

"Establish ... a House of God"

Lesson 18

*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Lesson 18, pp 99-104*

Purpose: To understand the significance of temples and encourage them to seek the blessings of the temple in their own lives.

Preparation: a. Doctrine and Covenants 95; 109; 110.
b. Our Heritage, pages 33-36.

Sing: "The Spirit of God" if you plan to use it during the lesson (Hymns, no. 2).

Attn Activity: How many temples were built by the Lord's covenant people before this dispensation?
How many temples were built or planned in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Without asking for discussion of these questions, explain that we know of only four temples that were built by the Lord's covenant people before this dispensation. The first was the temple **built in the days of Solomon**, which was rebuilt twice and known at different times as the temple of Zerubbabel and the temple of Herod (Bible Dictionary, "Temple," 781). The other **three are mentioned in the Book of Mormon**: the **temple built by Nephi** (2 Nephi 5:16), the **temple in the land of Zarahemla** from which King Benjamin gave his final address (Mosiah 1:10; 2:1), and the **temple in the land Bountiful** where the people gathered before the appearance of the resurrected Lord (3 Nephi 11:1).

Five temples were built or planned during the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith: in **Kirtland, Independence, Far West, Adam-ondi-Ahman, and Nauvoo**.

•How many temples are currently built or under construction?

Emphasize that the Prophet Joseph Smith was a temple builder. It was through him that Malachi's prophecy of Elijah's return was fulfilled (Malachi 4:5-6; D&C 110:13-16). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to be a temple-building church.

1. The Lord commanded the Saints to build the Kirtland Temple.

D&C 95. Temples are an essential part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In December 1832, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland, Ohio (D&C 88:119; 109:2). Five months later the Saints had done little to fulfill this command, so the Lord called on them to repent and hasten their work (D&C 95). Four days later, men began hauling stone and digging trenches in preparation for building the temple.

•Read D&C 95:3-4, 8-9, 16-17; 109:5, 8. What do these verses teach about the purposes for building the Kirtland Temple? (The Kirtland Temple was not like today's temples, where saving ordinances are performed for the living and the dead. The Lord restored temple ordinances a few years later while the Saints were in Nauvoo.)

•What did the Lord reveal to Joseph Smith about how to build the Kirtland Temple? (See D&C 95:13-17 and the following quotations.)

Some of the workers suggested they build the temple with logs or boards. But **Joseph Smith** replied: "*Shall we ... build a house for our God, of logs? No.... I have a plan of the house of the Lord, given by himself; and you will soon see by this, the difference between our calculations and his idea of things*" (quoted in Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 230).

The Lord revealed His plans for the Kirtland Temple in a vision to the First Presidency (Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams). President Frederick G. Williams said they knelt together in prayer, and a model of the building "*appeared within viewing distance.... After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us.*" When the temple was completed, Frederick G. Williams said it looked exactly as it had in the vision. (In The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, comp. Lyndon W. Cook [1981], 198.)

Today the First Presidency, through revelation, determines when and where to build temples.

2. The Saints were blessed for their great sacrifices in building the temple.

•Explain that the Kirtland Temple was the first temple built in this dispensation. What were some of the challenges and sacrifices associated with building the temple? (See D&C 109:5 and Our Heritage, pages 33-34.)

•How were the Saints blessed for the sacrifices they made in building the Kirtland Temple? (See Our Heritage, pages 34-35.)

•What sacrifices have you seen members of the Church make to receive temple blessings or to participate in temple work? What are some sacrifices we could make to participate in temple work?

3. Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple. On 27 March 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple. The dedicatory prayer, which the Lord revealed, is recorded in D&C 109. The dedicatory service lasted seven hours and was accompanied by a great outpouring of the Spirit. It included the dedicatory prayer, hymn singing, testimony bearing, the passing of the sacrament, sermons, and a solemn assembly in which members sustained Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. The service ended with the Saints giving the **Hosanna Shout**—raising their hands above their heads and shouting three times, "*Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna to God and the Lamb, amen, amen, and amen*" (History of the Church, 2:427-28).

You may want to have class members sing "**The Spirit of God**" (Hymns, no. 2), which was sung at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.

•Why do we dedicate temples? How are temples different after they are dedicated? If any class members have attended a temple dedication, invite them to share some of their thoughts and impressions of the experience.

•What spiritual manifestations occurred during the dedication of the Kirtland Temple? (See Our Heritage, pages 34-35.)

•Explain that in the dedicatory prayer, the Prophet emphasized some responsibilities of Church members with regard to temples. What responsibilities did he emphasize? (Some of these are outlined in the following scripture passages)

a. D&C 109:7, 14. (We should seek diligently to learn by study and by faith.) Why is this an important responsibility with regard to temples?

b. D&C 109:9, 17-19. (Our incomings, outgoings, and salutations should be in the name of the Lord.) How can we fulfill this responsibility?

c. D&C 109:20-21. (We must be clean to enter the temple.) Why is it necessary that we be worthy when we enter the temple? (See D&C 97:15-17.) How do we verify our worthiness to enter the Lord's house? (Through temple recommend interviews.)

d. D&C 109:23. (We should leave the temple bearing the great tidings of the gospel to the ends of the earth.) How can temple attendance inspire us to do this?

•Explain that in the dedicatory prayer, the Prophet prayed for many great blessings. What blessings did he pray for? (Some of these blessings are outlined in the following scripture passages.)

a. D&C 109:15. (The Lord's people would receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost.) Invite class members to tell how temple attendance has increased the influence of the Spirit in their lives.

b. D&C 109:22. (The Lord's people would go forth from the temple armed with power and watched over by angels.) Invite class members to share experiences when they have felt armed with power after attending the temple.

c. D&C 109:25-26. (No weapon or wickedness would prevail against the Lord's people.) How does temple attendance protect us from evil?

d. D&C 109:32-33. (The Lord would break off the yoke of affliction from His people.) How has temple attendance helped you overcome or bear affliction?

e. D&C 109:36-37. (There would be an outpouring of the Spirit, as on the day of Pentecost; see Acts 2:1-4.) One fulfillment of this part of the prayer occurred during a priesthood meeting on the night of the dedication. The temple was filled with the sound of a mighty wind, and many brethren spoke in tongues, prophesied, and saw visions (History of the Church, 2:428).

f. D&C 109:54-58. (The Lord would have mercy on the nations of the earth, softening the hearts of the people to prepare them for the gospel message.)

g. D&C 109:61-64, 67. (The scattered children of Israel would begin to be gathered and redeemed.) How does temple work help bring about this blessing?

h. D&C 109:72-74. (The Lord's Church would fill the whole earth.) How does temple work help bring about this blessing?

President Howard W. Hunter, the 14th President of the Church, described these promises in the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple as "*stirring and wonderful*" ("The Great Symbol of Our Membership," Ensign, Oct. 1994, 5). This prayer, he said, "*continues to be answered upon us individually, upon us as families, and upon us as a people because of the priesthood power the Lord has given us to use in His holy temples*" (Ensign, Oct. 1994, 4).

4. The Lord accepted the Kirtland Temple, and ancient prophets restored priesthood keys.

D&C 110. The Lord fulfilled His promise to endow His servants with power from on high when the Kirtland Temple was completed (D&C 95:8). This endowment of power included an appearance of the Savior in the temple, an outpouring of the Spirit, many revelations, and the restoration of priesthood keys by Moses, Elias, and Elijah. With these sacred experiences and keys, the Lord's servants were able to move His work forward with greater power and authority.

•How did the Prophet Joseph Smith describe the appearance of the Savior in the Kirtland Temple? (See D&C 110:1-3.) What did the Savior say about Himself? (See D&C 110:4.) What did He say to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery about the temple? (See D&C 110:6-10.)

•What priesthood keys did Moses, Elias, and Elijah restore? (See D&C 110:11-16.) What blessings and responsibilities do we have today because Moses restored the keys of the gathering of Israel? because Elias restored the keys of the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham? because Elijah restored the keys of the sealing power? (The following chart may help your discussion.)

Person	Keys Restored	Blessings and Responsibilities Today
Moses	Gathering of Israel	The authority to preach the gospel to gather Israel (missionary work).
Elias	The dispensation of the gospel of Abraham	The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant and the responsibilities associated with that covenant (see Abraham 2:9-11 for a review of these blessings and responsibilities).
Elijah	Sealing power	The power that makes priesthood ordinances valid in heaven. The sealing power makes possible temple marriage, sealings to children and ancestors, eternal families,

and temple ordinance work for the dead.

5. Temple building and temple work accelerate in our day.

•Display a picture of a temple. How has temple building accelerated in our day? (The Church had 19 temples in 1980 and 51 temples by the end of 1997. In the October 1997 general conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced plans to construct smaller temples. In the April 1998 conference he announced plans to have 100 temples by the end of the year 2000, which meant constructing as many temples in 3 years as were built during the first 167 years after the organization of the Church.)

•Along with the acceleration in temple building, Church leaders have given renewed emphasis to participating in temple work. Read D&C 138:53-56 with class members. Worthy Church members today are among the "choice spirits who were reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in ... the building of the temples and the performance of ordinances therein." How can we help accelerate temple work?

President Howard W. Hunter said: "*Let us be a temple-attending and a temple loving people. Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty, it is a place of revelation, it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us*" (Ensign, Oct. 1994, 5).

Conclusion: Prayerfully examine our lives and determine how we can participate in temple work. Suggest that just as the Saints made sacrifices to build the Kirtland Temple, we should make sacrifices to assist with temple work. Encourage us to attend the temple. Testify that the Lord will bless us as we participate in this great work.

Additional Teaching Idea:

Pictures of temples-Suggest that we display pictures of temples in their homes. **President Howard W. Hunter** said: "*Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing*" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 8; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 8).

Our Heritage
A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Chapter 3, Building the Kingdom in Kirtland, Ohio

The Kirtland Temple
Sacrifices of the Saints

On 27 December 1832, the Saints first learned of the Lord's command to build a temple (see D&C 88:119). Construction of the temple became the main priority of the Church in Kirtland between 1833 and 1836. This presented great challenges to the Saints, who lacked both the necessary laborers and money. According to **Eliza R. Snow**, *"At that time, . . . the Saints were few in number, and most of them very poor; and, had it not been for the assurance that God had spoken, and had commanded that a house should be built to his name, of which he not only revealed the form, but also designated the dimensions, an attempt towards building that Temple, under the then existing circumstances, would have been, by all concerned, pronounced preposterous."*¹⁶

With faith that God would provide the necessary help and means, the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Saints began making the necessary sacrifices. **John Tanner** was one whom the Lord prepared to help provide the means for building the temple. John, a recent convert from Bolton, New York, in December of 1834 *"received an impression by dream or vision of the night, that he was needed and must go immediately to the Church in the West...."*

"On his arrival in Kirtland, he learned that at the time he received the impression that he must move immediately to the Church, the Prophet Joseph and some of the brethren had met in prayer-meeting and asked the Lord to send them a brother or some brethren with means to assist them to lift the mortgage on the farm upon which the temple was being built.

*"The day after his arrival in Kirtland,... [he was] informed that the mortgage of the before mentioned farm was about to be foreclosed. Whereupon he loaned the prophet two thousand dollars and took his note on interest, with which amount the farm was redeemed."*¹⁷

The remarkable efforts put forth by the Kirtland Saints are examples of sacrifice and consecration of time, talents, and means. For three years they labored on the building. Besides the construction skill and effort provided by the men, the

women spun and knit in order to clothe those who were working. Later they made the curtains that partitioned the rooms. Construction was made more difficult by mob threats to destroy the temple, and those who worked by day guarded the temple by night. But after the Saints' immense sacrifices of time and resources, the temple was finally completed in the spring of 1836.

Dedication of the Temple

With the completion of the temple, the Lord poured out powerful spiritual blessings upon the Saints in Kirtland, including visions and the ministering of angels. **Joseph Smith** called this period *"a year of jubilee to us, and a time of rejoicing."*¹⁸ Daniel Tyler testified, *"All felt that they had a foretaste of heaven.... We wondered whether the millennium had commenced."*¹⁹

The pinnacle of this outpouring of the Spirit was the dedication of the temple. An estimated 1,000 people gathered at the temple on 27 March 1836 in a spirit of rejoicing. Dedicatory anthems were sung, including "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning," which was written for the occasion by William W Phelps. The sacrament was administered, and sermons were delivered by Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith, and others.

Joseph Smith read the dedicatory prayer, now recorded as Doctrine and Covenants section 109, which was given to him by revelation. In it he pleaded with the Lord that he would bless the people as he had on the day of Pentecost: *"And let thy house be filled, as with a rushing mighty wind, with thy glory"* (D&C 109:37). Many recorded that this prayer was fulfilled that evening when the Prophet met in the temple with members of the priesthood quorums.

Eliza R. Snow wrote: *"The ceremonies of that dedication may be rehearsed, but no mortal language can describe the heavenly manifestations of that memorable day. Angels appeared to some, while a sense of divine presence was realized by all present, and each heart was filled with 'joy inexpressible and full of glory.'*"²⁰

After the dedicatory prayer, the entire congregation rose and, with uplifted hands, shouted hosannas.

One week later, on 3 April 1836, some of the most significant events in latter-day history occurred. In the temple on that day, **the Savior** himself appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and said, *"Behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house"* (D&C 110:7). Other great and glorious visions followed as Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to restore additional keys of the priesthood. Moses bestowed the

keys of the gathering of Israel, Elias committed to Joseph and Oliver the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, and Elijah restored the keys of sealing (see D&C 110:11-16). All these additional keys were necessary for the progress of the Lord's kingdom in the final dispensation of time.

The full priesthood blessings administered in the temple were not revealed or administered during the Kirtland period. These blessings were revealed to the Church through the Prophet Joseph several years later while the Nauvoo Temple was being built.

Exodus from Kirtland

The building of the temple brought many blessings, but in 1837 and 1838, faithful Saints also faced problems caused by apostasy and persecution, which hastened the end of the Church era in Kirtland.

The United States was suffering a financial depression, and the Church felt the effects. Some members became caught up in rampant speculation and debt and did not spiritually survive a dark time of economic collapse, including the collapse of the Kirtland Safety Society. This banking institution had been established by Church members in Kirtland, and some members incorrectly blamed Joseph Smith for the problems associated with it.

Organized persecution and violent mob action came from residents of the local community and from bitter members who had been excommunicated or had apostatized from the Church.

As the violence against the Saints and their leaders escalated, it became unsafe for them to remain in Kirtland. The Prophet, whose life was in grave danger, fled Kirtland in January of 1838 for Far West, Missouri. During 1838 most of the faithful Saints were also forced to leave. They left behind a monument of faith, consecration, and sacrifice in the temple built to God. In the example of their lives, they also left a permanent heritage of faithful obedience to the Lord's anointed leaders and personal sacrifice in the work of the Lord.

Endnotes:

16. Eliza R. Snow: An Immortal (1957), 54.
17. "Sketch of an Elder's Life," Scraps of Biography (1883), 12.
18. History of the Church, 2:430.
19. Daniel Tyler, "Incidents of Experience," Scraps of Biography, 32.
20. Eliza R. Snow, quoted in Tullidge, Women of Mormonism, 95.

*Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, Religion 324 & 325, 2nd Edition,
Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
pp 224-227, 270-277.*

"Walking in Darkness at Noon-day" Section 95

Historical Background

The commandment to build a temple was first given in December 1832 (see D&C 88:119). The Prophet Joseph Smith reported that when Doctrine and Covenants 95 was given, "great preparations were making to commence a house of the Lord," but "the Church was poor" and the work lagged (History of the Church, 1:349-50.) On 1 June 1833 the temple committee, composed of Hyrum Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, and Jared Carter, sent a circular to all the members, encouraging them to assist spiritually and temporally in building the temple. On the same day the Prophet Joseph Smith received section 95, in which the Lord reproved the Saints for neglecting the commandment to build a temple.

Notes and Commentary

D&C 95:1-2. How Is Chastening a Sign of Love?

If we love someone in the highest sense of the word, we are deeply concerned for that person's eternal as well as temporal welfare. Sometimes a leader or parent sees that correction is necessary for a person to progress. **President Spencer W. Kimball**, counseling priesthood leaders, said: *"We are concerned that too many times the interviewing leader in his personal sympathies for the transgressor, and in his love perhaps for the family of the transgressor, is inclined to waive the discipline which that transgressor demands.*

"Too often a transgressor is forgiven and all penalties waived when that person should have been disfellowshipped or excommunicated. Too often a sinner is disfellowshipped when he or she should have been excommunicated...."

"Do you remember what was said by the prophet Alma? 'Now,' he said, 'repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment.' [Alma 42:16.]

"Ponder on that for a moment. Have you realized that? There can be no

forgiveness without real and total repentance, and there can be no repentance without punishment. This is as eternal as is the soul....

"Please remember these things when somebody comes before you who has broken the laws of God.

"It is so easy to let our sympathies carry us out of proportion; and when a man has committed sin, he must suffer. It's an absolute requirement-not by the bishop-but it's a requirement by nature and by the very part of a man." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1975, p. 116; or Ensign, May 1975, p. 78.)

Sometimes chastening is the only way to bring about obedience and the happiness that results. "Whom I love I also chasten," the Lord said (D&C 95:1). **President Brigham Young** said: *"At times I may to many of the brethren appear to be severe. I sometimes chasten them; but it is because I wish them to so live that the power of God, like a flame of fire, will dwell within them and be round about them. These are my feelings and desires."* (In Journal of Discourses, 8:62.)

D&C 95:3. What Was the Saints'"Grievous Sin"?

Later verses in section 95 show why it was so important to build the temple. Missionaries were to be prepared there "to prune [the Lord's] vineyard" for the last time (v. 4). Also in the temple the Lord intended to "endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high" (v. 8).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: *"The Kirtland Temple was necessary before the apostles (who had not yet been called), and other elders of the Church could receive the endowment which the Lord had in store for them. The elders had been out preaching the Gospel and crying repentance ever since the Church was organized and many great men had heard and embraced the truth, nevertheless the elders could not go forth in the power and authority which the Lord intended them to possess until this Temple was built where he could restore keys and powers essential to the more complete preaching of the Gospel and the administering in its ordinances...."*

"Four days after the Lord had rebuked the brethren for their neglect, without waiting for subscriptions, the brethren went to work on the Temple. Elder George A. Smith, a recent convert, hauled the first load of stone for the Temple. Hyrum Smith and Reynolds Cahoon commenced digging the trench for the walls, and they finished the same with their own hands." (Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:406-7.)

D&C 95:4. What Does Pruning the Vineyard Mean?

"The vineyard is the harvest symbol usually used to represent the world-the earth and all of the people who live on the earth. At times the vineyard (the people of the world) has become corrupt, and it is necessary to prune it so the vine will be able to produce good fruit in abundance. The process of pruning involves the separation of one part of the plant from other parts. This could be achieved by calling out or separating the righteous from among the wicked or by the actual destruction of the wicked. It is usually in the former sense that the Lord instructs his servants (missionaries) to prune his vineyard. However, the Lord has also warned that when the pruning process is completed, the vines that continue to bring forth bad fruit will be burned. This evidently refers to the burning of the wicked, which will take place at the second coming when Jesus Christ will come in power and great glory." (Ludlow, Companion, 2:318.)

D&C 95:4. What Is the Lord's "Strange Act"?

Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: "A fresh view is not always welcomed ... ; it can be jarring to those who are intensely set in their ways (see Isaiah 28:21). Even the remarkable Enoch was not welcomed by many of his contemporaries. Of him and his labors it was said anciently, 'There is a strange thing in the land' (Moses 6:38). Isaiah's phrase 'strange work' is amplified in Restoration scriptures. Fresh and striking truths were necessary so that mortals could 'hear and know that which they have never considered' (D&C 101:94). Without such vision, people perish (see Proverbs 29:18).

"Having described the Restoration as his 'strange act,' and 'my strange work,' the Lord indicated that it would go against the grain of much of society. Yet restitution of the unfamiliar, the uncommon, the unusual, and the unique would actually aid mortals by providing fresh, divine standards and help them in discerning between righteousness and wickedness, as God 'poured out [His] Spirit upon all flesh.' (D&C 95:4; 101:95.) With values otherwise shorn of true perspective, the inversions of certain of them become almost inevitable. Finally, evil can end up being called good, and good evil. (See Isaiah 5:20; 2 Nephi 15:20; Moroni 7:14.)" (A Wonderful Flood of Light, 9.)

D&C 95:5-6. Why Are Some Priesthood Holders Not Chosen or Accepted by the Lord?

It is one thing to be called to labor in the vineyard and another to be faithful in the performance of that work. Only those who faithfully fill their callings are chosen by the Lord for exaltation in the kingdom of God. Those who are called but not

chosen "have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day" (D&C 95:6), for they do not respond to the light of the restored gospel that surrounds them (see also D&C 121:34-40).

D&C 95:7. What Is a "Solemn Assembly"?

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "Solemn assemblies have been known among the Saints since the days of Israel. They have been of various kinds but generally have been associated with the dedication of a temple or a special meeting appointed for the sustaining of a new First Presidency or a meeting for the priesthood to sustain a revelation, such as the tithing revelation to President Lorenzo Snow... .

"Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were first sustained by a congregation, including a fully organized priesthood. Brigham Young was sustained on March 27, 1846, and was 'unanimously elected president over the whole Camp of Israel ...' by the council. (B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, vo. 3, p. 52.) Later he was sustained, and the Hosanna Shout was given.

"Each of the presidents of the Church has been sustained by the priesthood of the Church in solemn assembly down to and including President Harold B. Lee, who was sustained October 6, 1972." (In *Conference Report*, Apr. 1974, pp. 64-65; or *Ensign*, May 1974, p. 45.) All the Presidents of the Church after President Lee have also been sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator in solemn assemblies.

The Bible mentions several solemn assemblies held in ancient times (see Leviticus 23:36; Numbers 29:35; Deuteronomy 16:8; 2 Chronicles 7:9; Nehemiah 8:18; Isaiah 1:10-14; Ezekiel 45:17; 46:11). Such assemblies are sacred meetings attended by the priesthood or those who seek to separate themselves from the world by keeping God's commands.

The command to the elders to hold a solemn assembly was given in *Doctrine and Covenants* 88:70. The purpose for the assembly was to help the elders spiritually prepare to continue their missionary work among the people of the world.

D&C 95:8-9. What Is an Endowment "with Power from on High"?

An endowment is a gift or a bequest. In the Church it usually refers to a temple ordinance in which members make certain promises and receive a gift of knowledge and spiritual power in return. The endowment spoken of here, however, is not the same as the ceremony administered in later temples. Priesthood members in Kirtland did participate in a "partial endowment, the full ordinance being

reserved for a future performance when a temple designed for ordinance work itself should be built" (Bruce R. McConkie, "A New Commandment: Save Thyself and Thy Kindred!" *Ensign*, Aug. 1976, p. 10). The first complete endowment in this dispensation was given by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo on 4 May 1842.

The endowment received in Kirtland included washings and anointings, as well as the washing of feet for official priesthood brethren. The Lord also poured out His Spirit, or in other words endowed them with spiritual power, and many received revelations or other gifts (see *History of the Church*, 2:308-10).

D&C 95:10. Contention in the School of the Prophets

Adding to the "grievous sin" (D&C 95:10) of failing to commence the temple as commanded (see *Notes and Commentary on D&C 95:3*), the Lord named another serious sin: contention in the School of the Prophets. Members of that special group had been told by revelation before the school was started to "cease from all ... [their] lustful desires, . . . pride and light-mindedness, and from all ... wicked doings" (D&C 88:121).

D&C 95:11-17. "Let the House Be Built"

President Joseph Fielding Smith pointed out that the Kirtland temple "was to be erected for other and greater purposes than those made known at this time to the officers and members of the Church. The time had not come for the real purposes and the nature of the endowment to be revealed. The elders, much less the members, were not prepared in 1833 for the fulness of the revelation which the Lord declared would be bestowed upon them. The severe rebuke administered to the Church had its effect and the brethren forgot the need of other buildings and commenced to concentrate their efforts upon this house of the Lord." (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:406-7.)

D&C 95:17. What Do Son Ahman, Alphas, and Omegas Mean?

The name Ahman is explained in *Notes and Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants* 78:20. Alphas and Omegas are other forms of the names Alpha and Omega; see *Notes and Commentary for D&C 38:1*.

Prayer of Dedication for the Kirtland Temple

Section 109

Historical Background

Smith and Sjodahl write: "The dedication of the Temple in Kirtland, on the 27th of March, 1836, was an ever memorable event in the history of the Church. That structure was reared in compliance with Revelations received (See Sec. 88:119; 95:8-9), at a time when the Saints were few and poor, and when to raise the money required (between sixty and seventy thousand dollars) meant a great deal of self-sacrifice on their part. 'While the brethren labored in their departments,' says Tullidge, 'the sisters were actively engaged in boarding and clothing workmen not otherwise provided for—all living as abstemiously as possible, so that every cent might be appropriated to the grand object.' And thus they toiled on from the 23rd of July, 1833, when the corner stones were laid, until it was completed for dedication.

"In the Revelation given on the 1st of June, 1833, the Lord indicated the special object for which this house was to be built: 'I gave unto you a commandment, that you should build an house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen, with power from on high' (Sec. 95:8). It was to be a place in which the Church would receive a Pentecostal baptism in the fire of the Holy Spirit [see Acts 21. A special house, consecrated and dedicated, was needed for that purpose, hence the commandment of God to the Saints concerning this house.

"Now the day of dedication had come. The people assembled early, full of joy and gratitude, and they were not disappointed in their expectations. The manifestations of the divine presence were such as to leave no room in the minds of the true Saints for doubt concerning the nature of the work in which they were engaged. Heber C. Kimball relates that during the ceremonies of the dedication, an angel appeared and sat near Joseph Smith, Sr., and Frederick G. Williams, so that they had a fair view of his person. He was tall, and had black eyes and white hair; wore a garment extending to near his ankles, and had sandals on his feet. 'He was sent,' President Kimball says, 'as a messenger to accept of the dedication.' (Whitney's Life of Heber C. Kimball, p. 103). A few days afterwards, a solemn assembly was held ... and blessings were given. 'While these things were being attended to,' Heber C. Kimball says, 'the beloved disciple John was seen in our midst by the Prophet Joseph, Oliver Cowdery, and others' (Ibid., p. 104). On the 6th of April, a meeting was held which was prolonged into the night. On this occasion the spirit of prophecy was poured out upon the Saints, and many in the congregation saw tongues of fire upon some of those present, while to others angels appeared. 'This,' President Kimball says, 'continued several days and was

attended by a marvelous spirit of prophecy. Every man's mouth was full of prophesying, and for a number of days and weeks our time was spent in visiting from house to house, administering bread and wine, and pronouncing blessings upon each other to that degree, that from the external appearances one would have supposed that the last days had truly come, in which the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon all flesh' (Ibid., p. 105; see also Hist. of the Church, Vol. II., p. 427). Nor were the Saints the only ones who were aware of supernatural manifestations at this time. Elder George A. Smith rose to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing wind. All the congregation arose, and many began to speak in tongues and prophesy. And then people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place. This continued until the meeting closed, at 11 p.m. (History of the Church, Vol. II., p. 428)." (Commentary, pp. 720-21.)

As the dedicatory services proceeded, Sidney Rigdon spoke to the congregation, commencing the services by reading Psalms 96 and 24. Several hymns were sung, and then President Rigdon spoke on Matthew 18:18-20 and the sealing power of the priesthood. The various quorums of the priesthood were presented to the membership of the Church for their sustaining vote, and then followed the dedicatory prayer by the Prophet. To the surprise of some, instead of praying spontaneously, Joseph Smith read the dedicatory prayer, which he had received earlier by revelation. This pattern for temple dedicatory prayers has been followed since that time (see History of the Church, 2:420).

Notes and Commentary

D&C 109:1-5. "Thy Servants Have Done According to Thy Commandment"

President George Q. Cannon wrote that the Kirtland Temple had been built at the "utmost self-sacrifice. Nearly three years had been occupied in its construction; and during this time the Saints had given of their substance and had toiled without ceasing to make a habitation fit for the ministration of angelic visitants and of the Holy One, Himself. The consummation of this work had been very near to the Prophet's heart, especially since the tribulations in Missouri had shown that no house of the Lord could be erected speedily in the center stake of Zion." (Life of Joseph Smith, p. 204.)

The Lord did "accept of this house" (D&C 109:4), as is evident from the manifestations that accompanied its dedication and also the glorious vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 110, which took place there shortly afterwards.

D&C 109:7-14. A House of Learning

In a revelation given to the School of the Prophets, the Lord commanded the elders to organize themselves and build a house for prayer, fasting, and learning (see D&C 88:117-20). Verses 6-9 quote the revelation given at that time.

Elder John A. Widtsoe stated: "It is thrilling to look back over our history to the time of the Kirtland Temple. The men left their farms, fields, and shops in the evenings and climbed to the top story, the attic story of the Kirtland Temple, there, in provided classrooms, to study various subjects, languages, mathematics, history, geography, and a variety of subjects. Really our people began there what we call today adult education. It was thought [by others] that an older man could not learn; only young people could learn. Since that time the world has come to quite a different conclusion. Today a man is never too old to learn. A woman is never too old to learn. The power to assimilate knowledge remains with us to the last day. Somehow these forebears of ours in the Church understood that." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1949, p. 149.)

D&C 109:10-60. Securing the Promises Given in Revelation

The Prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord that the Saints receive the blessings promised to them in various revelations already given:

1. That God's glory would rest upon His people and upon the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 109:12-13).
2. That those who worship in the temple would be taught properly (see v. 14).
3. That the people would "grow up" in the Lord, receiving a fulness of the Holy Ghost (v. 15).
4. That the house of God would be all it was meant to be with no unclean thing permitted therein (see vv. 16-20, which are paraphrased from D&C 88:119-20).
5. That when the Saints transgressed, they would return quickly to the Lord (see v. 21).
6. That His servants could go forth armed with power and protected by the angels to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth (see vv. 22-23).
7. That He would establish His people forever against all the enemies who fight against them (see vv. 24-33).
8. That their sins would be forgiven (see v. 34).

9. That the powers of Pentecost would come upon them (see vv. 35-37).

10. That the servants of God would have the power of the covenant and bear testimony of it throughout the world (see vv. 38-44).

11. That the servants of God would be delivered from the calamity of the wicked and the judgments that are promised (see vv. 45-49).

12. That the Lord would have mercy on the nations of the earth, softening their hearts to prepare them for the gospel message (see vv. 54-58).

13. That stakes of Zion would be appointed so the gathering might roll forth (see v. 59). (Adapted from Sperry, Compendium, pp. 593-96.)

D&C 109:21. How Does One Show Reverence in the Lord's House?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that "the most decorous conduct-unmarred by loud laughter, unnecessary conversation, untoward actions of any sort, or even by evil thoughts-is essential to reverencing the Lord's sanctuary. And what is said of his temples is also true of his meetinghouses." (Mormon Doctrine, p. 652.)

President Joseph F. Smith said: "Self-respect requires, among other things, that one shall behave like a true gentleman, in a house of worship. No self-respecting person will go to a house devoted to the service of God to whisper, gossip and visit; rather, it is one's duty to put on self-restraint, to give one's undivided attention to the speaker, and concentrate the mind upon his words that his thoughts may be grasped to one's benefit and profit." (Gospel Doctrine, p. 334.)

D&C 109:22-23. Armed with Power and Watched Over by Angels

"The Lord is here with us," said President Brigham Young, "not in person, but his angels are round us, - and he takes cognizance of every act of the children of men, as individuals and as nations. He is here ready by his agents, the angels, and by the power of his Holy Spirit and Priesthood, which he has restored in these last days, to bring most perfect and absolute deliverance unto all who put their trust in Him, when they are ready to receive it; and, until they are ready, the work of preparation must be vigorously progressed in, while at the same time we in patience must possess our souls." (In Journal of Discourses, 11:14.)

D&C 109:25-31. No Weapon Shall Prosper; No Combination of Wickedness Shall Triumph over God's People

The Saints in the future will face opposition and persecution (see Notes and Commentary on D&C 98:38), and then this inspired dedicatory prayer will be a

source of comfort, for, as the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, Satan will marshal all of his available forces to stop the kingdom, but he will not prevail: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (History of the Church, 4:540).

D&C 109:47-53. Has the Anger of the Lord Fallen upon the United States in Response to This Plea?

As part of the dedicatory prayer, the Prophet Joseph Smith pleaded with the Lord to remember the Saints in Missouri in their afflictions. He beseeched the Lord to have mercy on the mobs so that they might repent (see D&C 109:50). But the Prophet asked the Lord to show forth His power on behalf of His people, letting His anger and indignation fall upon those guilty of causing the sufferings, if they did not repent.

On at least two other occasions the Prophet predicted that Missouri would suffer great judgments because of the mob actions against the Saints. In 1843 in Nauvoo, the Prophet said: "They shall be oppressed as they have oppressed us, not by 'Mormons,' but by others in power. They shall drink a drink offering, the bitterest dregs, not from the 'Mormons,' but from a mightier source than themselves. God shall curse them." (History of the Church, 6:95.)

And in a conversation with General Alexander Doniphan, a friend of the Saints in Missouri, the Prophet said: "God's wrath hangs over Jackson county. God's people have been ruthlessly driven from it, and you will live to see the day when it will be visited by fire and sword. The Lord of Hosts will sweep it with the besom [broom] of destruction. The fields and farms and houses will be destroyed, and only the chimneys will be left to mark the desolation." (Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, 1:538.)

During the Civil War these prophecies were fulfilled, and Missouri was a scene of widespread, terrible destruction (see Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, 1:539-59, for a detailed discussion of Missouri's sufferings).

Earlier the Lord had commanded the Prophet to seek redress, as high as the president of the United States if necessary, warning that if the government did not heed their just pleas, the Lord would "vex the nation" (D&C 101:89; see also D&C 101:85-88).

The Saints did seek redress but received none. President John Taylor commented: "The Gospel reveals many things to us which others are unacquainted with. I knew of those terrible events which were coming upon this nation previous to the breaking out of our great fratricidal war [the Civil War], just as well as I now know that they transpired, and I have spoken of them to many. What of that? Do I not know that a nation like that in which we live, a nation which is blessed with the freest, the most enlightened and magnificent government in the world to-day, with privileges which would exalt people to heaven if lived up to do I not know that if they do not live up to them, but violate them and trample them under their feet, and discard the sacred principles of liberty by which we ought to be governed-do I not know that their punishment will be commensurate with the enlightenment which they possess? I do. And I know-I cannot help but know-that there are a great many more afflictions yet awaiting this nation. But would I put forth my hand to help bring them on? God forbid! And you, you Latter-day Saints, would you exercise your influence to the accomplishment of an object of that kind? God forbid! But we cannot help but know these things. But our foreknowledge of these matters does not make us the agents in bringing them to pass." (In Journal of Discourses, 22:141-42.)

D&C 109:54-58. The Gospel to Go Forth from America to the Nations of the Earth in the Last Days

President George Q. Cannon stated: "God has founded this land America and the government for the express purpose that Zion might be built upon this land, and that the people of all nations might come here singing His praises and thanking him that from the darkness and the threatening evils by which they are surrounded He has provided a way of escape, a safe place, that when calamities and judgments come upon the inhabitants of the earth, they can stand in holy places and be secure by keeping the commandments of God. What a glorious theme this is for the Elders to carry to the downtrodden of the nations of the earth who groan in darkness and who see no way of deliverance! Nor will it be the down-trodden alone who will listen to these tidings. Men in high places and of commanding positions will yet listen to them, and they will take note of this extraordinary people who have done such a remarkable work and who are now traversing the globe to bring from every land all who will listen to their message; to bring them with all their traditions to this place which we call Zion, where they can, by the fusing power of the Spirit of God, be consolidated into one united people." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1900, p. 68.)

D&C 109:60. How Are Latter-day Saints Gentiles?

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith explained: "Let us also remember that we are of the

Gentiles! By this I mean that the Latter-day Saints have come to their blessings through the Gentile nations. President Brigham Young ... said that Joseph Smith was a pure Ephraimite. This is true; yet Joseph Smith came also of a Gentile lineage. So do most members of the Church. We may boast of our lineage, and rejoice in the fact that Patriarchs have declared us to be of Ephraim, but at the same time let us not despise the Gentiles, for we are also of them. If it were not so the scriptures would not be fulfilled. [1 Nephi 15:13-14; Ether 12:22.]" (Way to Perfection, p. 140.)

D&C 109:61-67. The "Children of Judah" and the "Remnants of Jacob"

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote that in reading the Book of Mormon "we learn that our western tribes of Indians are descendants from that Joseph which was sold into Egypt, and that the land of America is a promised land unto them, and unto it all the tribes of Israel will come, with as many of the Gentiles as shall comply with the requisitions of the new covenant. But the tribe of Judah will return to old Jerusalem [see Doctrine and Covenants 133:8, 13, 35]. The city of Zion spoken of by David, in the one hundred and second Psalm, will be built upon the land of America, 'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads' (Isaiah 35:10); and then they will be delivered from the overflowing scourge that shall pass through the land. But Judah shall obtain deliverance at Jerusalem. See Joel 2:32; Isaiah 26:20 and 21; Jeremiah 31:12; Psalm 1:5; Ezekiel 34:11, 12 and 13. These are testimonies that the Good Shepherd will put forth His own sheep, and lead them out from all nations where they have been scattered in a cloudy and dark day, to Zion, and to Jerusalem; besides many more testimonies which might be brought."(History of the Church, 1:315.)

D&C 109:74. When Will the Mountains Flow Down?

"In the resurrection which now approaches," Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote, "and in connection with the glorious coming of Jesus Christ, the earth will undergo a change in its physical features, climate, soil, productions, and in its political, moral and spiritual government.

"Its mountains will be leveled, its valleys exalted, its swamps and sickly places will be drained and become healthy, while its burning deserts and its frigid polar regions will be redeemed and become temperate and fruitful." (Key to the Science of Theology, p. 132; see D&C 133:19-25.)

D&C 109:75-76. When Will the Righteous Be Caught Up?

See Notes and Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 88:95-98.

D&C 109:79. What are Seraphim?

See Notes and Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 38:1.

D&C 109:79-80. "Help Us by the Power of Thy Spirit"

"The rearing of a Temple of God in the world is the construction of a citadel by the followers of Prince Immanuel [the Lord] in the territory claimed by Diabolus [the devil]. Hence his rage when the people of God build Temples. But the Temple in Kirtland served its divine purpose, as did that in Nauvoo, though both were abandoned. In it the Saints received that power from on high which enabled the Church to withstand, successfully, the attacks of all enemies. Owing to that baptism by the Holy Spirit received in the Temples, the Church, notwithstanding persecution, exile, and apostasy, has grown in spiritual power and become able to make itself felt in the world as a regenerating force. But for the Temples and the communion with God established through the Temple service, the Church might have been overwhelmed in the persecutions of Missouri and Illinois, just as the Primitive Church might have perished in the early persecutions but for the power it received on the day of Pentecost." (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, pp. 722-23.)

Messengers with Keys Section 110

Historical Background

Excitement ran high as the Saints prepared to dedicate the Kirtland Temple on 27 March 1836. The Lord was pleased with the sacrifices made by the Saints to complete "a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119). As the house was being dedicated, the Lord's acceptance was gloriously manifested in divine endowments of "power from on high" (D&C 105:11; see also History of the Church, 2:427-33; Notes and Commentary on D&C 105:11-12, 18, 33).

"After the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, council and spiritual meetings were held in the building almost daily. Sunday, April 3, 1836, was one of the most eventful days in the history of the Church" (Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 2:46).

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote of his activities on 3 April 1836: "Attended meeting in the Lord's House, and assisted the other Presidents of the Church [the First Presidency and quorum presidents] in seating the congregation, and then became an attentive listener to the preaching from the stand. Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten spoke in the forenoon to an attentive audience of about one

thousand persons. In the afternoon, I assisted the other Presidents in distributing the Lord's Supper to the Church, receiving it from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate at the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to my brethren, I retired to the pulpit, the veils being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer. After rising from prayer, the following vision was opened to both of us." (History of the Church, 2:434-35.) Doctrine and Covenants 110 records the vision and visitations received on that day.

Notes and Commentary

D&C 110:1-3. Why Did the Prophet Use Figurative Language to Describe the Glorified Christ?

A complete description of the glorified Savior in human language is probably not possible. But by comparing the indescribable things of a spiritual realm to things within our comprehension, the Prophet could give us some sense of the glory and appearance of the Lord. The language of the Prophet's description is similar to that of the descriptions written by Daniel (see Daniel 10:4-8) and by John the Revelator (see Revelation 1:13-17).

D&C 110:7. What Was the Relationship between the Sacrifice of the Saints in Building the Kirtland Temple and the Appearance of the Savior?

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice all things" (Teachings, p. 322). Elder Franklin D. Richards related the sacrifices of the Saints in building the temple to the blessings that followed: "The Saints did all the work they could on the building, and then went out and obtained work here and there, and with the money they earned they purchased those things that were necessary for its completion. It was done by sacrificing all that they had; and when we had done all that we could do, Oh! how joyous it was to know the Lord accepted the work, when He stood upon the breastwork of the Temple, conversed with the Prophet Joseph and Oliver, and revealed to them their duties, and informed them that the Gospel should go from there and be preached throughout the nations of the earth." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1898, p. 17.)

D&C 110:7-10. What Was the "Fame" of the Kirtland Temple That Was to Spread to Foreign Lands?

The workmanship on the Kirtland Temple was the best the Saints could produce. The sacrifice of the Saints in the construction of that temple has become legend.

Many of the women sacrificed by giving their china to be crushed and mixed in the outside plaster to give color and brilliance to the house of God. But as for the "fame" of the temple (D&C 110:10), the appearance of heavenly guests who came with unspeakable glory and restored vital saving keys and powers eclipses anything of mortal origin.

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "That which took place [in the Kirtland Temple] on the third day of April in the year 1836 has spread forth to all lands. Thousands and tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands have been blessed because of what took place upon that occasion. Not only the thousands in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but thousands upon thousands who are not members of the Church have partaken of the blessings which came at that time and which have spread forth throughout the earth. And while they may not know it, they have been influenced, and have many of them performed a wonderful work because of the things that took place, and because of the fulfillment of this prediction [D&C 110:7-10] made by the Son of God." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1936, p. 73.)

D&C 110:11. The Keys of Gathering Are Crucial to the Earthly Kingdom of God

The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of the importance of the gathering: "*All that the prophets ... have written, from the days of righteous Abel, down to the last man that has left any testimony on record for our consideration, in speaking of the salvation of Israel in the last days, goes directly to show that it consists in the work of the gathering*" (Smith, Teachings, p. 83).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "*Israel's great lawgiver, the prophet whose life was in similitude of the Messiah himself, the one who delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage and led them to their land of promise, came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 3 April 1836, in the Kirtland Temple. He gave them: (1) 'the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth,' and (2) the keys of 'the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north' (D&C 110:11).*

"Since then, with increasing power and in great glory, we have gathered, from their Egyptian bondage as it were, the dispersed of Ephraim and a few others, initially to the mountains of America, but now into the stakes of Zion in the various nations of the earth. The gathering of Israel is a reality. When the ten tribes return they will come at the direction of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for he now holds and will then hold the keys of presidency and direction for this mighty work." ("This Final Glorious Gospel Dispensation," Ensign, Apr. 1980, p. 22.)

D&C 110:11. Where Are the Ten Lost Tribes?

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "Whether these tribes are in the north or not, I am not prepared to say. As I said before, they are 'lost' and until the Lord wishes it, they will not be found. All that I know about it is what the Lord has revealed, and He declares that they will come from the North. He has also made it very clear and definite that these lost people are separate and apart from the scattered Israelites now being gathered out." (Signs of the Times, p. 186; see also Notes and Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 133:26-34.)

D&C 110:12. Who Is the Elias That Committed the Dispensation of the Gospel of Abraham?

Elias is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Elijah, but Elijah appears separately in this revelation and is referred to by his Hebrew name (see v. 13). Elias is also a title for a forerunner, and several individuals have been identified in this way, including Gabriel or Noah and John the Baptist. We do not know whether the Elias in verse 12 is one of these, or another forerunner, or whether he was an ancient prophet whose personal name was Elias.

D&C 110:12. What Is the Gospel of Abraham?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated: "*The man Elias brings back 'the gospel of Abraham,' the great Abrahamic covenant whereby the faithful receive promises of eternal increase, promises that through celestial marriage their eternal posterity shall be as numerous as the sands upon the seashore or as the stars in heaven for multitude. Elias gives the promise-received of old by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-that in modern men and in their seed all generations shall be blessed. And we are now offering the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to all who will receive them.*" (In Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 28; or Ensign, May 1983, 22.)

D&C 110:13-14. The Coming of Elijah

President Joseph Fielding Smith noted: "*Edersheim in his work, The Temple, says: 'To this day, in every Jewish home, at a certain part of the Paschal service [i.e. when they drink the "third cup"]-the door is opened to admit Elijah the prophet as forerunner of the Messiah, while appropriate passages are at the same time read which foretell the destruction of all heathen nations. It is a remarkable coincidence that, in instituting his own Supper, the Lord Jesus connected the symbol, not of judgment, but of his dying love, with his "third cup."*"

"It was, I am informed, on the third day of April, 1836, that the Jews, in their homes at the Paschal feast, opened their doors for Elijah to enter. On that very day Elijah did enter-not in the home of the Jews to partake of the Passover with them-but he appeared in the house of the Lord, erected to his name and received by the Lord in Kirtland, and there bestowed his keys to bring to pass the very things for which these Jews, assembled in their homes, were seeking." (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:100-101.)

D&C 110:16. What Responsibility Does Each Latter-day Saint Have Because of the Mission of Elijah?

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "*The Bible says, 'I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.'* [Malachi 4:5-6.]

"Now, the word turn here should be translated bind, or seal. But what is the object of this important mission? or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion.

"But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah. And I would to God that this temple was now done, that we might go into it, and go to work and improve our time, and make use of the seals while they are on earth.

"The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten, and the consumption decreed falls upon the world." (History of the Church, 6:183-84.)

P&C 110:16. "By This Ye May Know"

The Lord has revealed through various messengers that His coming is not far distant. On Moroni's first visit to Joseph Smith, he quoted several promises from the Bible, saying that these were "about to be fulfilled" (JS-H 1:40; see also JS-H 1:36-45). When Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple, he bore witness that his

own coming not only fulfilled Malachi's prophecy but was a sign that the great and dreadful day was "at the doors" (v. 16; see also JS-M 1:39).

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: *"If the great and dreadful day of the Lord were near at hand when Elijah came 130 years ago, we are just one century nearer it today. But some will say: 'But no! Elijah, you are wrong! Surely 130 years have passed, and are we not better off today than ever before? Look at our discoveries, our inventions, our knowledge, and our wisdom! Surely you made a mistake!' So many seem to think and say, and judging by their actions they are sure, that the world is bound to go on in its present condition for millions of years before the end will come. Talk to them; hear what they have to say-these learned men of the world. 'We have had worse times,' they say. 'You are wrong in thinking there are more calamities now than in earlier times. There are not more earthquakes, the earth has always been quaking, but now we have facilities for gathering the news which our fathers did not have. These are not signs of the times; things are not different from former times.' And so the people refuse to heed the warnings the Lord so kindly gives to them, and thus they fulfill the scriptures. Peter said such sayings would be uttered, and he warned the people....*

"Shall we slumber on in utter oblivion or indifference to all that the Lord has given us as warning? I say unto you, 'Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.'" (In Conference Report, Apr. 1966, p. 15.)

D&C 110:16. What Is the Significance of the Keys Brought by Elijah?

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: *"What was the nature of this restoration? It was the conferring upon men in this dispensation of the sealing power of the priesthood, by which all things are bound in heaven as well as on earth. It gave the authority to Joseph Smith to perform in the temple of God all the ordinances essential to salvation for both the living and the dead.*

"Through the power of this priesthood which Elijah bestowed, husband and wife may be sealed, or married for eternity; children may be sealed to their parents for eternity; thus the family is made eternal, and death does not separate the members. This is the great principle that will save the world from utter destruction.

"Vicariously the dead may obtain the blessings of the gospel-baptism, confirmation, ordination, and the higher blessings, which are sealed upon them in the temples of the Lord, by virtue of the authority restored by Elijah. Through the restoration of these keys, the work of the Lord is fully inaugurated before the coming of Jesus Christ in glory.

"These keys of the binding, or sealing power, which were given to Peter, James, and John in their dispensation, are keys which make valid all the ordinances of the gospel. They pertain more especially to the work in the temples, both for the living and for the dead. They are the authorities which prepare men to enter the celestial kingdom and to be crowned as sons and heirs of God.

"These keys hold the power to seal husbands and wives for eternity as well as for time. They hold the power to seal children to parents, the key of adoption, by which the family organization is made intact forever. This is the power which will save the obedient from the curse in the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Through these keys the hearts of the children have turned to their fathers." (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:118-19.)