

D&C 135

Lesson 32, Doctrine & Covenants, Adult Religion Class, Monday, 22 May 2017

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General Introduction

See Setting for section below.

Summary Chronology

- **Mon, 29 Jan 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – JS nominated for President of the United States.
- **Late Feb 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – JS discussed exploring the west as a location for the Saints.
- **Mon, 11 Mar 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – Council of Fifty organized.
- **Sat, 16 Mar 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – Final meeting of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo.
- **Sun, 7 Apr 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – King Follett sermon given by JS.
- **Thu, 18 Apr 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – William, Jane, and Wilson Law excommunicated.
- **Mon, 6 May 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – JS appointed men to lead Saints to Texas.
- **Fri, 7 Jun 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – First and only issue of the *Nauvoo Expositor* was made available.
- **Mon, 10 Jun 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – The Nauvoo City Council voted to destroy the press and type of the *Nauvoo Expositor*.
- **Wed, 12 Jun 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – JS was arrested the first time for the destruction of the press.
- **Sun, 23 Jun 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – JS crossed the Mississippi River to evade arrest.
- **Mon, 24 Jun 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – JS and others left for Carthage.
- **Tue, 25 Jun 1844, Carthage, IL** – JS and Hyrum Smith imprisoned on charge of treason.
- **Thu, 27 Jun 1844, Carthage, IL** – JS and Hyrum Smith assassinated while in the Carthage jail.
- **Tue, 9 Jul 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – James Strang claimed to be successor to JS.
- **Aug 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – Second edition (1844) of the Doctrine and Covenants was first available.
- **Thu, 8 Aug 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – Meeting in the grove, Quorum of the Twelve chosen to lead the Church.
- **Sun, 8 Sep 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – Sidney Rigdon excommunicated.
- **Sun, 17 Nov 1844, Nauvoo, IL** – JS's final child, David Hyrum Smith, born.
- **Fri, 24 Jan 1845, Springfield, IL** – Nauvoo charter repealed.
- **Sat, 24 May 1845, Nauvoo, IL** – Capstone placement ceremony at Nauvoo temple.
- **Fri, 30 May 1845, Carthage, IL** – Men on trial for JS's and Hyrum's murders found not guilty.
- **Thu, 28 Aug 1845, Nauvoo, IL** – Church leaders make plans to go to upper California.
- **Wed, 10 Sep 1845, Lima, IL** – Attack on Isaac Morley settlement.
- **Wed, 17 Sep – Sun, 28 Sep, 1844, Nauvoo and Warsaw, IL** – Battles between Mormon Militia and Anti-Mormon forces, ends with truce and agreement for Saints to leave the state.
- **Sun, 5 Oct 1845, Nauvoo, IL** – Portion of Nauvoo temple dedicated so meetings could be held there.
- **Sun, 20 Nov 1845, Nauvoo, IL** – Dedication of temple attic so endowments could be performed.
- **Wed, 10 Dec 1845, Nauvoo, IL** – First ordinances began in Nauvoo temple.
- **Wed, 4 Feb 1846, Iowa Territory** – First group of Saints crossed the Mississippi into Iowa Territory, leaving Nauvoo for the west.

D&C 135 – The Martyrs

Date and Location

Thursday, 3 November 1831, Hiram, OH

Setting

As converts to the Church poured into the Nauvoo area in the early 1840s, there was great demand for copies of Joseph Smith's revelations. These had been printed in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, but the number of Saints now greatly exceeded that supply and there were no more copies to be purchased. A convert and a printer named Ebenezer Robinson received permission from Joseph Smith to begin printing another edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1841, after already printing an 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon and a new hymnal in 1841. Robinson had purchased equipment to make stereotypes—permanent plates of the pages to be printed. This allowed many printings of a book over time, rather than a large run made up front with significant cost and effort. In 1841, Robinson began to set the type for the Doctrine and Covenants.

On 28 January 1842, the Prophet received a revelation that the printing operations should be put into the hands of the Twelve, rather than left to a private party like Robinson.¹ Accordingly, Robinson sold the entire printing operation on the Corner of Water and Bain streets to the Church for \$6,600 in early February 1842, and Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor were put in charge of printing the *Times and Seasons* and continuing the work on the Doctrine and Covenants.

Because Robinson's work was mostly a reprint of the 1835 edition, he had progressed to page 109 in the new book by the time of the handoff, about one-quarter of the book. But Woodruff and Taylor had many assignments as members of the Quorum of the Twelve, and little or no progress was made on the stereotype plates in 1842. In 1843, they again turned to the work, and by the end of that year were done to page 409, and had added seven new sections, not in the 1835 edition.² In January 1844, John Taylor was the sole printer working on the project. Paper was ordered for the project and printing began. On 12 June 1844, a notice was printed into the *Nauvoo Neighbor* newspaper that the book would be ready for sale in about one month and that pre-orders were being taken. On 25 June 1844, John Taylor wrote that the initial print run would be 1,000 copies.

However, on 27 June 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were brutally murdered in Carthage jail, and John

¹ See <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-28-january-1842>, accessed 20 May 2017.

² The new sections (using today's numbering system) were 103, 105, 112, 119, 124, 127, and 128.

³ An example is that Taylor recalled Joseph's last words were to him, "That's right, Brother Taylor; parry them off as well as you can," after which he was shot and rolled under the bed. Richards, on the other hand, recalled Joseph's last words after he was shot as "O Lord my God!" which Taylor would not have heard in his condition and position.

Taylor was seriously injured, shot four times. Taylor amazingly recovered but the work was delayed as a result of his injuries.

On 28 July 1844, William W. Phelps, announced that the book could be pre-purchased for \$1.25 and that there were still copies of the 1,000 print run available for pre-purchase. Though the exact date it was released is not known, it was cited in the 2 September 1844 issues of the *Times and Seasons*, making a late August release date likely.

One of the last additions before the book was released was a short tribute to Joseph and Hyrum, numbered originally as Section CXI (111). Because the book had already been printed, they had to make it fit on the last two blank pages, which they did by reducing the font.

Though the authorship of this section has traditionally been attributed to John Taylor, it's clear that it was a group effort, with Taylor perhaps being the final editor. In the days following the martyrdom, Saints everywhere were desperate for news, to several accounts were published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* and the *Times and Seasons*, likely authored by Willard Richards who was an eyewitness to the event and who had escaped with only a minor injury. Taylor was still recovering in Carthage until 6 July, and then longer in Nauvoo. The details in these newspaper accounts match Willard Richards journal, and much of that language is found in this section.³ But Taylor's witness was also taken into account in many details,⁴ as did details from others, such as John Bernhisel, who remembered Joseph saying that he was going to Carthage like a lamb to the slaughter. Later in life, John Taylor also quoted the section, modifying the language somewhat, including saying that Joseph was "a great Prophet than perhaps any other man who ever lived except Jesus." He said that if we know more about Enoch and other ancient prophets, we might be able to make a more definitive comparison.⁵

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is also the first publication, section 111 in 1844. The exact date of the composition is not known but was likely the latter part of August 1844.

⁴ For example, Richards' first recollection was that the murders took place about 6:00pm, but Taylor's broken watch attested the time to be 5:16pm and 26 seconds, so his 1 August account was updated with that detail.

⁵ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 61-69; *JSP*, RT2:637-642; LaJean Purcell Carruth and Mark Lyman Staker, "John Taylor's June 27, 1854, Account of the Martyrdom," in *BYU Studies*, 50:3 (2011), 25-62.

Commentary

1 **To seal the testimony of this book.** As explained in the Setting, this was written at the end of the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants as a tribute to Joseph and Hyrum Smith and as a condemnation of those who promised them protection in Carthage and failed in that duty.

1 **and the Book of Mormon.** The Book of Mormon is a testament to the calling of Joseph Smith. Anyplace along the way, he could have denied it, if it were not true. Certainly he could have escaped much suffering in Missouri, and he could have escaped his death. Instead, he continued to testify to it right to the end. Hyrum, too, believed in the book and his witness of it was sealed with this own blood, even as he read from it just before they left for Carthage.

1 **we announce the martyrdom of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and Hyrum Smith the Patriarch.** Their deaths had, of course, been announced in newspaper accounts throughout the country in June, July, and August 1844. This announcement, though, was different, because it was tied to the scripture that Joseph had given to the world, and would thereafter be printed with his revelations.

1 **by an armed mob—painted black—of from 150 to 200 persons.** The mob consisted mostly of members of local militias, mostly from Warsaw, where newspaper editor and leader of the anti-Mormon political effort had whipped people into a frenzy, calling for Joseph Smith's death in June 1844. The Carthage Grays, who were charged by Governor Ford with defending the Church leaders, left a skeletal crew at the jail; most of them intentionally stayed a few miles away to allow the attack to take place.

1 **Hyrum was shot first and fell calmly, exclaiming, I am a dead man!** In the earliest published account of the incident, Willard Richards wrote that as the mob came up the stairs, they closed the door, then “a ball was sent through the door [John Taylor said someone shot through the keyhole], which passed between us, and showed that our enemies were desperadoes, and we must change our position [they were leaning against the door to hold it closed]. Gen. Joseph Smith, Mr. Taylor, and myself sprang back to the front part of the room [to the side of the door], and Gen. Hyrum Smith retreated two thirds across the chamber directly in front of and facing the door. A ball was sent through the door which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose when he fell backwards extended at length without moving his feet. From the holes in his vest, (the day was warm and

no one had their coats on but myself,) pantaloons, drawers and shirt, it appears evident that a ball must have been thrown [shot] from without, through the windows, which entered his back on the right side and passing through lodged against his watch, which was in his right vest pocket completely pulverizing the crystal and face, tearing off the hands and mashing the whole body of the watch, at the same instant the ball from the door entered his nose. As he struck the floor he exclaimed emphatically; “*I’m a dead man.*” Joseph looked towards him, and responded, “O dear! *Brother Hyrum!*”⁶

1 **Joseph leaped from the window, and was shot dead in the attempt, exclaiming: O Lord my God!** Again, Willard Richards: “Joseph attempted as the last resort, to leap the same window from when Mr. Taylor fell [back into the room], when two balls pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward exclaiming, “*O Lord my God!*” As his feet went out the window, my head went in [meaning, he looked out the window], the balls whistling all around. He fell on his left side a dead man. At this instant the cry was raised, “*He’s leaped the window,*” and the mob on the stairs and in the entry ran out.”⁷

1 **They were both shot after they were dead, in a brutal manner.** Richards said this from his vantage point up in the room, with only a glance out the window, at which point he turned to care for John Taylor who was wounded but still alive. Witnesses on the ground stated that Joseph was still alive when he hit the ground, pulled himself up against the well, then died, and that no one molested the body after it fell from the window.⁸

1 **both received four balls.** Joseph was shot in the right collar bone, the chest, and twice in the back. Hyrum was shot in the face, the back, his breast (into his throat and head), and another unnamed location.⁹

2 **John Taylor . . . was wounded in a savage manner.** John Taylor was the first one to try and escape out the window. As he reached it, however, he was shot in the left thigh, collapsing onto the window sill on his chest, breaking his watch but locking the hands at the time, 5:16 and 26 seconds.¹⁰ He fell back into the room, then attempted to crawl under a nearby bed. He was shot in the forearm, the ball passing through his arm into his wrist and hand, and another going into his left knee. A fourth shot hit him in the left hip, tearing off flesh and splattering blood on the wall.¹¹

⁶ Willard Richards, “Two Minutes in Jail,” in *Times and Seasons*, 1 August 1844, 598; Carruth and Staker, “John Taylor’s June 27, 1854, Account,” 59.

⁷ Richards, “Two Minutes in Jail,” 599.

⁸ Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 21.

⁹ Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 21; Richards, “Two Minutes in Jail,” 598.

¹⁰ Richards, “Two Minutes in Jail,” 599.

¹¹ Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 397; “John Taylor’s Miracle,” Church History website, <https://history.lds.org/article/museum-treasures-john-taylors-pocket-watch>, accessed 20 May 2017.

2 Willard Richards . . . escaped without even a hole in his robe. Richards' only wound was a nick in his left ear.¹²

3 Joseph Smith . . . has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other. Joseph Smith held keys from all past dispensations, and did more than any prophet in the past to bring the message of salvation to more of heavenly Father's children, which continues in our day. Prophets of the past looked forward to this day, to the dispensation led by Joseph Smith.

3 In the short space of twenty years. Measuring from the first visit of Moroni in 1824.

3 brought forth the Book of Mormon. Listing the Prophet's accomplishments starts with the first tangible evidence of his prophetic callings—the Nephite record that he translated in his early twenties.

3 Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents. While many of Joseph's revelations and teachings are captured in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Joseph Smith Papers projects is a testament to the "many other" documents Joseph produced or caused to be produced that contribute to our understanding of God's plan.

3 gathered many thousands. The population of Nauvoo at the time of Joseph's death was about twelve thousand, with a few thousand more in other settlements in Illinois and Iowa, not to mention a large number of Saints in other cities in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain.

3 founded a great city. This is speaking of Nauvoo, but the Prophet either founded or had a dramatic impact on Kirtland, Independence, and Far West. Everywhere he went, the location was changed by his teachings and followers.

3 a fame and name that cannot be slain. Twenty years previously, Moroni had told a seventeen-year-old farmboy that his "Name should be had for good and evil among all nations" (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). That was already starting by 1844, but today the Joseph Smith story is told and embraced by new people hundreds of thousands of time every year, a testimony to the power of his fame and name.

3 sealed his mission and his works with his own blood. One of the first reactions of the Saints was to compare the Prophet's and Patriarch's deaths to Biblical events and characters, from the murder of Abel to the death of Christ. They saw their deaths as part of those "slain for the word of God" mentioned in Revelation 6:9-10 (see v. 7).¹³

¹² Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 397.

¹³ Jeffrey Mahas, "Remembering the Martyrdom," *Revelations in Context*, <https://history.lds.org/article/remembering-the-martyrdom>, accessed 20 May 2017.

3 In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated. Joseph is recorded to have said about Hyrum, "I could pray in my heart that all my brethren were like unto my brother beloved brother Hyrum, for truly he possesses the mildness of a lamb, and the integrity of a Job, and in short the meek and quiet spirit, of Jesus Christ; and I love him with that love, that is stronger than death, for I never had occasion to rebuke him, nor he me, which he declared when he left me to day."¹⁴

4 the pretended requirements of the law. After the city council, led by mayor Joseph Smith, destroyed the press of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, owned and published by dissenters who had left the Church over polygamy, those dissenters brought charges of inciting a riot against Joseph and the city council. William Law, Charles Foster, Francis Higbee, and the others claimed that up to two hundred people had attacked their print shop, but the city council stated it was just the city marshal. The friendly but non-member judge in Nauvoo, Daniel H. Wells, dismissed the charges. Two more attempts were made but again, charges were dismissed. This angered the Anti-Mormon party who saw the rulings as abuses of power, causing Thomas Sharp of the *Warsaw Signal* to call for war, extermination, and murder. With such high tensions, and fearing a great civil war, governor Thomas Ford requested Joseph and the city council come to Carthage for a trial that would be more acceptable to all parties.

4 I am going like a lamb to the slaughter. As mentioned in the Setting, it was probably John Bernhisel who heard Joseph Smith say this as they were on their way to Carthage on 24 June 2017. His report made it into this document. The phrase "lamb to the slaughter" came from Isaiah 53:7 (though see also Jeremiah 11:19).

4 twelfth chapter of Ether. Hyrum was reading the Book of Mormon the morning they left for Carthage, and read Ether 12:26-28, which was written by Moroni, who received an answer from the Lord that he was faithful, clean, and made strong in his weakness (v. 5). He must have been reading early, because the party left Nauvoo at about 6:30am.¹⁵

6 if the fire can scathe a green tree for the glory of God, how easy it will burn up the dry trees. The "green tree" reference is from Luke 23:31, where Jesus is speaking of the last days. Most commentators agree that he is speaking of himself, with the "dry" tree the wicked among the house of Israel. In this case, the green tree is Joseph and Hyrum, the "best blood of the nineteenth century," and the dry trees

¹⁴ History, 1834-1836, p. 155, in *JSP*, H1:152.

¹⁵ Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 377.

the wicked who killed them, who will be burned up in the judgments of God.

7 They were innocent of any crime, as they had often been proved before. As mentioned above (v. 4), Joseph and the others had been charged with riot three times and had all three cases dismissed by a qualified judge and court.

7 were only confined in jail by the conspiracy of traitors and wicked men. When the group arrived in Carthage, they met with a judge who set bail and set a trial date. At that point, they were free to return to Nauvoo. But those who brought them to Nauvoo did not want them to leave, having an attack planned and ready. So they brought charges of treason against Joseph and Hyrum, stemming from his calling out the Nauvoo Legion to help protect the Saints and keep the peace, a few days previous. The judge that issued the arrest warrant was Robert Smith, who was also a captain of the Carthage Greys militia. So Joseph and Hyrum were arrested with no hearing or witnesses and taking northwest of the Hamilton Hotel where they were staying to be held in the Carthage jail. Several others joined them, though they were not under arrest, including Willard Richards, John Taylor, Dan Jones, John Fullmer, and Stephen Markham. The latter three departed for various reasons and were not allowed back in when they returned, leaving just Joseph, Hyrum, Richards, and Taylor in the room on 27 June.¹⁶

7 the broken faith of the State. The governor, Thomas Ford, had pledged to keep the men safe, using state militia

to do so. On 27 June, he went to Nauvoo to keep the peace there. The people he left in charge of security either helped with the ambush or looked the other way. Ironically, as Joseph and Hyrum were being murdered, Ford was being treated to dinner by Emma Smith in the Mansion House.

7 the innocent blood of all the martyrs under the altar that John saw. This echoed a theme common in the early publications about the killings, that the men had joined the martyrs mentioned in Revelation 6:9-11, along with other Old and New Testament martyrs mentioned throughout the Bible.¹⁷

Results

Joseph's and Hyrum's death shocked the Church. When their bodies were brought back to Nauvoo, Vilate Kimball wrote to her husband, Heber, serving a mission in the east with Brigham Young, "God forbid that I should ever witness another like unto it . . . Every heart is filled with sorrow, and the very streets of Nauvoo se[e]m to mo[u]rn."¹⁸

The funerals were attended by eight to ten thousand, but after, the bodies were carefully hidden and guarded, out of fear that someone would steal or desecrate them. Governor Ford pledged to bring the murderers to justice, and some men were charged with their murders. But none were convicted as local juries believed that they had acted properly and acquitted them. The Saints lost all faith in the government to protect their rights and began to make preparations to leave Nauvoo for a yet-unknown location.

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¹⁶ Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 382-387.

¹⁷ Mahas, "Remembering the Martyrdom."

¹⁸ Mahas, "Remembering the Martyrdom."

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