

## LESSON 30

### “The Prisoners Shall Go Free”

D&C 2; 124:25-55; 127; 128; JS-History 1:36-39; Our Heritage, pages 58-61

#### OVERVIEW:

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed the doctrine of priesthood ordinances for the dead. The Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Nauvoo. We should be enthusiastic and joyful in our efforts to perform baptisms for the dead.

#### SCRIPTURES:

##### JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY

36 After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of <sup>a</sup>Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

37 *For behold, the <sup>a</sup>day cometh that shall <sup>b</sup>burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as <sup>c</sup>stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.* (1 <sup>a</sup>FOR, behold, the <sup>b</sup>day cometh, that shall <sup>c</sup>burn as an oven; and all the <sup>d</sup>proud, yea, and all that do <sup>e</sup>wickedly, shall be (burn as – Moroni to Joseph Smith) <sup>f</sup>stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, (for they that come shall burn them) saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor <sup>g</sup>branch.)

38 And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: *Behold, I will reveal unto you the <sup>a</sup>Priesthood, by the hand of <sup>b</sup>Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the <sup>c</sup>Lord.* (5 ¶ Behold, I will <sup>a</sup>send you <sup>b</sup>Elijah the prophet <sup>c</sup>before the coming of the <sup>d</sup>great and dreadful <sup>e</sup>day of the LORD: (Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. – Moroni to JS. These changes are the same as in D&C 2))

39 He also quoted the next verse differently: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the <sup>a</sup>children the <sup>b</sup>promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.* (6 And he shall <sup>a</sup>turn (plant in) (Joseph Smith said the word “turn” should be “seal” or “bind.” Teachings, p. 330.) the <sup>b</sup>heart(s) of the <sup>c</sup>fathers to the <sup>d</sup>children, (the promises made to the fathers) and the heart(s) of the <sup>e</sup>children (shall turn) to their fathers, lest I come and <sup>f</sup>smite the <sup>g</sup>earth with a <sup>h</sup>curse. (If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.) Elijah came to the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836. A by-product of this process of being sealed to each other, is that those on the earth are sealed to those in heaven and can draw assistance from them. DHC 6:252 Each generation needs to be welded to the one before it, such that a whole, complete, and perfect union can be made. One of the first things necessary for that union is the organization of the righteous from every dispensation into one eternal family. In this way all the keys, powers, and glories from the days of Adam to the present are brought together to prepare the earth for the return of its great King. Moroni uses the phrase “utterly wasted” relative to the purpose of earth life rather than “a curse” as used by Malachi. If we do not accomplish the primary purpose for which we came to mortality, namely the forming of an eternal family unit, we have wasted our lives on matters that are not of eternal importance. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 24)

## THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTION 2

*An extract from the words of the angel Moroni to Joseph Smith the Prophet, while in the house of the Prophet's father at Manchester, New York, on the evening of September 21, 1823. HC 1: 12. Moroni was the last of a long line of historians who had made the record that is now before the world as the Book of Mormon. Compare Malachi 4: 5—6; also Sections 27: 9; 110: 13—16; and 128: 18. (This scripture is the prophecy of Moroni to Joseph Smith about the coming of Elijah. Section 110 is the fulfillment of this prophecy.)*

*1, Elijah is to reveal the priesthood; 2—3, Promises of fathers are planted in hearts of children.*

1 BEHOLD, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of <sup>a</sup>Elijah the prophet, (Joseph Smith: Elijah was the last prophet that held the keys of the Priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the Priesthood, in order that all the ordinances may be attended to in righteousness. It is true that the Savior had authority and power to bestow this blessing; but the sons of Levi were too prejudiced. "And I will send Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord," etc. etc. [Mal. 4:5-6.] Why send Elijah? Because he holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood; and without the authority is given, the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness. (HC 4:211, October 5, 1840.)) before the coming of the great and <sup>b</sup>dreadful day of the Lord. (Joseph Smith: In the days of Noah, God destroyed the world by a flood, and he has promised to destroy it by fire in the last days: but before it should take place Elijah should come first and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, etc. Now comes the point. What is this office and work of Elijah? It is one of the greatest and most important subjects that God has revealed. He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children. Now was this merely confirmed to the living, to settle difficulties with families on earth? By no means. It was a far greater work. Elijah! what would you do if you were here? Would you confine your work to the living alone? No, I would refer you to the Scriptures, where the subject is manifest: that is; without us, they could not be made perfect, nor we without them; the fathers without the children, nor the children without the fathers. [Heb. 11:40; D&C 128:18.] I wish you to understand this subject, for it is important; and if you will receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection; and here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those who dwell in heaven. This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah. (HC 6:251-52, 1844.))

2 And <sup>a</sup>he shall plant in the hearts of the children the <sup>b</sup>promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. (John A. Widtsoe: In our pre-existent state, in the day of the great council, we made a certain agreement with the Almighty. The Lord proposed a plan, conceived by him. We accepted it. Since the plan is intended for all men, we become parties to the salvation of every person under that plan. We agreed, right then and there, to be not only saviors for ourselves, but measurably saviors for the whole human family. We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father's work, and the Savior's work, but also our work. The least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purpose of the eternal plan of salvation. That places us in a very responsible attitude towards the human race. By the doctrine, with the Lord at the head, we become saviors on Mount Zion, all committed to the great plan of offering salvation to the untold numbers of spirits. To do this is the Lord's self-imposed duty, this great labor his highest glory. Likewise, it is man's duty, self-imposed, his pleasure and joy, his labor, and ultimately his glory. There is no place for forgetting the other man, in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There stands my brother, it was for him that the whole plan was made, for him the Church was organized, for him all these blessings were given—not for me alone. Oh, I stand there, too. The Church was made for

me, the Gospel was given for me, all the blessings were given for me; but my brother is entitled to them just as much as I am. He and I together and all of us must unitedly work together to fulfill the great purposes of the Almighty Father. [Sec. 38:27.] Under the Gospel, what is man's highest ideal? Under the Gospel it must be to become like the Father. [Sec. 76:54-60; 132:24; Moses 1:39.] If the Lord's concern is chiefly to bring happiness and joy, salvation, to the whole human family, we cannot become like the Father unless we too engage in that work. There is no chance for the narrow, selfish, introspective man in the kingdom of God. He may survive in the world of men; he may win fame, fortune and power before men, but he will not stand high before the Lord unless he learns to do the works of God, which always point toward the salvation of the whole human family. [Sec. 15:6; 18:10-16; 128:5, 15-18.] (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, October 1934, p. 289.) [See HC 6:59-61.]

3 If it were not so, the whole <sup>a</sup>earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (Joseph Smith: The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead. The Apostle says, ". . . they without us cannot be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40); for it is necessary that the sealing power should be in our hands to seal our children and our dead for the fulness of the dispensation of times—a dispensation to meet the promises made by Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world for the salvation of man. [Titus 1:2.] Now I will speak of them. I will meet Paul halfway. I say to you, Paul, you cannot be perfect without us. [Sec. 128:15, 18.] It is necessary that those who are going before and those who come after us should have salvation in common with us; and thus hath God made it obligatory upon man. Hence, God said, "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:5.) (TPJS, April 6, 1844, p. 356.))

## SECTION 124

*Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, January 19, 1841. HC 4: 274—286. Because of increasing persecutions and illegal procedures against them by public officers, the saints had been compelled to leave Missouri. The exterminating order issued by Lilburn W. Boggs, Governor of Missouri, dated October 27, 1838, had left them no alternative. See HC 3: 175. In 1841, when this revelation was given, the city of Nauvoo, occupying the site of the former village of Commerce, Illinois, had been built up by the saints, and here the headquarters of the Church had been established.*

25 And again, verily I say unto you, let all my saints <sup>a</sup>come from afar. (Orson F. Whitney: These are the days of the gathering of Israel from their long dispersion. This is the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God has set his hand to gather in one all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. [Eph. 1:9-10.] For this purpose the Gospel was instituted, and for this purpose it was restored in these latter days. Gathering is the great distinctive feature of the dispensation of the fulness of times. "Mormonism" does not scatter, does not disintegrate, does not divide; it gathers, unifies, and proposes to bring together all things in Christ. (CR, April 1913, pp. 122-23.))

26 And send ye <sup>a</sup>swift messengers, yea, chosen messengers, and say unto them: Come ye, with all your <sup>b</sup>gold, and your silver, and your precious stones, and with all your antiquities; and with all who have <sup>c</sup>knowledge of antiquities, that will come, may come, and bring the <sup>d</sup>box-tree, and the fir-tree, and the pine-tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth;

27 And with iron, with copper, and with brass, and with zinc, and with all your precious things of the earth; and build a <sup>a</sup>house to my name, for the Most High to <sup>b</sup>dwell therein.

28 For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and <sup>a</sup>restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood. (Joseph Fielding Smith: Joseph Smith said further: "If a man gets a fulness of the Priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the

ordinances of the house of the Lord." I hope we understand that. If we want to receive the fullness of the Priesthood of God, then we must receive the fullness of the ordinances of the house of the Lord and keep His commandments. . . . Let me put this in a little different way. I do not care what office you hold in this Church, you may be an apostle, you may be patriarch, a high priest, or anything else, and you cannot receive the fullness of the Priesthood unless you go into the temple of the Lord and receive these ordinances of which the Prophet speaks. No man can get the fullness of the Priesthood outside of the temple of the Lord. There was a time when that could be done, for the Lord could give these things on the mountain tops—no doubt that is where Moses got it, that is no doubt where Elijah got it—and the Lord said that in the days of poverty, when there was no house prepared in which to receive these things, that they can be received on the mountain tops. But now you will have to go into the house of the Lord, and you cannot get the fullness of the priesthood unless you go there. Do not think because anybody has a higher office in this Church than you have, that you are barred from blessings, because you can go into the temple of the Lord and get all the blessings there are that have been revealed, if you are faithful, have them sealed upon you as an elder of this Church, and then you have all that any man can get. There have to be offices in the Church, and we are not all called to the same calling, but you can get the fullness of the Priesthood in the temple of the Lord by obeying this which I have read to you. I want to make this emphatic. (Elijah the Prophet and His Mission, 1936, pp. 28-29.) In a broad sense the fullness of the priesthood includes the authority to administer the ordinances of the house of the Lord for both the living and the dead. The keys of the fulness of the priesthood were conferred upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple by Moses, Elias, and Elijah (D&C 110:11-16). More specifically, to receive the fulness of the priesthood is to receive the highest ordinances of the temple. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 322). A man can receive the fulness of the priesthood only after he has entered into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. That marriage covenant must be sealed "by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed" (D&C 132:19). To this the Prophet Joseph Smith added, "If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 308). William Clayton recorded these additional instructions from Brigham Young, while the Twelve were preparing the temple and the ordinances to be administered therein: "We have been ordained to the Melchisedeck (sic) Priesthood, which is the highest order of Priesthood, and it has many branches or offices. And those who have come in here and have received their washing and anointing will be ordained Kings and Priests, and will then have received the fullness of the Priesthood, all that can be given on earth, for Brother Joseph said he had given us all that could be given to man on earth" (Smith, Intimate Chronicle, 234). "In setting forth as much as can, with propriety, be spoken outside of the temple," explained Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "the Lord says that 'the fulness of the priesthood' is received only in the temple itself. This fulness is received through washings, anointings, solemn assemblies, oracles in holy places, conversations, ordinances, endowments, and sealings. (D&C 124:40.) It is in the temple that we enter into the patriarchal order, the order of priesthood that bears the name 'the new and everlasting covenant of marriage'" (New Witness, 315). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 971))

29 For a <sup>a</sup>baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be <sup>b</sup>baptized for those who are dead—

30 For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. ("It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc. One of the ordinances of the house of the Lord is baptism for the dead. God decreed before the foundation of the world that that ordinance should be administered in a font prepared for that purpose in the house of the Lord" (Teachings of the Prophet

Joseph Smith, 308). Thus only in their poverty when they are unable to do otherwise does the Lord permit his people to perform this sacred ordinance some place other than a temple. Even then, the ordinances performed outside the temple, are generally redone after a temple becomes available. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 973)

31 But I command you, all ye my saints, to <sup>a</sup>build a house unto me; and I grant unto you a sufficient time to build a house unto me (Joseph Smith: There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord's house; and the Church shall not hold another General Conference, until they can meet in said house. *For thus saith the Lord!* (HC 4:426, October 2, 1841.) At five o'clock p.m., I attended the dedication of the baptismal font in the Lord's House. President Brigham Young was spokesman. (HC 4:446, November 8, 1841.) The Twelve met in council at President Young's, and at four o'clock, repaired to the baptismal font in the basement of the Temple. Elders Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and John Taylor baptized about forty persons for the dead; Elder Willard Richards, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith confirming. These were the first baptisms for the dead in the font. (HC 4:454, November 21, 1841.) Joseph Fielding Smith: This passage [Sec. 124:31-35] has been misinterpreted by some, especially by enemies of the Church who profess a belief in the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, but do not accept the doctrine of salvation for the dead. A careful reading of these verses will show that it was not the failure to build a house, but the failure to perform the ordinances for the dead in the house after it was prepared for those ordinances that would cause the rejection. In the months when the saints were without a Temple the Lord granted them the privilege of baptizing for their dead in the Mississippi River, but with the understanding that this was a special privilege which would end when they had been given sufficient time to prepare a place in the Temple where this ordinance could be performed. For baptism for the dead, as well as other ordinances for the dead, are to be performed in a house built to the name of the Lord and for that holy purpose. Therefore we find the members of the Church engaging in baptisms for the dead in the river from the time the privilege was granted until the time arrived when the font in the house of the Lord was prepared for that ordinance, and when that time arrived all baptisms for the dead in the river ceased by divine command. The Lord said: [Sec. 124:32-33, quoted.] And if ye do not these things at the end of the appointment [v. 32], obviously does not mean "if ye do not build a temple at the end of the appointment," as our critics infer it does, but it refers to the ordinances that were to be performed in the Temple, and the failure on the part of the Saints to perform these ordinances for their dead was the thing that would cause their rejection with their dead, and not the failure to build the Temple, which was merely the edifice in which the saving principles were to be performed. This is in harmony with the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who said that if we neglect the salvation of our dead, we do it at the peril of our own salvation! Why? Because we without them cannot be made perfect. [D&C 128:15.] (Salvation Universal, 1912, p. 22.); and during this time your baptisms shall be acceptable unto me.

32 But behold, at the end of this appointment your baptisms for your dead shall not be acceptable unto me; and if you do not these things at the end of the appointment ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God.

33 For verily I say unto you, that <sup>a</sup>after you have had sufficient time to build a house to me, wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world, your baptisms for your dead cannot be acceptable unto me;

34 For therein are the <sup>a</sup>keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory.

35 And after this time, your baptisms for the dead, by those who are scattered abroad, are not acceptable unto me, saith the Lord.

36 For it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem (This is a marvelously prophetic verse. Not only does it foreshadow a day when temples will be common to the stakes of Zion, as we now see happening with the building of smaller temples, but it also foresees the building of a temple in which baptisms for the dead will be performed in Jerusalem. Some have supposed that the temple prophesied to be built in Jerusalem in the last days can be built by a people other than the Latter-day Saints. This

could hardly be the case if it is to be built to accommodate the performance of baptisms for the dead and by implication other vicarious ordinances. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 974. Orson Pratt: By and by there will be a Temple built at Jerusalem. Who do you think is going to build it? You may think that it will be the unbelieving Jews who rejected the Savior. I believe that that which is contained on the 77th page of the Book of Mormon [2 Nephi 8:4-17], as well as in many other places, in that same book, will be literally fulfilled. The Temple at Jerusalem will undoubtedly be built by those who believe in the true Messiah. Its construction will be, in some respects, different from the Temples now being built. It will contain the throne of the Lord, upon which he will, at times, personally sit, and will reign over the house of Israel for ever. It may also contain twelve other thrones, on which the twelve ancient Apostles will sit, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. It will, very likely, have an apartment, with a table, on which food and drink will be prepared, such as are suitable to the taste and happiness of immortal resurrected beings, thus fulfilling the words of Jesus—"Ye that have followed me in the regeneration shall eat and drink at my table, and sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [Matt. 19:28.] (JD, May 20, 1877, 19:19-20.) Bruce R. McConkie: But when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, and the Jews once again believe in the true Messiah and worship the Father in his name, there will once again be a temple in Jerusalem—a temple named for their beloved Lord. Jesus of Nazareth, a Galilean Jew, the only perfect Man of all the chosen race. Herod's Temple became dust because the Jewish nation, whose house of worship it was, rejected their Messiah and chose to walk in their own wayward course. A house of the Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the Jews—shall rise again in Jerusalem, perhaps on the very site where the ancient holy house stood, because the remnants of Judah shall accept their King, believe his gospel, and walk in his paths. A holy temple, the house of the Lord—a sacred sanctuary with its Holy of Holies where the Divine Presence, the Shekinah of old, shall once more be manifest to Israel—shall be built in Old Jerusalem. It shall be built by the Jews: Jews who believe in Christ; Jews who are converted to the truth; Jews who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Jews who hold again the powers and priesthoods possessed by their ancestors. The keys and powers whereby temples are built vest in the President of the Church, the presiding high priest among the Lord's latter-day people. These keys, first conferred by angelic ministrants—Moses, Elijah, Elias, and others—upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, have come down in direct succession and rest upon and are exercised by the prophet of God on earth, the one who, as it were, wears the mantle of Joseph Smith. And so it is that the Jews shall build their temple, and the Jews who do it will be Mormons; they will be Jews who are the converted and baptized saints of the latter days. In a discourse on the Second Coming of Christ, given April 6, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Judah must return, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, and the temple, and water come out from under the temple, and the waters of the Dead Sea be healed. It will take some time to rebuild the walls of the city and the temple, &c.; and all this must be done before the Son of Man will make His appearance." (Teachings, p. 286.) In a revelation to Joseph Smith, given November 3, 1831, the Lord said: "Let them . . . who are among the Gentiles flee unto Zion," which was then being established in America. "And let them who be of Judah flee unto Jerusalem, unto the mountains of the Lord's house." (D&C 133:12-13.) That is to say, let the Jews gather in their own Jerusalem, a city built upon four hills or mountains, a city in whose mountains they shall build the house of the Lord in due course. Ezekiel, in chapters 38 and 39, tells of the wars and desolations incident to the Second Coming. Then in chapters 40 through 48 he devoted himself to the details, and they are most specific, of what has come to be called Ezekiel's Temple. Worldly scholars, not knowing the purposes of the Lord where his people are concerned; not understanding the doctrine of the gathering of Israel in the last days; not being aware that the gospel was to be restored in the latter days; not knowing that temples are essential to the salvation of men no matter what age they live in—worldly scholars have assumed that Ezekiel's Temple was not and will not be built. The truth is that its construction lies ahead. No doubt some of the recitations relative to it are figurative, though it is clear that some sacrificial ordinances are yet to be performed. It is clear that Ezekiel's Temple, to be built by the Jews in Jerusalem, is destined for millennial use. In chapter 43, for instance, the Lord calls it,

specifically, "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever." That is to say, it will be the place of his throne during the Millennium when he dwells among the house of Israel, and it was the place where the soles of his feet trod when he dwelt on earth as a mortal. In this same chapter he says his house shall be built "upon the top of the mountain." In chapter 47 we find the statements to which the Prophet alluded when he said the water would "come out from under the temple, and the waters of the Dead Sea be healed." Ezekiel's language is: "Waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward. . . . These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed." Ezekiel's concluding expression, relative to Old Jerusalem where the temple shall stand, is: "And the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there." (Mortal Messiah, 1:116-122), those places which I have appointed for <sup>a</sup>refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead.

37 And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your <sup>a</sup>washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?

38 For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a <sup>a</sup>tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was. (Joseph Smith: What was the object of gathering the Jews, or the people of God in any age of the world? . . . The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose. It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world. Jesus did everything to gather the people, and they would not be gathered, and He therefore poured out curses upon them. [Matt. 23:37-39.] Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles. It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc. One of the ordinances of the house of the Lord is baptism for the dead. . . . If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord. (HC 5:423-24, June 11, 1843.))

39 Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your <sup>a</sup>anointings, and your washings, and your <sup>b</sup>baptisms for the dead, and your <sup>c</sup>solemn assemblies, and your <sup>d</sup>memorials for your <sup>e</sup>sacrifices by the sons of Levi, (According to the promise of Malachi and in conjunction with the authority restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist, the sons of Levi, as a part of the restoration of all things, are to offer again the same offering that they offered anciently (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 172-73). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 974) and for your <sup>f</sup>oracles in your most <sup>g</sup>holy places wherein you receive conversations (Charles W. Penrose: The temples will not be confined altogether to Zion, even though that may cover both North and South America. The work will spread forth in other lands as the veil o'er the covering continues to burst. The spiritual and temporal, the heavenly and earthly will be closer, in being joined together, and the time will come when we shall have plenty of work to do in the millennial season, the one thousand years, the one "day of the Lord," when we get communications from the priesthood behind the veil to the priesthood in the earth, in the temples that will be erected. In those holy conversations we read about in the revelations of God, concerning the building of a house to him, that day is not very far off, as the Lord sees things. It may be quite a while as we see them, but they are real, and that which God has promised them will surely come to pass. (CR, October 1923, p. 14.)), and your statutes and judgments, (Statutes are laws, and the covenants made in the temple include promises to keep the laws of God. Elder James E. Talmage explained: "The ordinances of the endowment embody

certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions. The Temple Endowment, as administered in modern temples, comprises instruction relating to the significance and sequence of past dispensations, and the importance of the present as the greatest and grandest era in human history. This course of instruction includes a recital of the most prominent events of the creative period, the condition of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, their disobedience and consequent expulsion from that blissful abode, their condition in the lone and dreary world when doomed to live by labor and sweat, the plan of redemption by which the great transgression may be atoned, the period of the great apostasy, the restoration of the Gospel with all its ancient powers and privileges, the absolute and indispensable condition of personal purity and devotion to the right in present life, and a strict compliance with Gospel requirements" (House of the Lord, 83-4). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 975) for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name. (Joseph Fielding Smith: The importance of the ordinances in the house of the Lord is shown in verses 37-39 [Sec. 124] , where we are informed that Moses was commanded to build a portable temple, generally called tabernacle, which could be carried with them in the wilderness. This tabernacle, is the same temple where the boy Samuel heard the voice of the Lord. (1 Samuel, chapters 1-3.) This sacred building was later replaced by Solomon's Temple. The question is often asked, "What was the nature of the ordinances performed in these edifices in ancient times?" The Lord explains this in the verses above cited. It is true that in ancient Israel they did not have the fulness of ordinances as we do today, and most, if not all, of which they were privileged to receive very likely pertained to the Aaronic Priesthood. (See D&C 84:21-26.) Neither did the ancients labor in their temples for the salvation of the dead. That work was reserved until after the Savior's visit to the spirit world where he unlocked the door to the prisons and had the gospel carried to the spirits who had been confined. President Brigham Young understood this clearly and has said: "Jesus was the first man that ever went to preach to the spirits in prison, holding the keys of the Gospel of salvation to them. Those keys were delivered to him in the day and hour that he went in to the spirit world, and with them he opened the door of salvation to the spirits in prison." (JD 3:370.) The Lord said to Enoch in speaking of the spirits of men, "But behold, these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods; and behold, I will shut them up; a prison have I prepared for them. And that which I have chosen hath plead before my face. Wherefore, he suffereth for their sins; inasmuch as they will repent in the day that my Chosen shall return unto me, and until that day they shall be in torment." (Moses 7:38-39.) The first work for the dead was accomplished by the primitive saints after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. [1 Cor. 15:29.] (CHMR, 1950, 4:82.))

40 And verily I say unto you, let this <sup>a</sup>house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

41 For I deign to <sup>a</sup>reveal unto my church things which have been kept <sup>b</sup>hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the <sup>c</sup>fulness of times.

42 And <sup>a</sup>I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house (During the April 1844 conference of the Church the Prophet said, "The declaration this morning is, that as soon as the Temple and baptismal font are prepared, we calculate to give the Elders of Israel their washings and anointings, and attend to those last and more impressive ordinances, without which we cannot obtain celestial thrones. But there must be a holy place prepared for that purpose. There was a proclamation made during the time that the foundation of the Temple was laid to that effect, and there are provisions made until the work is completed, so that men may receive their endowments and be made kings and priests



unto the Most High God, having nothing to do with temporal things, but their whole time will be taken up with things pertaining to the house of God. There must, however, be a place built expressly for that purpose, and for men to be baptized for their dead. It must be built in this central place; for every man who wishes to save his father, mother, brothers, sisters and friends, must go through all the ordinances for each one of them separately, the same as for himself, from baptism to ordination, washing and anointings, and receive all the keys and powers of the Priesthood, the same as for himself" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 362-63). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 976-77. Joseph Fielding Smith: Wednesday, May 4, 1842, the Prophet met with a number of brethren in the upper room of his store where he had his private office, where he kept his sacred writings, did his translating and received revelations and held council meetings. The special reason for the gathering was of the greatest moment to the Church and to this generation. It was the fulfillment of the promise the Lord made that he was about to reveal unto the Church "things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times." [Sec. 124:41.] These things were to be made known, and the blessings coming from them to be given to the members of the Church, within the walls of temples built to the name of the Lord. The Lord said he would reveal unto his servant, Joseph Smith "all things pertaining to his house, and the priesthood thereof, and the place whereon it shall be built." (D&C 124:41-42.) Knowing that the Prophet would be taken in death before this house was finished, the Lord commanded him to make known to the trusted brethren the ordinances which later would be performed in the temple when it was finished. It was on this occasion, May 4, 1842, that the Prophet called some of these brethren to his upper room, and gave unto them instruction "in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds." [HC 5:2.] (CHMR, 1950, 4:111-12.), and the priesthood thereof, and the place whereon it shall be built. (Joseph Smith: All men who become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ will have to receive the fullness of the ordinances of his kingdom; and those who will not receive all the ordinances will come short of the fullness of that glory, if they do not lose the whole. (HC 5:424, June 11, 1843.))

43 And ye shall build it on the place where you have contemplated building it, for that is the spot which I have chosen for you to build it.

44 If ye labor with all your might, I will consecrate that spot that it shall be made <sup>a</sup>holy.

45 And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my <sup>a</sup>servants (Lorenzo Snow: There may be some things that the First Presidency do; that the Apostles do, that cannot for the moment be explained; yet the spirit, the motives that inspire the action can be understood, because each member of the Church has a right to have that measure of the Spirit of God that they can judge as to those who are acting in their interests or otherwise. . . . [Sec. 50:21-22.] (CR, October 1898, p. 54.)) whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

46 But if they will not <sup>a</sup>hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed (Joseph Fielding Smith: No man ever went astray by following the counsel of the authorities of the Church. No man who ever followed the teachings or took advice or counsel from the one who stands as the representative of the Lord ever went astray; but men who have refused to accept counsel have gone astray and into forbidden paths, and in some instances have even denied the faith. Others who went astray because they failed to understand and to heed the counsels that were given unto them for their eternal good, have humbled themselves and come back to the Church acknowledging their error. (CR, October 1912, p. 124.)), they shall not be blest, because they <sup>b</sup>pollute mine holy grounds, and mine holy ordinances, and charters, and my holy words which I give unto them.

47 And it shall come to pass that if you build a house unto my name, and do not do the things that I say,

I will not perform the <sup>a</sup>oath which I make unto you, neither fulfil the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord.

48 For <sup>a</sup>instead of blessings, ye, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon your own heads, by your follies, and by all your abominations, which you practise before me, saith the Lord. (These verses return us to the fact that the Lord requires that we become a covenant people or a covenant community; we are not simply a community of covenant individuals. We do not work out our salvation separately and singly but rather together. If one man chooses to pollute the water it is not he alone who suffers. All who drink it, regardless of how innocent they may be, will be poisoned. While if another man choose to raise the blinds so that the light of heaven might enter the otherwise darkened room, all within the room are thereby enabled to see. All of us have been both blessed and cursed by that which others have done. These verses return us to both the promises and warnings of Jackson County and Kirtland, Ohio (D&C 101:1-8; 112:24-26). Nauvoo is to be to them a place of refuge and safety if the Saints abide in the counsels of the Lord, but if some of their number choose to pursue another course, all will suffer, and again as history attests such was the case. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 977)

49 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their <sup>a</sup>diligence, and their enemies come upon them and <sup>b</sup>hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to <sup>c</sup>require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings. (Charles W. Penrose: If you will read carefully the revelations I speak of now [Sec. 84 and 124] , you will find that the Lord refers particularly to this very requirement in regard to Jackson county, Missouri, and he declares that the people there were commanded to build a house to him at that time, and on that spot. But their enemies came upon them and prevented them from doing that which the Lord commanded them, and therefore the Lord accepted their offering. The Lord lays down there a principle which it is well for us to understand. The Lord says that whenever he gives a commandment, no matter what it is about, to the children of man, and they go to with their might and endeavor to fulfil his commandment, and do that which is required of them, and they are prevented by their enemies, or by any other means, from accomplishing it, he does not require it any more at their hands. He accepts of their offering. That has applied in the past, and will apply in the future, and we should remember it. If God gives a commandment, and we do not obey it, why he revokes it, and he revokes the blessings. If he gives us a commandment to do certain things, and we find ourselves unable to do them, either by restricted laws or any other obstacles in the way of physical force, the Lord requires them no more but accepts our offering, and he will visit his wrath and indignation upon those who prevent his people from accomplishing that which he required at their hands. (CR, April 1924, pp. 13-14.))

50 And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will <sup>a</sup>visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth <sup>b</sup>generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God. (Joseph Fielding Smith: You have an idea that the commandment [Exodus 20:5] means that when a man sins his children will be held responsible for his folly and be punished for it, for three or four generations. The commandment does not mean anything of this kind. The Lord never punishes a child for its parents' transgressions. He is just and merciful. The real meaning of this visiting of the iniquity is that when a man transgresses he teaches his children to transgress, and they follow his teachings. It is natural for children to follow in the practices of their fathers and by doing so suffer for the parents' iniquity which they have voluntarily brought upon themselves. There are numerous other passages of scripture showing the mercy and justice of the Lord and that they are not to be punished for the fathers' transgression. Here are a few: [Deut. 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chron. 25:4; Jer. 31:29-30; Ezek. 18:20, quoted.] (IE, June 1955, 58:383.))

51 Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a <sup>a</sup>house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the

Lord your God.

52 And I will answer <sup>a</sup>judgment, wrath, and indignation, wailing, and anguish, and gnashing of teeth upon their heads, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord your God.

53 And this I make an <sup>a</sup>example unto you, for your consolation concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work and have been hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by <sup>b</sup>oppression, saith the Lord your God.

54 For I am the Lord your God, and will save all those of your brethren who have been <sup>a</sup>pure in heart, and have been <sup>b</sup>slain in the land of Missouri, saith the Lord.

55 And again, verily I say unto you, I command you again to build a <sup>a</sup>house to my name, even in this place, that you may <sup>b</sup>prove yourselves unto me that ye are <sup>c</sup>faithful in all things whatsoever I command you, that I may bless you, and crown you with honor, immortality, and eternal life. (Though Zion and its temple were not built within the appointed generation, and though the early Saints were excused from this labor, these things will yet come to fruition. On 8 March 1833, the Lord promised: "I, the Lord, will contend with Zion, and plead with her strong ones, and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me. For she shall not be removed out of her place" (D&C 90:36-37). All that has been prophesied must yet be fulfilled and every labor assigned the Saints of this dispensation must be accomplished. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 977-78)

## SECTION 127

*An epistle from Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Latter-day Saints at Nauvoo, Illinois, containing directions on baptism for the dead; dated at Nauvoo, September 1, 1842. HC 5: 142-144.* (Before the Prophet Joseph sent this revelation and D&C 128 to the Saints, an unknown person made a serious attempt on the life of former Governor Boggs of Missouri. Orrin Porter Rockwell, a Mormon, was accused of the crime, (Porter was arrested on these charges and spent nine months in prison. He was later acquitted and released.) and Joseph Smith was named as his accessory. Residents of Missouri tried to compel the governor of Illinois, Thomas Carlin, to extradite Joseph Smith to Missouri to answer these false charges. This was a conspiracy to get the Prophet back into the hands of the Missourian mobbers. Governor Carlin of Illinois had joined in this conspiracy contrary to every principle of correct law, as it was later shown in the trial which was held in Springfield [Illinois]... From his place of concealment the Prophet wrote these two letters (Section 127 and 128). D&C Student Manual, p. 314. Willard Richards: President Joseph Smith has this day received a full and complete discharge from all his bonds and difficulties, touching the case of Missouri, in the case of Lilburn W. Bogg's attempted assassination, having undergone a patient and laborious investigation by the circuit court of the United States, now in session in this place, Judge Pope presiding. It was decided that all the proceedings against the Mormon Prophet were illegal, and that the case should never be revived again. Joseph is in good health and fine spirits, and are all rejoicing that righteousness has prevailed throughout all the deliberations of the court, consequently Joseph is again free and ready to attend to his Master's business. The Saints rejoice, and the heavens are glad, that truth has not entirely left the earth, and that the kingdom is at hand. Yours in the gospel, W. Richards (Letter to Millennial Star) (MS, March 1843, 3:190.) The first public discourse on the subject of baptism for the dead had been given on 15 August 1840 at the funeral of Seymour Brunson, who had been a member of the high council in Nauvoo. Simon Baker made an account of what Joseph Smith had said on that occasion. "He [the Prophet] read the greater part of the 15th chapter of Corinthians and remarked that the Gospel of Jesus Christ brought glad tidings of great joy, and then remarked that he saw a widow in that congregation that had a son who died without being baptized, and this widow in reading the sayings of Jesus 'except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven,' and that not one jot nor tittle of the Savior's words should pass away, but all should be fulfilled. He then said that this widow should have glad tidings in that thing. He also said

the apostle [Paul] was talking to a people who understood baptism for the dead, for it was practiced among them. He went on to say that people could now act for their friends who had departed this life, and that the plan of salvation was calculated to save all who were willing to obey the requirements of the law of God" (Ehat and Cook, Words of Joseph Smith, 49). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1020-21)

*1—4, Joseph Smith glories in persecution and tribulation; 5—12, Records must be kept relative to baptisms for the dead.* (By the summer of 1842 persecution had grown to the point that the Prophet Joseph Smith was forced into hiding. This revelation was given while he was staying in the home of Brother Taylor, father of John Taylor. D&C Student Manual, p. 314)

1 FORASMUCH as the Lord has revealed unto me that my enemies, both in Missouri and this State, were again in the pursuit of me; and inasmuch as they pursue me without a<sup>a</sup> cause, (Responding to the question as to why the Prophet was constantly subjected to such harassment, Brigham Young said, "Why was he hunted from neighborhood to neighborhood, from city to city, from State to State, and at last suffered death? Because he received revelations from the Father, from the Son, and was ministered to by holy angels, and published to the world the direct will of the Lord concerning his children on the earth. Again, why was he persecuted? Because he revealed to all mankind a religion so plain and so easily understood, consistent with the Bible, and so true. It is now as it was in the days of the Savior; let people believe and practise these simple, Godlike truths and it will be as it was in the old world, they will say, if this man be let alone he will come and take away our peace and nation" (Journal of Discourses, 18:231). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1021) and have not the least shadow or coloring of justice or right on their side in the getting up of their prosecutions against me; and inasmuch as their pretensions are all founded in falsehood of the blackest dye, (Brigham Young observed that "Joseph, our Prophet, was hunted and driven, arrested and persecuted, and although no law was ever made in these United States that would bear against him, for he never broke a law, yet to my certain knowledge he was defendant in forty- six lawsuits, and every time Mr. Priest was at the head of and led the band or mob who hunted and persecuted him. And when Joseph and Hyrum were slain in Carthage jail, the mob, painted like Indians, was led by a preacher" (Journal of Discourses, 14:199). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1021-22) I have thought it expedient and wisdom in me to leave the place for a short season, for my own safety and the safety of this people. I would say to all those with whom I have business, that I have left my<sup>b</sup> affairs with agents and clerks (Oliver K. Granger, William W. Phelps, William Clayton, Willard Richards, and James Sloan.) who will transact all business in a prompt and proper manner, and will see that all my debts are canceled in due time, by turning out property, or otherwise, as the case may require, or as the circumstances may admit of. When I learn that the storm is fully blown over, then I will return to you again.

2 And as for the<sup>a</sup> perils which I am called to pass through, they seem but a small thing to me, as the<sup>b</sup> envy and wrath of man have been my common lot all the days of my life; and for what cause it seems mysterious, unless I was<sup>c</sup> ordained from before the foundation of the world ("Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was," declared the Prophet Joseph Smith, "I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 365).) for some good end, or bad, as you may choose to call it. Judge ye for yourselves. God<sup>d</sup> knoweth all these things, whether it be good or bad. But nevertheless, deep water is what I am wont to swim in. It all has become a second nature to me; and I feel, like Paul, to glory in<sup>e</sup> tribulation; for to this day has the God of my fathers delivered me out of them all, and will deliver me from henceforth; for behold, and lo, I shall triumph over all my enemies, for the Lord God hath spoken it.

3 Let all the saints rejoice, therefore, and be exceedingly glad; for Israel's<sup>a</sup> God is their God, and he will mete out a just recompense of<sup>b</sup> reward upon the heads of all their<sup>c</sup> oppressors.

4 And again, verily thus saith the Lord: Let the work of my<sup>a</sup> temple, and all the works which I have

appointed unto you, be continued on and not cease; and let your <sup>b</sup>diligence, and your perseverance, and patience, and your works be redoubled, and you shall in nowise lose your reward, saith the Lord of Hosts. (It can justly be said that the revelations received in Nauvoo and the ordinances performed in its temple rank among the most important events in earth's history. Events of such spiritual grandeur require a matching expression of faith. The building and completion of the Nauvoo Temple constituted evidence sufficient for all the hosts of heaven to know that the Lord had indeed raised up a people worthy of the endowment of power that he deigned to put upon them. In the labor of building that temple, the nation of Israel was born anew and the announcement made to all the world that the stone seen by Daniel had commenced to roll forth and that there was no power in heaven or on earth that could stop it. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1022-23) And if they <sup>c</sup>persecute you, so persecuted they the prophets and righteous men that were before you. For all this there is a reward in heaven.

5 And again, I give unto you a word in relation to the <sup>a</sup>baptism for your dead.

6 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you concerning your dead: When any of you are <sup>a</sup>baptized for your dead, let there be a <sup>b</sup>recorder, (Joseph Smith: I have one remark to make respecting the baptism for the dead to suffice for the time being, until I have opportunity to discuss the subject at greater length—all persons baptized for the dead must have a recorder present, that he may be an eyewitness to record and testify of the truth and validity of his record. It will be necessary, in the Grand Council, that these things be testified to by competent witnesses. Therefore let the recording and witnessing of baptisms for the dead be carefully attended to from this time forth. [Sec. 128:2-5.] If there is any lack, it may be at the expense of our friends; they may not come forth. (HC 5:141, August 31, 1842.)) and let him be eye-witness of your baptisms; let him hear with his ears, that he may testify of a truth, saith the Lord; (Baptism is an ordinance of salvation by which men obtain entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Of necessity it must be performed by one having authority—one properly commissioned to act—and of equal necessity others sharing that same authority must act as witnesses of the event. They are also to see that proper records are kept. Such is the order of heaven. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1023. Those qualified to be witnesses are priests in the Aaronic Priesthood and all holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood.)

7 That in all your recordings it may be <sup>a</sup>recorded in heaven; whatsoever you <sup>b</sup>bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven; (The responsibility of the Latter-day Saints is unique in the history of the world. Work for the dead had been done by the Saints of the meridian of time, but it falls to the Latter-day Saints to accomplish the bulk of this work. In these verses the Lord gives instructions so the work can be done in an orderly, verifiable way. D&C Student Manual, p. 315)

8 For I am about to <sup>a</sup>restore many things to the earth, pertaining to the <sup>b</sup>priesthood, saith the Lord of Hosts. (It was in Nauvoo that the fulness of the priesthood was restored. Here the keys of the kingdom were given to those who would succeed Joseph Smith in this great latter-day work. Here the Twelve received the rights of the priesthood and all the powers and blessing of the temple. Here thousands of Latter-day Saints were clothed in the blessings of the priesthood and endowed with power from on high. Those sensitive to the things of the Spirit cannot walk the streets where old Nauvoo stood without the sense that they walk on sacred ground, the staging place for great events of our dispensation. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1023)

9 And again, let all the <sup>a</sup>records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my holy temple, to be held in remembrance from generation to generation, saith the Lord of Hosts. (Temple records contain the names and ordinance dates for all persons for whom temple work has been done in this dispensation. This important data is stored in computers for ease of retrieval. This kind of record keeping fulfills the Lord's requirement for "all the records [to] be had in order." D&C Student Manual, p. 315)

10 I will say to all the saints, that I desired, with exceedingly great desire, to have addressed them from the stand on the subject of baptism for the dead, on the following Sabbath. But inasmuch as it is out of

my power to do so, I will write the word of the Lord from time to time, on that subject, and send it to you by mail, as well as many other things.

11 I now close my letter for the present, for the want of more time; for the enemy is on the alert, and as the Savior said, the <sup>a</sup>prince of this world cometh, but he hath nothing in me.

12 Behold, my prayer to God is that you all may be saved. And I subscribe myself your servant in the Lord, prophet and <sup>a</sup>seer of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

JOSEPH SMITH

## SECTION 128

*An epistle from Joseph Smith the Prophet to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, containing further directions on baptism for the dead; dated at Nauvoo, Illinois, September 6, 1842. HC 5: 148—153. ("Brother Joseph was hid up in my house from his enemies from Missouri," wrote Edward Hunter. "During that time, Joseph revealed the last part of the baptism for our dead. I was present with William Clayton" (Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage 6:323).)*

*1—5, Local and general recorders must certify to the fact of baptisms for the dead; 6—9, Their records are binding and recorded on earth and in heaven; 10—14, The baptismal font is a similitude of the grave; 15—17, Elijah restored power relative to baptism for the dead; 18—21, All of the keys, powers, and authorities of past dispensations have been restored; 22—25, Glad and glorious tidings acclaimed for the living and the dead.*

1 AS I stated to you in my letter before I left my place, that I would write to you from time to time and give you information in relation to many subjects, I now resume the subject of the <sup>a</sup>baptism for the dead, as that subject seems to occupy my mind, and press itself upon my feelings the strongest, since I have been pursued by my enemies. (Certain things become more important in our lives than other things.)

2 I wrote a few words of revelation to you concerning a recorder. I have had a few additional views in relation to this matter, which I now certify. That is, it was declared in my former letter that there should be a <sup>a</sup>recorder, who should be eye-witness, and also to hear with his ears, that he might make a record of a truth before the Lord.

3 Now, in relation to this matter, it would be very difficult for one recorder to be present at all times, and to do all the business. To obviate this difficulty, there can be a recorder appointed in each ward of the city, who is well qualified for taking accurate minutes; and let him be very particular and precise in taking the whole proceedings, certifying in his record that he saw with his eyes, and heard with his ears, giving the date, and names, and so forth, and the history of the whole transaction; naming also some three individuals that are present, if there be any present, who can at any time when called upon certify to the same, that in the mouth of two or three <sup>a</sup>witnesses every word may be established. (This system is still used in the Church today.)

4 Then, let there be a general <sup>a</sup>recorder, to whom these other records can be handed, being attended with certificates over their own signatures, certifying that the record they have made is true. Then the general church recorder can enter the record on the general church book, with the certificates and all the attending witnesses, with his own statement that he verily believes the above statement and records to be true, from his knowledge of the general character and appointment of those men by the church. And when this is done on the general church book, the record shall be just as holy, and shall answer the ordinance just the same as if he had seen with his eyes and heard with his ears, and made a record of the same on the general church book. (Rudger Clawson: In the early days of the Church some baptisms for the dead that were not properly witnessed and recorded, were rejected of the Lord, and the work had to be done over again. We know that great care and attention is given to this matter today in our Temples and that efficient help must be secured to do this. . . . Truly it is a great and marvelous work, and not the

least important thing about it is that these ordinances are all carefully recorded in the books and are filed away in the archives of the Temple, to be brought forth in due time. From these records the people who have gone to that house will be judged. Nothing that is done in that Temple will be accepted of the Lord, except it is properly witnessed and recorded. (CR, April 1900, pp. 43-44.)

5 You may think this order of things to be very particular; but let me tell you that it is only to answer the will of God, by conforming to the ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world, for the <sup>a</sup>salvation of the dead who should die without a <sup>b</sup>knowledge of the gospel. (Joseph Smith: The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother, Alvin, that has long since slept, and marvelled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins. Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying—All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts. And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability, are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven. (HC 2:380-81, January 21, 1836.) Parley P. Pratt: In the world of spirits there are Apostles, Prophets, Elders, and members of the Church of the Saints, holding keys of Priesthood, and power to teach, comfort, instruct, and proclaim the Gospel to their fellow spirits, after the pattern of Jesus Christ. In the same world there are also the spirits of Catholics and Protestants of every sect, who have all need to be taught and to come to the knowledge of the true unchangeable Gospel in its fullness and simplicity, that they may be judged the same as if they had been privileged with the same in the flesh. [1 Peter 4:6.] There is also the Jew, the Mahomedan, the infidel, who did not believe in Christ while in the flesh. All these must be taught, must come to the knowledge of the crucified and risen Redeemer, and hear the glad tidings of the Gospel. There are also all the varieties of the heathen spirits; the noble and refined philosopher, poet, patriot or statesmen of Rome or Greece, the enlightened Socrates and Plato, and their like, together with every grade of spirits down to the most uncultivated of the savage world. All these must be taught, enlightened, and must bow the knee to the eternal King, for the decree hath gone forth that unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. [Sec. 76:110-11; 88:104.] O, what a field of labor, of benevolence, of missionary enterprise now opens to the Apostles and Elders of the Church of the Saints! As this field opens they will begin to realize more fully the extent of their divine mission, and the meaning of the great command to "preach the gospel to every creature." [Mark 16:15.] In this vast field of labor the Priesthood are, in a great measure, occupied during their sojourn in the world of spirits, while awaiting the resurrection of the body, and at the same time they themselves are edified, improved and greatly advanced and matured in the science of divine Theology. (Key to the Science of Theology, 1943, pp. 127-28.) Joseph F. Smith: In relation to the deliverance of spirits from their prison house, of course, we believe that can only be done after the gospel has been preached to them in the spirit, and they have accepted the same, and the work necessary to their redemption by the living be done for them. That this work may be hastened so that all who believe, in the spirit world, may receive the benefit of deliverance, it is revealed that the great work of the Millennium shall be the work in the temples for the redemption of the dead; and then we hope to enjoy the benefits of revelation through the Urim and Thummim, or by such means as the Lord may reveal concerning those for whom the work shall be done, so that we may not work by chance, or by faith alone, without knowledge, but with the actual knowledge revealed unto us. It stands to reason that, while the gospel may be preached unto all, the good and the bad, or rather to those who

would repent and to those who would not repent in the spirit world, the same as it is here, redemption will only come to those who repent and obey. There is, no doubt, great leniency given to people who are anxious to do the work for their dead, and in some instances, very unworthy people may have the work done for them; it does not follow, however, that they will receive any benefit therefrom, and the correct thing is to do the work only for these of whom we have the testimony that they will receive it. However, we are disposed to give benefit of the doubt to the dead, as it is better to do the work for many who are unworthy than to neglect one who is worthy. Now, we know in part and see in part, but steadfastly look forward to the time when that which is perfect will come. [1 Cor. 13:8-12.] We are left largely to our own agency here, to exercise our own intelligence and to receive all the light that is revealed, so far as we are capable of receiving it, and only those who seek the light, and desire it, are likely to find it. [Sec. 88:63-64; 46:8-9.] (IE, December 1901, 5:146-47.) Joseph Fielding Smith: We are not going to do the temple work for everybody, because it doesn't pertain to them ["all of the ordinances of the Gospel, pertain to the celestial kingdom of God"]. We are going to do the temple work for those who are entitled, through their faith and their repentance, to enter into the celestial kingdom. But somebody says, "How do we know? We search our records for hundreds of years and do the work for all of them." Of course we do, because we can't judge. I don't know whether one man is worthy and another isn't. The Lord has given us the privilege of doing the work for all of our kindred, with the hope of course that all of them will receive the truth, and since we are of the house of Israel our parents, generation by generation as they go back, also would be of the house of Israel, and hence they would be more likely to receive the Gospel than would those who are purely Gentiles. Now if there are any in our lines we do work for in the temple who are unworthy or unwilling to receive the ordinances of the house of the Lord, then the Lord will be the judge. He will set that ordinance aside and it will not be accounted as done. That is in His hands. Our duty is to do the work the Lord has required at our hands for the salvation of our dead. Now in the justice of our Father in Heaven every soul on the face of the earth must have an opportunity to receive the Gospel. I want to read a verse to you from the Doctrine and Covenants: For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed. (D&C 1:2-3.) Now reason teaches us that it is a physical impossibility for us to reach every soul upon the face of the earth with a knowledge of the Gospel. We have not done that. With all the means at our command they have been dying by the thousands, both in the days since the work began and before, without having heard the voice of a servant of the Son of God upon the earth; yet the time must come, in the justice of our Father in Heaven, when every soul must hear—every ear shall hear, every eye shall see, every heart shall be penetrated—and if it isn't done in this life by the preaching of the Gospel then it must be done among the dead, in the spirit world; but it must be done. (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, October 1940, pp. 196-97.)

6 And further, I want you to remember that John the Revelator was contemplating this very subject in relation to the dead, when he declared, as you will find recorded in Revelation 20:12—*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; (Scriptures) and another book was opened, which is the book of life;* (Bruce R. McConkie: "What is it? Figuratively, it is our own life, and being, the record of our acts transcribed in our souls, an account of our obedience or disobedience written in our bodies. Literally, it is the record kept in heaven of the names and righteous deeds of the faithful" (McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3:578).) *and the dead were judged out of those things which were "written in the books, according to their works.*

7 You will discover in this quotation that the books were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; (Heaven too keeps its record of all that we do. This record will stand as a second witness with the record kept on earth in the determination of our standing before God. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1026) but the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works; consequently, the books spoken of must be the books which contained the



record of their works, and refer to the <sup>a</sup>records which are kept on the earth. And the book which was the <sup>b</sup>book of life is the record which is kept in heaven; the principle agreeing precisely with the doctrine which is commanded you in the revelation contained in the letter which I wrote to you previous to my leaving my place—that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven.

8 Now, the nature of this ordinance consists in the <sup>a</sup>power of the priesthood, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, wherein it is granted that whatsoever you <sup>b</sup>bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, (Melvin J. Ballard: An evidence that those in the Spirit world know of the work we do here in the Temples, was related by President [Edward J.] Wood of the Alberta Temple. While sealing a group of children to their parents, in the midst of the ceremony he felt an impression to ask the mother who was present, "Sister, does this list contain the names of all your children?" She said, "Yes." He began again, but once more he stopped and asked if the list named all her children. She told him there were no more children. He attempted to proceed, but a third time was impelled to ask: "My sister, have you not lost a child whose name is not on this list?" Then she said: "Yes, I do remember now. We did lose a little baby. It was born alive and then died soon after. I had forgotten to put its name down." The name was given and then it, being the first born, was named first and all were sealed to the parents. Then President Wood said: "Everytime I started to seal the children, I heard a voice say: 'Mother, don't forget me,' and I could not go any farther." The appeal was made each time until the omission was discovered. Our loved ones who have departed are conscious of what is happening. They are often very near to us. Their hearts are turned to the work we are doing. We can make them happy and make ourselves happy. (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, October 1932, 23:149.) and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Or, in other words, taking a different view of the translation, whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven, and whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven; for out of the books shall your dead be judged, according to their own works, whether they themselves have attended to the <sup>c</sup>ordinances in their own *propria persona*, or by the means of their own agents, according to the ordinance which God has prepared for their salvation from before the foundation of the world, according to the records which they have kept concerning their dead.

9 It may seem to some to be a very bold doctrine that we talk of—a power which records or binds on earth and binds in heaven. Nevertheless, in all ages of the world, whenever the Lord has given a <sup>a</sup>dispensation of the priesthood to any man by actual revelation, or any set of men, this power has always been given. Hence, whatsoever those men did in <sup>b</sup>authority, in the name of the Lord, and did it truly and faithfully, and kept a proper and faithful record of the same, it became a law on earth and in heaven, and could not be annulled, according to the decrees of the great <sup>c</sup>Jehovah. This is a faithful saying. Who can hear it?

10 And again, for the precedent, Matthew 16:18, 19: *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter,* (The name Peter (petros) means "small rock"; Christ is using a subtle word play here. When he says "upon this rock" (petra), meaning bedrock, "I will build my church," he is telling Peter that he will be a revelator and that the Church will be founded upon the principle of revelation. At the time of their first meeting, Christ told Peter that he would be called "Cephas," which is by interpretation a "seer," or a "stone" (JST John 1:42). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1027) *and upon this <sup>a</sup>rock I will build my church* (There is and can be only one true Church. Bruce R. McConkie: "What then is the principle upon which the Lord has built up his Church and established his kingdom in all ages?" asked Bruce R. McConkie. "Always, invariably, eternally, exclusively, Deity has and does operate upon the principle of revelation. By revelation his mind and will is made known and his kingdom established; without it he becomes an unknown God, an immaterial nothing; without it men substitute their own creeds and theories for his plans and purposes. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Brother of Jared, Nephi, Joseph Smith, and every prophet through whom the God of heaven set up his earthly kingdom, received their commission and direction by revelation. Where there is revelation, there is the kingdom of God on earth; where there is no revelation, there the kingdom of God is not" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:386).); *and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* (As used in scripture, hell has

reference to the place of departed spirits (Bible Dictionary, 699). In some passages, though certainly not all, it refers to the place of torment or the abiding place of wicked spirits. The point of this passage of scripture is that the keys being promised to Peter will have power to open such gates. A gate prevails when it keeps something in or out of a particular place. For keys to prevail is for them to either lock or unlock such a gate so that people can enter or leave the gated area. Those who obey the laws and ordinances of the gospel have the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them (D&C 10:69; 17:8; 21:4-6; 98:22). This is generally thought to mean that they are safe from the threat of ending up in the place of torment when they die. It is also generally supposed that in the context of the present text it is saying that hell or the devil will not prevail against Peter. In fact, what is being said is that Peter will have power to direct the ministering of the gospel in the world of the spirits and that he, and for that matter all faithful Saints acting under his direction, will have the power to move freely from one part of the spirit world to another. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1029) *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

11 Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the *summum bonum* of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the <sup>a</sup>powers of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a <sup>b</sup>knowledge of facts in relation to the <sup>c</sup>salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living.

12 Herein is <sup>a</sup>glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life—The ordinance of baptism by water, to be <sup>b</sup>immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead, that one principle might accord with the other; to be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves; hence, this ordinance was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in likeness of the dead.

13 Consequently, the <sup>a</sup>baptismal font was instituted as a similitude of the grave, (Joseph Fielding Smith: The Lord has placed the baptismal font in our temples below the foundation, or the surface of the earth. This is symbolical, since the dead are in their graves, and we are working for the dead when we are baptized for them. Moreover, baptism is also symbolical of death and the resurrection, in fact, is virtually a resurrection from the life of sin, or from spiritual death, to the life of spiritual life. (See D&C 29:41-45.) Therefore when the dead have had this ordinance performed in their behalf they are considered to have been brought into the presence of God, just as this doctrine is applied to the living. Other ordinances of the endowment and sealings therefore do not have to be performed below the surface of the earth as in the case of baptism. (CHMR, 1950, 4:137-38.)) and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead, and that all things may have their likeness, and that they may accord one with another—that which is earthly conforming to that which is <sup>b</sup>heavenly, as Paul hath declared, 1 Corinthians 15:46, 47, and 48:

14 *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. (That which is natural will become spiritual, meaning immortal.) The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.* And as are the records on the earth in relation to your dead, which are truly made out, so also are the records in heaven. This, therefore, is the <sup>a</sup>sealing and binding power, and, in one sense of the word, the <sup>b</sup>keys of the kingdom, which consist in the key of <sup>c</sup>knowledge.

15 And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their <sup>a</sup>salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul (Joseph Smith: He [the apostle Paul] is about five feet high; very dark hair; dark complexion; dark skin; large Roman nose; short face; small black eyes, penetrating as eternity; round shoulders; a whining voice, except when elevated, and then it almost resembled the roaring of a lion. He was a good orator, active and diligent, always employing himself in doing good to his fellow man. (TPJS, January 5, 1841, p. 180.)) says concerning the fathers—

that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made <sup>b</sup>perfect. (Joseph Smith: This doctrine [baptism for the dead] presents in a clear light the wisdom and mercy of God in preparing an ordinance for the salvation of the dead, being baptized by proxy, their names recorded in heaven and they judged according to the deeds done in the body. This doctrine was the burden of the scriptures. Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation. (HC 4:426, October 2, 1841.) No one is saved separately and singly. Salvation is a community affair, and the covenant of salvation is made with the community of Saints rather than with people individually. The Lord had Moses lead the children of Israel to Sinai that he might make of them a holy nation. To Moses he said, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:5-6). So it was that covenants were made between the generations long before we were born to do a work and labor for each other. Elder John A. Widtsoe explained: "In our preexistent state . . . we made a certain agreement with the Almighty. The Lord proposed a plan. . . . We accepted it. Since the plan is intended for all men, we became parties to the salvation of every person under that plan. We agreed, right then and there, to be not only saviors for ourselves but . . . saviors for the whole human family. We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father's work, and the Savior's work, but also our work. The least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purpose of the eternal plan of salvation. "That places us in a very responsible attitude towards the human race. By that doctrine, with the Lord at the head, we become saviors on Mount Zion, all committed to the great plan of offering salvation to the untold numbers of spirits. To do this is the Lord's self-imposed duty, this great labor his highest glory. Likewise, it is man's duty, self-imposed, his pleasure and joy, his labor, and ultimately his glory" ("Worth of Souls," 25:189). Illustrating the covenants made before we were born that exist between the generations, Wilford Woodruff bore the following testimony, "I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it again in my life, that those men who laid the foundation of this American Government and signed the Declaration of Independence were the best spirits the God of Heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men. George Washington and all the men that labored for the purpose were inspired of the Lord. Another thing I am going to say here, because I have a right to say it. Every one of those men that signed the Declaration of Independence with General Washington called upon me, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Temple at St. George two consecutive nights, and demanded at my hands that I should go forth and attend to the ordinances of the house of God for them. Men are here, I believe, that know of this— Brothers J. D. T. McAllister, David H. Cannon and James C. Bleak. Brother McAllister baptized me for all these men, and I then told these brethren that it was their duty to go into the Temple and labor until they got endowments for all of them. They did it. Would those spirits have called upon me, as an Elder in Israel, to perform that work if they had not been noble spirits before God? They would not. I bear this testimony because it is true. The spirit of God bore record to myself and the brethren while we were laboring in that way" (cited in Lundwall, Temples of the Most High, 82). To President Woodruff they said, "You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God" (Journal of Discourses, 19:229). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1031-32)

16 And now, in relation to the baptism for the dead, I will give you another quotation of Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:29: *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?*

17 And again, in connection with this quotation I will give you a quotation from one of the prophets, who had his eye fixed on the <sup>a</sup>restoration of the priesthood, the glories to be revealed in the last days, and in an especial manner this most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel, namely,

the baptism for the dead; for Malachi says, last chapter, verses 5th and 6th: *Behold, I will send you<sup>b</sup> Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.* (Melvin J. Ballard: The dead know where their records are, so you are to search until you have gone as far as you can. But, of course, there are hosts of men and women in the Spirit World whose records don't exist anywhere on the earth, but whose record is in the Spirit World. When you have done all you can do and have reached the limit, what will happen? As always in the past, man's extremity is God's opportunity. The Lord never helps us while we can help ourselves. This is our day. We don't expect Him to do miraculous things that we can do ourselves. When we have done our utmost, then will come God's opportunity. Don't think for a moment that the temples will close. They will go on all through the Millennium. Great hosts of the dead in the Spirit World are waiting for this work. Should it not stir us to do everything to relieve them of their distress? It surely should. When we have done our utmost, then will come the day when the authorities that preside on the other side will come and make known all who have received the Gospel in the Spirit World, and everyone entitled to have their work done. That is the simplest thing in the world. When the Lord is ready, it will be very simple and very easy. We can speed that day by doing now the work that we can do. (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, October 1932, 23:148-49.))

18 I might have rendered a<sup>a</sup> plainer translation to this, but it is sufficiently plain to suit my purpose as it stands. It is sufficient to know, in this case, that the earth will be smitten with a<sup>b</sup> curse unless there is a welding<sup>c</sup> link of some kind or other between the fathers and the<sup>d</sup> children, (Marriner F. Merrill: We may pass away any moment. I have known of many instances of this kind, where people have put off from time to time and from year to year, their work in behalf of some of their kindred dead, and have finally passed away themselves without doing this work. (CR, October 1899, pp. 64-65.)) upon some subject or other—and behold what is that subject? It is the<sup>e</sup> baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the<sup>f</sup> fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time. And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the<sup>g</sup> foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto<sup>h</sup> babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. (Orson F. Whitney: The dominant thought in the mind of the Prophet Joseph Smith during his last days on earth was expressed by him in the following forceful language: [Sec. 128:18, quoted.] Involved in this mighty scheme of bringing together all things that are Christ's, is the gathering of the scattered house of Israel, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the chosen people, through whom God has worked from the beginning for the salvation and betterment of mankind; and Joseph Smith, a descendant of that Joseph who was sold into Egypt [2 Nephi 3:6-8, 14-15], was the divinely appointed instrument for lifting up the ensign for the gathering of Israel in the last days. And what is the object in view? Why all this stupendous labor and sacrifice? Why must the house of Israel be assembled? Why must the gospel dispensations—links of a mighty chain extending from the creation down to the end of time—be bound together in one? It is because God is coming down upon the earth, and the way must be prepared before him. Jesus Christ is coming to reign as King of Kings, to inaugurate the millennial era of universal freedom, righteousness and peace; and in order that his coming, which is designed as a blessing, may not prove a curse, a calamity, through the unpreparedness of His people and the world at large, he has set his hand in these days to perform the marvelous work and wonder that the Prophet Isaiah foretold. [Isa. 29:14.] (CR, April 1918, p. 74.) John Taylor: We talk sometimes about co-operation; but the plan of salvation, if you please, is a grand Co-operative Scheme, as expansive as the heavens and as wide as eternity; it penetrates through all time, extends through all ages, and reaches men in every position, living or dead; they who have lived, we who now live, and they who will live hereafter

are all working together in this grand co-operative plan, and we cannot be made perfect without our progenitors, neither can they be perfected without us, and they are as much dependent upon us as we are dependent upon them. We can build temples, they cannot; it is not their province to administer in them at present, but it is ours, and we are called upon to do so. They are interested in our welfare, they are our fathers, we are their children; they are laboring there, we here, for our mutual salvation and exaltation in the kingdom of God. . . . The living and the dead so-called in Christ are all working for the accomplishment of the same great objects and purposes. Don't you think that they, behind the veil, feel as much interested in the work as we do? Read the little glimpse given by John in Revelation, where he speaks about the souls of those before the altar; who prayed day and night that he would avenge them of their adversaries [Rev. 6:10] ; and again, when the time came when Babylon was cast down there was rejoicing among the angels in heaven. [Rev. 12:7-12.] This gives us some faint idea of the feelings entertained by those on the other side of the veil in relation to events here. (JD, April 8, 1875, 17:373-74.))

19 Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of <sup>a</sup>gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of <sup>b</sup>truth out of the earth; ("Truth" is the name by which the Nephite record known to us as the Book of Mormon was spoken of in prophecy. For instance, Enoch speaking for the Lord prophetically described the final gospel dispensation, saying, "And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City" (Moses 7:62; emphasis added). Drawing on this text, the psalmist wrote, "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Psalm 85:11). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1034) glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great <sup>c</sup>joy. How beautiful upon the mountains are the <sup>d</sup>feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things, (Though the coming forth of the Book of Mormon would certainly be a cause for rejoicing among those who faithfully compiled this record that it might in some future day come into the hands of their descendants (D&C 10:46-48), we would understand this text to mean that as the Book of Mormon is destined to gather Israel among the living so it is destined to be used in like manner among the dead. If they are to be judged according to men in the flesh (1 Peter 4:6; D&C 138:10), they too must be called upon to accept or reject the testimony of scripture. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1034) and that say unto Zion: Behold, thy God reigneth! As the <sup>e</sup>dews of Carmel, so shall the knowledge of God descend upon them!

20 And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from <sup>a</sup>Cumorah! <sup>b</sup>Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfilment of the prophets (No subject was of greater interest to Israel's prophets than the latter-day gathering and redemption of Israel. This was a dominant theme with both the prophets of the Old Testament and the prophets of the Book of Mormon. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon signaled the beginning of these long-looked-for events. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1034)—the <sup>c</sup>book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca county, declaring the three witnesses to <sup>d</sup>bear record of the book! The voice of <sup>e</sup>Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the <sup>f</sup>devil when he appeared as an angel of <sup>g</sup>light! (No account has been preserved of the occasion when Michael, or Adam, appeared to aid the Prophet in detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light. Lehi, in his great discourse on the Atonement, refers to the fact that the devil attempted to deceive Adam and Eve in the same manner (2 Nephi 9:9). This may suggest that Adam by virtue of his own experience in such things came to aid the Prophet as a mentor on this occasion. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1035) The voice of <sup>h</sup>Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the <sup>i</sup>keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times! (Erastus Snow: "In due course of time, as we read in the history which he [Joseph] has left, Peter, James and John appeared to him— it was at a period when they were being pursued by their enemies and they had to travel all night, and in the dawn

of the coming day when they were weary and worn, who should appear to them but Peter, James and John, for the purpose of conferring upon them the Apostleship, the keys of which they themselves had held while upon the earth, which had been bestowed upon them by the Savior. This Priesthood conferred upon them by those three messengers embraces within it all offices of the Priesthood from the highest to the lowest" (Journal of Discourses, 23:183.)

21 And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old <sup>a</sup>Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, (It was in the chamber or upper room of the Whitmer home that Joseph and Oliver labored on much of the translation of the Book of Mormon. It was here too that the revelation was given directing that they proceed with the organization of the Church. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1036) and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! And the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of <sup>b</sup>Gabriel, and of Raphael, (The Prophet learned by revelation that Gabriel was Noah (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157). Raphael may have been Enoch. This conclusion is deduced by listing the six major gospel dispensations prior to our own—Adam's, Enoch's, Noah's, Abraham's, Moses', and the meridian of time, and then noting that we can identify someone coming to restore keys from each of them except Enoch's. Since we have both a name and a dispensation unaccounted for, the answer may be found in putting the two together. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1036) and of divers <sup>c</sup>angels, from Michael or <sup>d</sup>Adam down to the present time, all declaring their <sup>e</sup>dispensation, their rights, their <sup>f</sup>keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, <sup>g</sup>precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our <sup>h</sup>hope!

22 **Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. <sup>a</sup>Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!** Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into <sup>b</sup>singing. Let the <sup>c</sup>dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the <sup>d</sup>King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to <sup>e</sup>redeem them out of their <sup>f</sup>prison; for the prisoners shall go free. (In a marvelous Messianic prophecy, Isaiah spoke in behalf of the promised Messiah, saying, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn" (Isaiah 61:1-2; emphasis added). Some 750 years later, Jesus would quote these same words in the synagogue at Nazareth to identify himself as the promised Messiah and formally begin his ministry among men (Luke 4:16-21). Following his crucifixion, and while his body lay in the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, Christ visited the spirits in prison to announce that through his resurrection all might eventually be freed from that prison. There he commissioned missionaries to teach the gospel to those bound by sin and ignorance that they too might be free to stand in the light of the gospel. Only with the restoration of the gospel is the true meaning of such text made known to us. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1037)

23 Let the <sup>a</sup>mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid <sup>b</sup>rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the <sup>c</sup>morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever! And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and <sup>d</sup>immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers!

24 Behold, the great <sup>a</sup>day of the Lord is at hand; and who can <sup>b</sup>abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth? For he is like a <sup>c</sup>refiner's <sup>d</sup>fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a <sup>e</sup>refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of <sup>f</sup>Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an <sup>g</sup>offering in righteousness. Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; (This verse is often misused and misunderstood. In its first sentence, it simply draws upon the language of Malachi relative

to the role to be played by the literal sons of Levi in the last days. Joseph Smith identified this as animal sacrifice (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 172-73). In the second sentence, the Prophet says that since the sons of Levi are going to make their offering, let us also make our offering. Our sacrifice is to center in the labor we do in behalf of our kindred dead in the house of the Lord. That is, if the sons of Levi are going to be true to their office and calling, let us in like manner be true to ours. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1037. John A. Widtsoe: 24The "offering in righteousness" is here identified with temple work for the salvation of the dead, which encompasses all the principles of the plan of salvation. When, therefore, the sons of Levi accept Christ and His gospel, subject themselves to the ordinances of the Church, and become active in gospel requirements, they will offer the offering in righteousness of which has been spoken. (Evidences and Reconciliations, 1943, 1:196.) and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the <sup>h</sup>records<sup>\*</sup> of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.

25 Brethren, I have many things to say to you on the subject; but shall now close for the present, and continue the subject another time. I am, as ever, your humble servant and never deviating friend,  
JOSEPH SMITH.

Our Heritage, pages 58-61:

### **The Nauvoo Temple**

Only 15 months after founding Nauvoo, the First Presidency, obedient to revelation, announced that the time had now come "to erect a house of prayer, a house of order, a house for the worship of our God, where the ordinances can be attended to agreeable to His divine will." Though poor and struggling to provide for their own families, Latter-day Saints responded to their leaders' call and began donating time and means toward constructing a temple. More than 1,000 men donated every tenth day in labor. Louisa Decker, a young girl, was impressed that her mother sold her china dishes and a fine bed quilt as her temple contribution. Other Latter-day Saints gave horses, wagons, cows, pork, and grain to aid in the temple's construction. The women of Nauvoo were asked to contribute their dimes and pennies for the temple fund.

Caroline Butler had no pennies or dimes to contribute, but she wanted very much to give something. One day while going to the city in a wagon, she saw two dead buffalo. Suddenly she knew what her temple gift could be. She and her children pulled the long hair from the buffaloes' manes and took it home with them. They washed and carded the hair and spun it into coarse yarn, then knitted eight pairs of heavy mittens that were given to the rock cutters working on the temple in the bitter winter cold.

Mary Fielding Smith, wife of Hyrum Smith, wrote to Latter-day Saint women in England, who within a year gathered 50,000 pennies, weighing 434 pounds, that were shipped to Nauvoo. Farmers donated teams and wagons; others sold some of their land and donated the money to the building committee. Many watches and guns were contributed. The Saints in Norway, Illinois, sent 100 sheep to Nauvoo to be used by the temple committee.

Brigham Young remembered: "We did much hard labor on the Nauvoo temple, during which time it was difficult to get bread and other provisions for the workmen to eat." Still, President Young counseled those in charge of temple funds to give out all the flour they had, confident that the Lord would provide. Within a short time Joseph Toronto, a recent convert to the Church from Sicily, arrived in Nauvoo, bringing with him \$2,500 in gold, which he laid at the feet of the Brethren. These life savings of Brother Toronto were used to replenish the flour and to purchase other much needed supplies.

Shortly after the Saints arrived in Nauvoo, the Lord revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith that baptisms could be performed for dead ancestors who had not heard the gospel (see **D&C 124:29–39**). Many Saints took great comfort in the promise that the dead might have the same blessings as those who accept the gospel here on earth.

The Prophet also received an important revelation concerning the teachings, covenants, and blessings that are now called the temple endowment. This sacred ordinance was to enable the Saints “to secure the fullness of those blessings” that would prepare them to “come up and abide in the presence of ... Eloheim in the eternal worlds.” After receiving the endowment, husbands and wives could be sealed together by the power of the priesthood for time and all eternity. Joseph Smith realized that his time on earth was short, so while the temple was still under construction, he began giving the endowment to selected faithful followers in the upstairs room of his red brick store.

Even after the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith, when the Saints realized they must shortly leave Nauvoo, they increased their commitment to completing the temple. The attic of the unfinished temple was dedicated as a part of the structure where the endowment would be administered. The Saints were so anxious to receive this sacred ordinance that Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and others of the Twelve Apostles remained in the temple both day and night, sleeping no more than about four hours a night. Mercy Fielding Thompson had charge of the washing and ironing of temple clothes, as well as overseeing the cooking. She too lived in the temple, sometimes working throughout the night to have everything ready for the next day. Other members were just as devoted.

Why would these Saints work so hard to complete a building they would soon leave behind? Almost 6,000 Latter-day Saints received their endowments before leaving Nauvoo. As they turned their eyes toward their western migration, they were bolstered in faith and secure in the knowledge that their families were eternally sealed together. Tear-stained faces, ready to move on after burying a child or spouse on America’s vast prairie, were resolute largely because of the assurances contained in the ordinances they had received in the temple.

This is an artist’s rendering of the Temple in Jerusalem as described in Ezekiel 40-48:

