frame building, since that would be the normal and cost effective thing to do. But the Lord wanted them to sacrifice to achieve this goal and do it in a manner that he would show to them, a manner worthy of the house of the Lord.

14 *I shall show unto three of you*. The presidency of the high priesthood: Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams (see Results below).

15 *the size thereof*. The brethren couldn't start digging the foundation until they first knew the measurements, so this was enough information to get them going. The temple was to be fifty-five feet wide and sixty-five feet long.

16 *the lower part...for your sacrament offering, and for your preaching, and your fasting, and your praying*. The house would have two levels, with a large meeting room on the lower floor to be used for general meetings and worship services.

17 *the higher part...for the school of mine apostles*. Not the Twelve as that office doesn't exist until 1835, but in the New Testament sense of the word 'apostle,' which means to be sent to speak and act with authority.

17 *Son Ahman*. See Commentary on 78:20.

17 *Alphus...Omegus*. This is the only use of these terms in all of scripture; typically it's Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. One commentary suggests this is simply that "the Greek letters have been given the Latin masculine ending," though they do not suggest what significance that might have.²¹

However, the original manuscript²² spells it like Alpha and Omega but just adds an "s" at the end of each, making them plural (the spelling was changed in the 1835 printing to a "u" and has been that way ever since). This spelling follows the Hebrew pattern of emphasizing a characteristic by making it a plural.

Results

The building committee (Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon) immediately sent out a circular requesting funds for the house of the Lord, stating, "Unless we fulfil this command vis establish a house, and prepare all things necessary whereby the Elders may gather into a school called the school of the prophets and receive the instruction that the Lord designs they should receive we may all dispare of obtaining the great blessing that God has promised to the faithful of the Church of Christ."²³

Physical work digging the foundation trenches of the building began on 7 June 1833 (with one account having Hyrum Smith starting by himself on 5 June, breaking the ground in the wheat field²⁴). The cornerstones were laid on 23 July 1833.²⁵ By fall, the foundation and the support girders for the first floor were in place. Construction paused when news of the Jackson county events reached Kirtland and members focused resources on helping those members in their need. Construction resumed in the spring of 1834 and proceeded until the temple was completed and dedicated in early 1836. Church leaders also drafted plans for the temple in Independence and sent those to the brethren in Missouri. The plans were similar to but not identical to those of Kirtland, the building in Missouri being planned to be slightly larger (sixty-one feet wide by seventy-eight feet long).²⁶

D&C 96 – The French Farm

Date and Location

Tuesday, 4 June 1833, Kirtland, Ohio, translating room, Newel K. Whitney store

Setting

Land was planned to be purchased in Kirtland to expand Church holdings and provide land for new arrivals. Several

plots were considered according to a 23 March 1833 conference, but in the end, the Peter French property was the only one acquired at this time. The purchase of that property was negotiated on 10 April 1833. By June, there was discussion about what to do with it. Frederick G. Williams had been appointed to oversee the existing brick kiln and brickyard on the property. At a conference of high priests and elders convened on 4 June 1833, they sought the will of the Lord to know how best to proceed.²⁷

²¹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:211.

²² Revelation, 1 June 1833 [D&C 95], *JSP*, D3:108.

²³ Revelation, 1 June 1833 [D&C 95], *JSP*, D3:105.

²⁴ Harper, *Making Sense*, 354.

²⁵ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:206.

²⁶ Plan of the House of the Lord in Kirtland, Ohio (Fragments), circa June 1833, *JSP*, D3:94-95 and 94n214.

²⁷ Minutes, 3 June 1833, *JSP*, D3:108-109.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in RB2 (between 6 Jun and 30 Jul 1833) 60-61, with another copy in RB1 (about late 1833) 182-183. It was first published as Section 96 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and as Section 97 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Commentary

1 *this stake that I have set for the strength of Zion.* This metaphor originates in Isaiah 54:2 (also Isaiah 33:20; 3 Nephi 22:2; Moroni 10:31) and refers to stakes used to secure a tent. In Isaiah's imagery, the tent gets enlarged to hold all those joining the covenant people, so the cords were lengthened and the stakes strengthened to hold up the bigger tent. It was used previously in D&C 133:9 (November 1831) and D&C 82:13-14, where it was first applied as a title to Kirtland. Now Kirtland is again portrayed as one of the stakes holding up the tent of Zion, which is in Missouri.

2 *let my servant Newel K. Whitney take charge.* Frederick G. Williams had previously been charged with determining what to do with the French property, during a 2 April 1833 conference.²⁸ Now by revelation it fell to Bishop Whitney.

2 *upon which I design to build mine holy house.* This is the first revelatory designation of the location of the Kirtland temple.

3 *let it be divided into lots.* "It" is the French farm. Shortly after this revelation, the brethren produced a plat map for Kirtland that divided a one-square mile city into forty-nine ten-acre squares, which each were in turn divided into half-acre lots (see Image #1).

4 *to benefit mine order.* The original read "to benefit the firm," referring to the United Firm. The dividing of lots was designed to benefit the Firm to allow it to build other facilities, such as a printing office to allow the "bringing forth my word to the children of men."

5 *my word should go forth unto the children of men.* A print shop was called for in Kirtland, even though the Church had one in Missouri. What the Lord knew that the leaders in Ohio didn't was that in a very short time from the receipt of this revelation, the Missouri printing operation would be destroyed, making a printing press in Ohio even more important.

6 *my servant John Johnson.* John Johnson owned the farm in Hiram, Ohio, where Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and

their families had lived from September 1832 to September 1832. Johnson had apparently offered his property in consecration ("whose offering I have accepted") and was now promised "eternal life inasmuch as he keepeth my commandments from henceforth."

7 *he is a descendant of Joseph.* Prefiguring later patriarchal blessings, Johnson is told of his lineage and blessings associated with that birthright.

8 *he should become a member of the order.* Meaning, the United Firm.

9 *ye shall ordain him unto this blessing.* Johnson was an elder at the time of this revelation but members of the Firm were all high priests, so he needed to be ordained a high priest.

9 *seek diligently to take away incumbrances.* The "house named among you" was the French inn or tavern, located on the eastern edge of the property, at the crossroads of major roads in and out of town (see Image #6). Johnson was to receive it as a stewardship, resulting in it being called the John Johnson Inn. The incumbrance was an arrangement for Thomas Knight to use the main floor as a store, which was resolved in the fall of 1833 when Knight moved away and liquidated his holdings.²⁹

Results

Newel K. Whitney immediately took over the management of the brick kiln and brickyard, per the revelation, a move that made sense based on his calling as bishop and member of the United Firm, with his property being immediately adjacent to the French property. The land was officially deeded to him just two weeks after this revelation.³⁰

John Johnson was ordained a high priest and brought into the United Firm the same day as this revelation. That required him to consecrate his sizable property and holdings in Hiram, Ohio, which he did without hesitation. They he was given the Inn on the French property to manage and in which to live. The leaders in Missouri were informed of this change in a letter at the end of June.³¹ In 1836, he was given the deed for the whole French property as a stewardship.³²

The print shop was planned for the land just south of the temple, on Frederick G. Williams's property, but later was placed in the schoolhouse built behind the temple, to the west (see Image #1).³³

²⁸ Minutes, 2 April 1833, *JSP*, D3:56.

²⁹ Revelation, 4 June 1833 [D&C 96], *JSP*, D3:112n283.

³⁰ Revelation, 4 June 1833 [D&C 96], *JSP*, D3:111n274.

³¹ Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson Co., MO, 25 June 1833, *JSP*, D3:147.

³² Minutes, 4 June 1833, *JSP*, D3:109; McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 699.

³³ Revelation, 4 June 1833 [D&C 96], *JSP*, D3:111n277.

Images

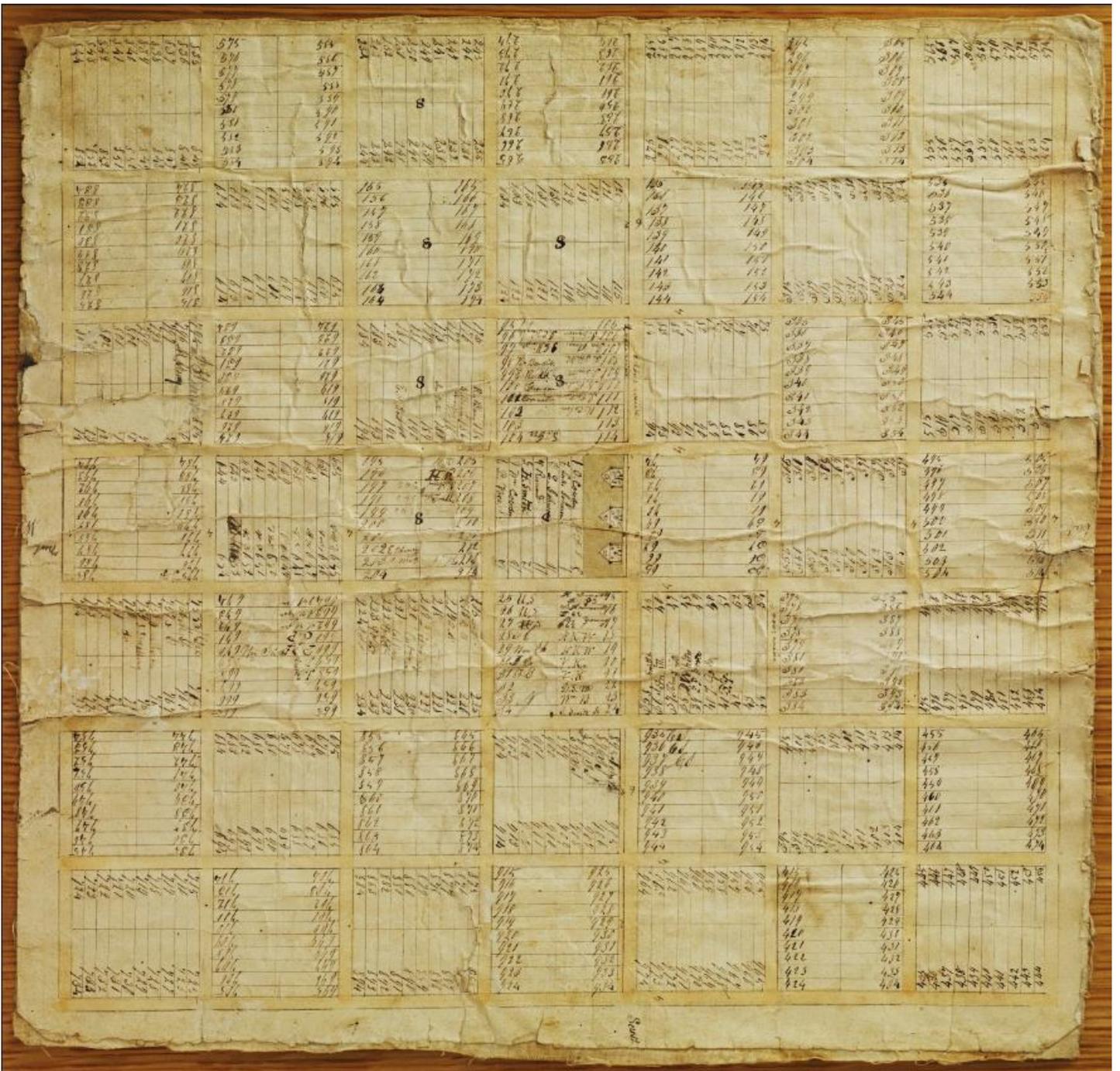
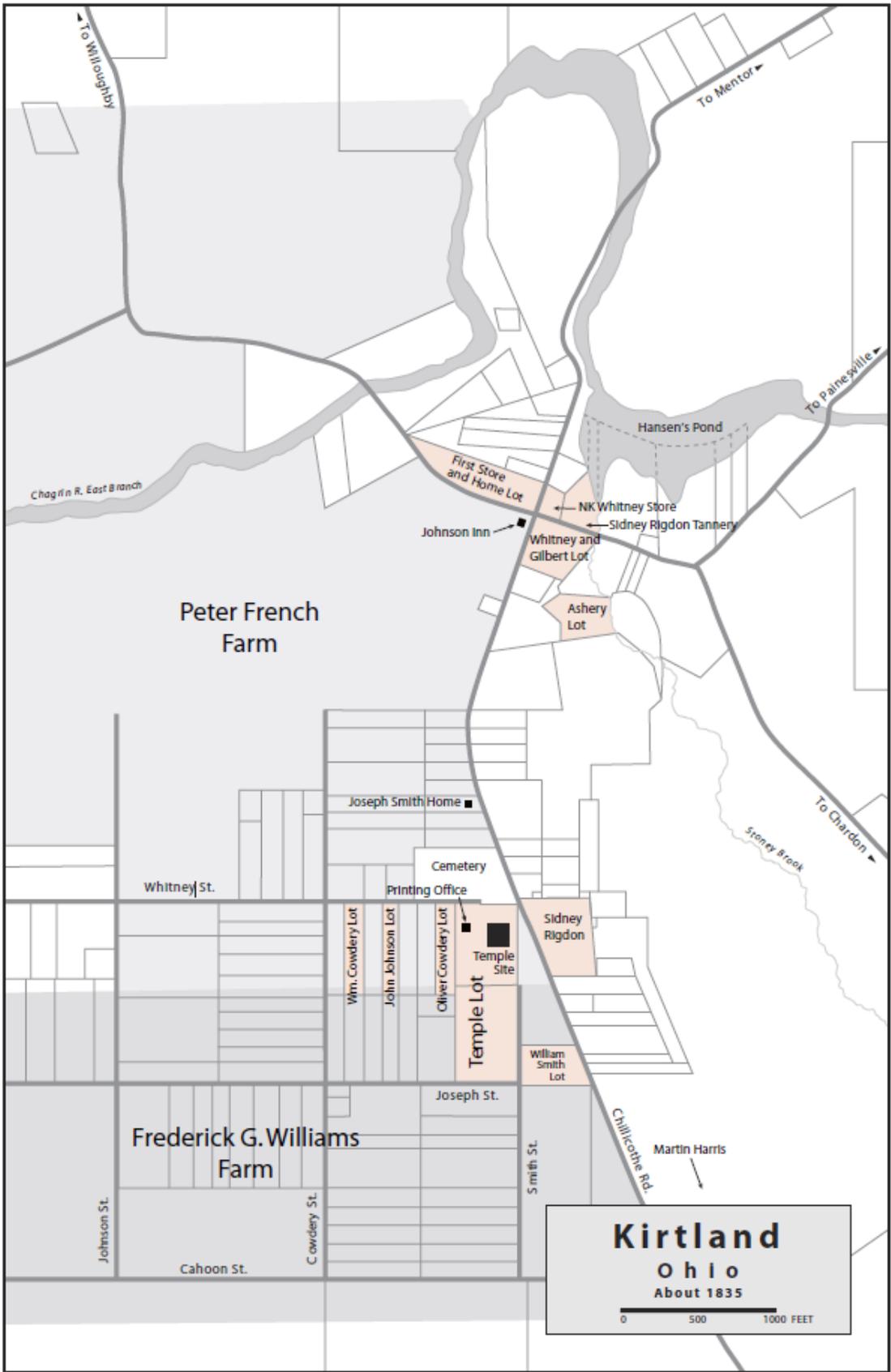


Image #1: Plat map for the Latter-day Saint City of Kirtland, 1833. A mile-square city was planned with a large temple lot on the east end of the center block, shown here with three buildings. From Joseph Smith Papers website.



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CARTOGRAPHY: R&R ERICSSON

Image #2: Kirtland, 1835. This map shows the properties at Kirtland managed by the United Firm and assigned to the firm's officers at the time the firm was discontinued. From Parkin, "Joseph Smith and the United Firm," 20.



Image #3: Kirtland temple, taken about 1900 (from Joseph Smith Papers website).

Kirtland Temple Floor Plan

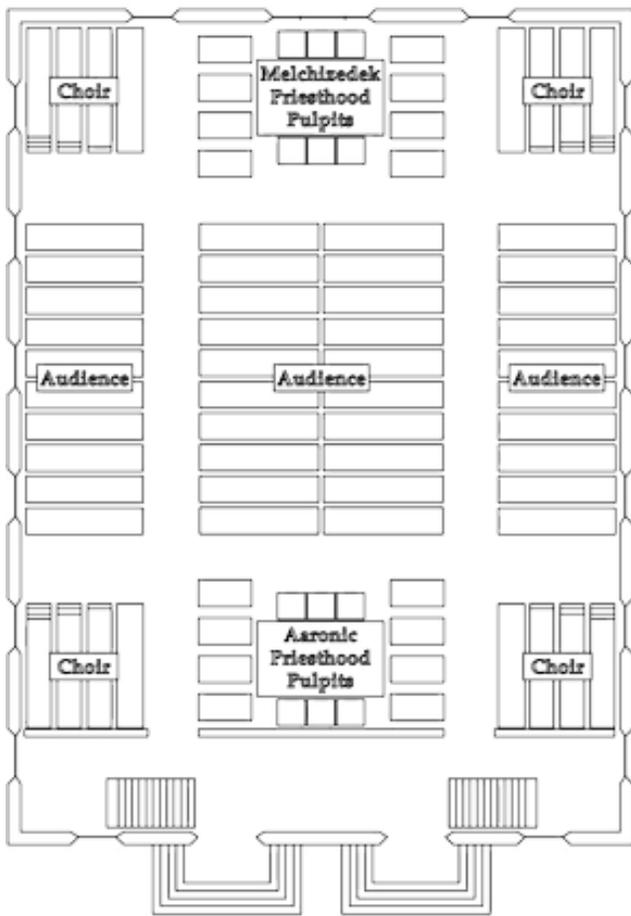


Image #4 (above): The lower level floorplan of the Kirtland temple.

Image #5 (right): The upstairs floor plan of the Kirtland temple, showing rooms for the Schools (of the Prophets and Elders) and a quorum meeting space.

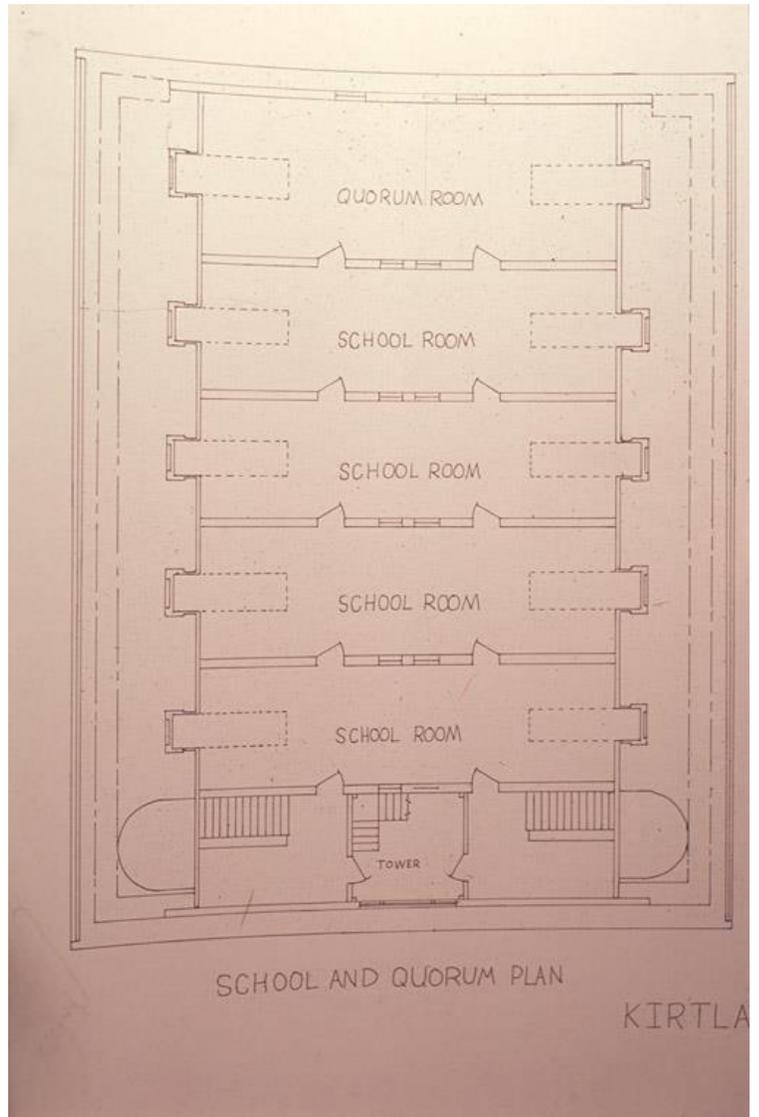




Image #6: John Johnson Inn (formerly French Inn or Tavern) and Whitney home (yellow) in the background, Kirtland, Ohio. From lds.org.

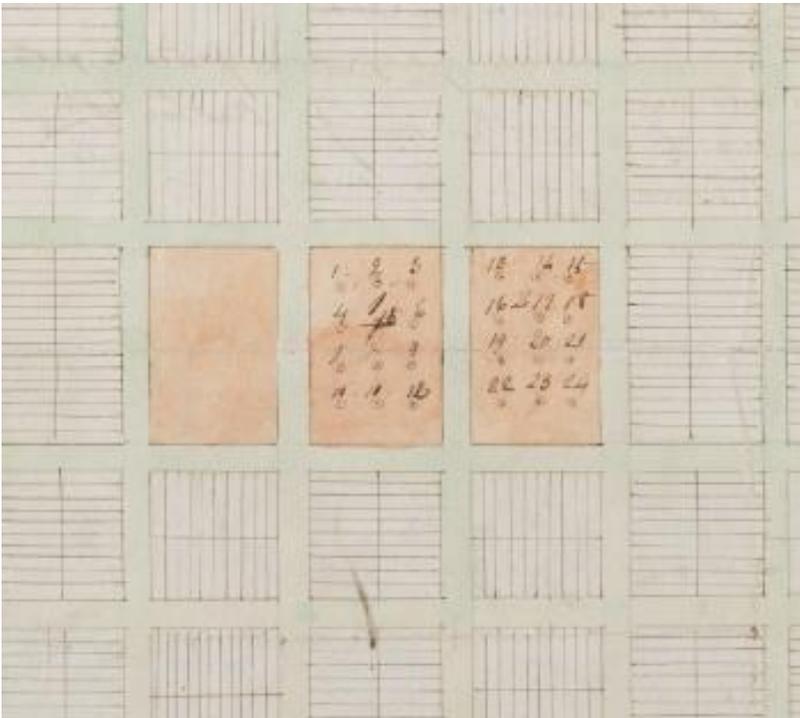


Image #7: Close up of the plat map for the city of Zion, showing the twenty-four “temples” to be built in the center, all the same size but for different purposes, including houses of worship, schools, and offices. From Joseph Smith Papers website.

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