

LESSON 26
“Go Ye Into All the World, and Preach My Gospel”
Our Heritage, p. 29-33, 36

OVERVIEW:

The Lord poured out great blessings during the Kirtland period. The Saints in Kirtland made great sacrifices to share the gospel. Members of the Quorum of the Twelve taught thousands in England. Many Saints in Kirtland remained valiant despite persecution.

D&C 42:6 - And ye shall go forth in the power of my Spirit, preaching my gospel, ^atwo by two, in my name, lifting up your voices as with the sound of a ^btrump, declaring my word like unto angels of God.

D&C 88:81 - Behold, I sent you out to ^atestify and warn the people, and it cometh every man who hath been warned to ^bwarn his neighbor.

SCRIPTURES:

Missions of Early Ohio Converts

Zera Pulsipher, a convert from Ohio, is an example of those who enthusiastically shared the message of the Restoration. He joined the Church in January 1832 and recorded that shortly afterward, he “was ordained to the office of an elder and went to preaching with considerable success at home and abroad.” (The name of Zera Pulsipher appears but once in the Doctrine and Covenants, that being in a list of those who served as Presidents of the Seventies (D&C 124:138). He was ordained and set apart to this position on March 6, 1838, and functioned therein until April 12, 1862, when he was released for having “transcended the bounds of the Priesthood.” He acknowledged his error and was subsequently ordained a high priest and a patriarch in the Church. On January 1, 1872, “he died as a member in full fellowship in the Church.” One of his most memorable experiences was baptizing Wilford Woodruff, one of the future Presidents of the Church. (Jenson 1:194.) Encyclopedia of the Doctrine and Covenants, p. 448) He and another missionary, Elijah Cheney, traveled to the small town of Richland, New York, where they began preaching in the local school. One of the first converts baptized by Elder Pulsipher in Richland was a young farmer named Wilford Woodruff, who would one day become one of the most successful missionaries in the history of the Church and the fourth President of the Church. Within a month’s time, the two missionaries had baptized a number of people and organized a branch of the Church in Richland.

Answering the call to warn their neighbors, missionaries came from all walks of life. Many of them were married and had family responsibilities. They departed in the midst of harvests and during the dead of winter, during periods of personal prosperity and at times of economic depression. A number of the elders were almost destitute when they entered the mission field. The Prophet himself traveled over 15,000 miles, serving 14 short-term missions from 1831 to 1838 in many states and in Canada. (In 1836 Elder Parley P. Pratt, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was called to serve a mission to Canada. On his way to Toronto, Canada, “a stranger gave him a letter of introduction to John Taylor, a Methodist lay preacher in Toronto. Taylor was affiliated with a group who believed existing churches did not correspond with New Testament Christianity. For two years this group had met several times a week for the purpose of seeking truth, independence of any sectarian organization. In Toronto, Elder Pratt was courteously received by the Taylors, but they were not at first enthusiastic about his message. Discouraged at being unable to secure a place to preach, Parley decided to leave Toronto. Before going he stopped at the Taylors to get some of his luggage and to say goodbye. While he was there, Leonora Taylor told her friend Mrs. Isabella Walton about Parley’s problem and said she was sorry he was

leaving. He may be a man of God, she said. Mrs. Walton replied that she had been inspired by the Spirit to visit the Taylors that morning because she was willing to let Elder Pratt stay at her home and preach. He did so and was eventually invited to attend a meeting of John Taylor's group, in which John read the New Testament account of Philip's preaching in Samaria. Now, said he, where is our Philip? Where is our receiving the Word with joy, and being baptized when we believed? Where is our Peter and John? Our apostles? Where is our Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands? When Parley was invited to speak, he declared that he had answers to John Taylor's questions. For three weeks, John Taylor attended Elder Pratt's meetings, making detailed notes of his sermons and carefully comparing them with the scriptures. Gradually he became convinced that the true gospel of Jesus Christ was restored. He and his wife, Leonora, were baptized on 9 May 1836. Church History in the Fulness of Times, p. 157)

When George A. Smith, cousin of the Prophet, received his call to the eastern United States, he was so poor that he did not own or have the means to purchase the clothes and books he needed. Consequently, the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum gave him some gray cloth, and Eliza Brown made him a coat, vest, and trousers. Brigham Young gave him a pair of shoes, his father gave him a pocket Bible, and the Prophet provided a copy of the Book of Mormon. (Cousin to the Prophet Joseph Smith, counselor to Brigham Young, and confidant of the Saints was George A. Smith. His name appears twice in the Doctrine and Covenants, once in a list of the Twelve Apostles (D&C 124:19), and once as an organizer of a company of pioneers (D&C 136:14). As a boy he was converted to the gospel through the Book of Mormon and spent more than half of his life in traveling and preaching the truths from that sacred volume. George A. Smith was called to the holy apostleship on April 26, 1839, on the intended temple site at Far West, Missouri. At the October conference in 1868, he was called to serve as first counselor to Brigham Young in the First Presidency, in which position he faithfully served until his death September 1, 1875. He served as Church Historian and Recorder and helped to compile the documentary history of Joseph Smith. His memory supplied some of the missing details from that history, which his predecessor Willard Richards had prophesied by penning in the margins of that history, "to be supplied by George A. Smith." Brigham Young paid Elder Smith the following tribute, "I have known Brother George A. Smith for forty-two years, have traveled and labored in the ministry with him for many years, and have believed him to be as faithful a boy and man as ever lived; and, in my opinion, he had as good a record on this and the other side of the veil as any man. I never knew of his neglecting or overdoing a duty; he was a man of sterling integrity, a cabinet of history, and always true to his friends." He was further described as "humble and meek, yet full of courage and unbounded energy in the cause of right. He always had time to notice young people and children and leave his impress of love and kindness upon the tablets of their hearts." (Jenson 1:37-42.) Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia, p. 527)

Elders Erastus Snow and (Perhaps no more dedicated missionary of the Church has ever lived than Erastus Snow. The only mention of his name appears in connection with his call to help organize the pioneers in their western trek (D&C 136:12). However, as one reads his history, the zealous service which he gave to the Church in its formative years is very apparent. Erastus joined the Church at age fourteen, being baptized February 3, 1833. By June 1834, he was in the mission field where he diligently labored for the next four years. In June 1838, he heeded the call to go to Missouri to help build the Church in Zion. The following February, he was visiting with the Prophet and Hyrum during their incarceration at Liberty, Missouri, when an escape attempt was foiled. As a consequence, Erastus was confined along with the other brethren in the jail. A militant mob threatened all kinds of physical violence and torture to the prisoners. At the height of the disturbance, Joseph prophetically promised his fellow prisoners that "not a hair of their heads should be hurt, and that they should not lose any of their things, even to a bridle, saddle, or blanket; that everything should be restored to them; they had offered their lives for their friends and the gospel; that it was necessary the Church should offer a sacrifice and the Lord accepted the offering" (Jenson 1:106). Acting upon Joseph's recommendation, Erastus served

as his own lawyer and was readily acquitted. Following this, the lawyers gathered around him and desired to know where he had received his training, for they claimed to have never heard a better plea. True to the promise of Joseph, everything that was taken from the men was restored: "nothing was lost, although no two articles were found in one place" (Jenson 1:106). In 1847, Erastus Snow and Orson Pratt were the first two men to enter the Salt Lake Valley, three days ahead of the main pioneer company. On February 12, 1849, he was called to serve as an Apostle in the Quorum of the Twelve. In addition to the numerous missions he fulfilled in the United States, he labored several years in Denmark and was responsible for the translation of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants into the Danish language. He died on May 27, 1888, in the seventieth year of his life, having spent close to sixty of those years in the service of the Master. Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia, p. 537-538) John E. Page (The call of John E. Page to fill a vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is recorded in a revelation received July 8, 1838 (D&C 118:6). His position within that quorum is again mentioned in a later revelation (D&C 124:129). Page was baptized by Martin Harris's brother Emer on August 18, 1833. "In May, 1836, he was called to go on a mission to Canada, to which he objected for the reason that he was destitute of clothing. The Prophet Joseph took off his coat and gave it to him, telling him to go, and the Lord would bless him." (Jenson 1:92.) During the two years in which he labored, he baptized over six hundred people. During the persecutions in Missouri, he lost his wife and two children, "who died as martyrs for their religion, through extreme suffering, for the want of the common comforts of life." He had a tendency to disobey counsel and occasionally found himself at odds with the Prophet and other members of the Twelve. For example, though called to accompany Orson Hyde on a mission to Jerusalem, Page failed to leave American soil. On another occasion he reversed the actions of three members of the Twelve, following their departure from the branch at Cincinnati. His spiritual demise is written in the following words by Andrew Jenson: "Soon after Pres. [Joseph] Smith's death, an advertisement appeared in the Beaver (Penn.) 'Argus,' that Elder John E. Page was out of employment and would preach for anybody that would sustain his family." Elder Page was disfellowshipped from the Quorum of the Twelve on Feb. 9, 1846, after which he became very bitter against his former associates and advised the Saints to accept the apostate James J. Strang as their leader. Soon afterwards he left Nauvoo, and after traveling about 120 miles he met a company of Saints coming from Canada. These were advised by Page to accompany him to Voree, Wisconsin, the site designated by Strang as the gathering place. A few were deceived, but the majority continued on to Nauvoo. Page was excommunicated from the Church on June 26, 1846, and died in obscurity near Sycamore, Illinois, in the fall of 1867. (Jenson 1:93.) Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia, p. 408-9) were also poor when they left for the mission field in the spring of 1836. Describing his status at the time of his departure for a mission in western Pennsylvania, Elder Snow wrote, "I left Kirtland on foot and alone with a small suitcase containing a few Church works and a pair of socks, with five cents in my pocket, being all my worldly wealth." Elder Page told the Prophet that he could not accept a call to preach because he was destitute of clothing. He didn't even have a coat to wear. The Prophet responded by removing his coat and giving it to Elder Page. He told Elder Page to go on his mission and the Lord would bless him abundantly. On this mission, Elder Page was blessed to share the gospel with hundreds of people who joined the Church.

Mission of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In 1835 members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were called on a mission to the eastern United States and Canada. This is the only time in the history of the Church when all 12 members of the Quorum undertook a mission at the same time. When they returned, Heber C. Kimball testified that they had felt God's power and were able to heal the sick and cast out devils.

Mission to England

In the latter part of the Kirtland period, a crisis arose within the Church. Some members, including some leaders, apostatized because they could not bear trials and persecutions and because they began to find fault with the Prophet Joseph and other Church leaders. The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that something new must be done for the salvation of his Church. That something was an infusion of converts into the Church from England. On Sunday, 4 June 1837, the Prophet approached Elder Heber C. Kimball in the Kirtland Temple and said to him, "Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me: 'Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my Gospel, and open the door of salvation to that nation.' "

While Heber C. Kimball was being set apart for his mission, Elder Orson Hyde entered the room. When he heard what was taking place, Orson was moved upon to repent, as he had been one of those involved in finding fault with the Prophet. He offered to serve as a missionary and was also set apart to go to England.

So eager was Heber C. Kimball to preach the gospel on foreign soil that as the boat approached the landing at Liverpool, England, he leaped from the boat to the dock before it was moored, proclaiming that he was the first to reach a land overseas with the message of the Restoration. By 23 July the missionaries were preaching to congregations of overflow crowds and the first baptisms were scheduled for 30 July. George D. Watt won a footrace to the River Ribble in Preston, which determined the honor of being the first to be baptized in Britain. (George Watt learned shorthand, which at the time was called phonography, he recorded the sermons of the leaders of the Church from 1851 to 1870. Church History in the Fulness of Time, p. 175. In April 1840, eight of the Twelve were in Great Britain on missions. William Smith and John E. Page did not fulfill missions in Britain. Orson Hyde arrived later, and then proceeded to Palestine to dedicate the land for the return of the Jews. At this time there was one vacancy in the Twelve. The 8 that served in Britain were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Willard Richards. Church History in the Fulness of Times, p. 231.)

Within eight months, hundreds of converts had joined the Church and many branches had been organized. Reflecting on this great harvest of souls, Heber recalled that the Prophet and his Counselors "laid their hands on me and ... said that God would make me mighty in that nation in winning souls unto Him: angels should accompany me and bear me up, that my feet should never slip; that I should be mightily blessed and prove a source of salvation to thousands." (During this time of great success, was also intense opposition by Satan. Because of this great success, for there were many who had been crying for the restoration of the Gospel, Satan's hosts were angered, and they made a determined effort by force to stop the progress of the work. It came about in a most peculiar and determined effort to overpower the missionaries, and make them impotent through the action of forces from the unseen world. It is recorded that about daybreak Sunday, July 10, 1837, Elder Isaac Russell who had been selected to preach at the Obelisk in Preston market-place that day, and who occupied the second story of the lodging of the elders in Wilford Street, went up to the third loft where Elders Hyde and Kimball were sleeping, and called upon them to pray for him, that he might be delivered from the evil spirits that were tormenting him to such a degree that he felt he could not live long unless he obtained relief. The story is a most interesting one, but one that chilled the blood of the elders. It is told as follows by Elder Kimball: "I had been sleeping on the back of the bed. I immediately arose, slipped off at the foot of the bed, and passed around to where he [Elder Russell] was. Elder Hyde threw his feet out, and sat up in the bed, and we laid hands on him, I being mouth, and prayed that the Lord would have mercy on him, and rebuke the devil. While thus engaged, I was struck with great force by some invisible power, and fell senseless

on the floor. The first thing I recollected was being supported by Elders Hyde and Richards, who were praying for me; Elder Richards having followed Russell up to my room. Elders Hyde and Richards then assisted me to get on the bed, but my agony was so great I could not endure it, and I arose, bowed my knees and prayed. I then arose and sat up on the bed, when a vision was opened to our minds, and we could distinctly see the evil spirits, who foamed and gnashed their teeth at us. We gazed upon them about an hour and a half (by Willard's watch). We were not looking towards the window, but towards the wall. Space appeared before us, and we saw the devils coming in legions, with their leaders, who came within a few feet of us. They came towards us like armies rushing to battle. They appeared to be men of full stature, possessing every form and feature of men in the flesh, who were angry and desperate; and I shall never forget the vindictive malignity depicted on their countenances as they looked me in the eye; and any attempt to paint the scene which then presented itself, or portray their malice and enmity, would be vain. I perspired exceedingly, my clothes becoming as wet as if I had been taken out of the river. I felt excessive pain, and was in the greatest distress for sometime. I cannot even look back on the scene without feelings of horror; yet by it I learned the power of the adversary, his enmity against the servants of God, and got some understanding of the invisible world. We distinctly heard these spirits talk and express their wrath and hellish designs against us. However, the Lord delivered us from them, and blessed us exceedingly that day." Elder Hyde supplemented this description as follows: "Every circumstance that occurred at that scene of devils is just as fresh in my recollection at this moment as it was at the moment of its occurrence, and will ever remain so. After you were overcome by them and had fallen, their awful rush upon me with knives, threats, imprecations and hellish grins, amply convinced me that they were no friends of mine. While you were apparently senseless and lifeless on the floor and upon the bed (after we had laid you there), I stood between you and the devils and fought them and contended with them face to face, until they began to diminish in number and to retreat from the room. The last imp that left turned around to me as he was going out and said, as if to apologize, and appease my determined opposition to them, 'I never said anything against you!' I replied to him thus: 'It matters not to me whether you have or have not; you are a liar from the beginning! In the name of Jesus Christ depart!' He immediately left, and the room was clear. That closed the scene of devils for the time."—D.H.C. 2:503. "Life of Heber C. Kimball," pp. 130-131.) When Elder Kimball reported this incident to the Prophet after his return from England, the Prophet answered: "Brother Heber, at that time you were nigh unto the Lord; there was only a veil between you and him, but you could not see him. When I heard of it, it gave me great joy, for I then knew that the work of God had taken root in that land. It was this that caused the devil to make a struggle to kill you. * * The nearer a person approaches the Lord, a greater power will be manifested by the adversary to prevent the accomplishment of his purposes." ("Life of Heber C. Kimball," pp. 131-132.) CHMR, Vol 3)

Because many early missionaries obediently accepted mission calls despite personal sacrifice, thousands of British converts enjoyed the blessings of the restored gospel. They gathered to Zion and greatly strengthened the Church for the crucial periods that lay ahead. (The number of converts in Britain that migrated to Nauvoo between 1840 and 1846 was 4,733.)

D&C 112:19-22 -19 Wherefore, whithersoever they shall send you, go ye, and I will be with you; and in whatsoever place ye shall proclaim my name an ^aeffectual door shall be opened unto you, that they may receive my word. 20 Whosoever ^areceiveth my word receiveth me, and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth those, the First Presidency, whom I have sent, whom I have made counselors for my name's sake unto you. 21 And again, I say unto you, that whosoever ye shall send in my name, by the voice of your brethren, the ^aTwelve, duly recommended and ^bauthorized by you, shall have power to open the door of my kingdom unto any nation whithersoever ye shall send them— 22 Inasmuch as they shall humble themselves before me, and abide in my word, and ^ahearken to the voice of my Spirit.

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. (The gathering of new converts to the Kirtland area continued unabated following the dedication of the temple in March of 1836. Most of these Saints were hard-working, committed people, but as Benjamin F. Johnson observed, most were of the “poorer class.” Unfortunately some of them arrived hoping to be cared for by the funds of the Church or the generosity of the members. The increasing number of Mormons living in poverty alarmed the old-time citizens of Kirtland, who banded together as early as 1835 and warned the poor to leave the city. Acknowledging the problem, the Prophet Joseph Smith advised the branches not to send penniless families to Kirtland. “The Saints have neglected the necessary preparation beforehand;... the rich have generally stayed back and withheld their money, while the poor have gone first and without money. Under these circumstances what could be expected but the appalling scene that now presents itself?” Part of what contributed to the appalling scene was the many small and poorly constructed homes that Church members built haphazardly along the Chagrin River and immediately south of the temple. Church History in the Fulness of Time, p. 169) 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. (The number of banks in the US had nearly doubled during the 1830s as the demand for credit and money increased. Banks provided loans, paper currency, a medium of exchange, and a safe depository for money. In Kirtland, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders pursued the idea of establishing a bank. With legal assistance, an article of agreement was drafted to incorporate a bank in Kirtland, which would be called the Kirtland Safety Society. In November 1836, Orson Hyde went to the capital of Ohio with a petition to the legislature requesting that they approve the proposal to incorporate the bank. At the same time, Oliver Cowdery went to Philadelphia to purchase plates for printing currency. He succeeded, but Orson returned from Columbus with discouraging news. The timing of the request was bad, and the legislature, after listening to the petition, refused to grant a charter for the requested bank. “Hard money” Democrats who opposed an expansion of banks in Ohio had gained control of the legislature and were turning down nearly all requests for new banks. The brethren were disappointed, but they decided to create a private joint-stock company to be called the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company. Since other unchartered or unauthorized banks were organized in Ohio, they assumed that individuals had a legal right to organize a private company that engaged in banking activities. Many people in the Western Reserve, members of the Church and nonmembers alike, initially supported the formation of the society with Joseph Smith as its treasurer and Sidney Rigdon as secretary. The Kirtland Safety Society opened for business on 2 January 1837. Serious problems soon arose to undermine the success of the bank. A lot of the other banks refused to accept the Safety Society’s notes as legal tender, and the anti-Mormon newspapers branded the currency as worthless. Furthermore, the society’s capital was primarily in the form of land; it did not possess much specie (hard currency, such as gold and silver) for satisfying any large demands for redemption of its paper currency. Enemies of the Church obtained enough notes to initiate a run on the bank forcing the society to suspend payment in specie to its customers a few weeks after the first notes were issued. Lack of a charter also hindered the company’s credibility. As a result, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were charged with violating the banking statutes of Ohio and brought to trial. In the spring of 1837 the Saints’ economic problems were compounded by a panic that spread west from New York into other parts of the nation. By May there was a general suspension of payment in specie by all banks in Ohio. Money was scarce during the panic, and many creditors were unable to extend credit or postpone dates when debts were

due. Joseph Smith did all he could to persuade investors to invest more funds to sustain the bank, but he finally turned its operation over to others. This failed to solve the problem, however, because of inept management and rumors that some of them were embezzling the society's funds. A growing spirit of speculation in Kirtland also added to the Church's economic problems. With the availability of supposed money, which they borrowed from the bank, many people were into debt to purchase land for resale at a substantial profit. As the Kirtland Safety Society overextended itself, it was finally forced to close its doors in November 1837. The two hundred individuals who invested in the bank lost nearly everything they had invested. Joseph Smith's losses from the failure of the company were greater than anyone else's. While seeking to achieve success with the bank and, at the same time, to purchase land in Kirtland and goods for his store, he accumulated debts amounting to approximately one hundred thousand dollars. Although he had assets in land and goods that were of greater value in some respects than his debts, he was unable to immediately transform these assets into a form that could be used to pay his creditors. The Prophet endured seventeen lawsuits during 1837 in Geauga County for debts involving claims of more than thirty thousand dollars. Unfortunately, few people correctly understood the causes of their economic difficulties. Many Saints spoke against the Prophet and accused him of being responsible for all of their problems. Church History in the Fulness of Times, p. 171-73)

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.