

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 95

This section chastises the leadership of the Church for failing to seriously undertake the construction of the House of the Lord at Kirtland.

The text can be divided into two sections, with v. 1-7 addressing their failure to start construction on the Temple, and v. 8-17 commands them to start building it. Note the end of each of the two parts (v. 7, 17) close with authority statements. The Lord is reminding them He is the One who issues the commands and His disciples are supposed to listen to Him.

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you whom I love, and whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation, and I have loved you-- 2 Wherefore, ye must needs be chastened and stand rebuked before my face; 3 For ye have sinned against me a very grievous sin, in that ye have not considered the great commandment in all things, that I have given unto you concerning the building of mine house;

4 For the preparation wherewith I design to prepare mine apostles to prune my vineyard for the last time, that I may bring to pass my strange act, that I may pour out my Spirit upon all flesh-- 5 But behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called but few of them are chosen. 6 They who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day. 7 And for this cause I gave unto you a commandment that you should call your solemn assembly, that your fastings and your mourning might come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, which is by interpretation, the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end.

The Lord chastises the leadership of the Church, but at the same time points out to them the chastisement is an opportunity to repent (v. 1). They must be reprimanded by Him (v. 2) for their failure to start construction on the Temple (v. 3).

The Lord's intent in commanding them to build the Temple is to continue on with the work of grafting the Gentiles into natural Israel and gathering the remnant of Israel out from among the Gentiles (v. 4). The members of the Church have been called to do this, but their lack of action results in them being rejected by the Lord (v. 5) because they are blindly walking in sin (v. 6). This is why He has called them to convene a solemn assembly, so they might mourn over their sins and repent (v. 6).

v1 While the Lord is chastising the leadership, note the tender terms He uses to convey the reprimand. The Lord loves them, and so he wants to deliver them out of temptation with the reprimand.

v4 The substance of this verse indicates how fundamental the Temple and the ordinances therein are to the Lord's mission of gathering Israel and taking the gospel to all nations. Without Temple ordinances this goal cannot be achieved.

"strange act", compare D&C 101:95. This is not the same strange act referred to in Isa. 28:21, but rather is referring to another unusual act with a similar covenant theology context, which is the dispensation of the fullness of the gospel to the Gentiles and their subsequent grafting in to Israel, cf. Joel 2:28, Acts. 2:16-17, Jacob 5:7-8, 3 Ne. 20:27. However, at this point in time, the Gentiles grafted into Israel are being as disobedient as were the ancient Israelites being chastised in Isa. 28, compare D&C 101:46-62.

v5-6 The Lord tells them unequivocally that as long as they are ignoring His commandments they are jeopardizing their status with Him.

8 Yea, verily I say unto you, I gave unto you a commandment that you should build a house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high; 9 For this is the promise of the Father unto you; therefore I command you to tarry, even as mine apostles at Jerusalem. 10 Nevertheless, my servants sinned a very grievous sin; and contentions arose in the school of the prophets; which was very grievous unto me, saith your Lord; therefore I sent them forth to be chastened.

11 Verily I say unto you, it is my will that you should build a house. If you keep my commandments you shall have power to build it. 12 If you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore you shall walk in darkness.

13 Now here is wisdom, and the mind of the Lord--let the house be built, not after the manner of the world, for I give not unto you that ye shall live after the manner of the world; 14 Therefore, let it be built after the manner which I shall show unto three of you, whom ye shall appoint and ordain unto this power. 15 And the size thereof shall be fifty and five feet in width, and let it be sixty-five feet in length, in the inner court thereof. 16 And let the lower part of the inner court be dedicated unto me for your sacrament offering, and for your preaching, and your fasting, and your praying, and the offering

up of your most holy desires unto me, saith your Lord. 17 And let the higher part of the inner court be dedicated unto me for the school of mine apostles, saith Son Ahman; or, in other words, Alphas; or, in other words, Omegus; even Jesus Christ your Lord. Amen.

v8-17 The Lord tells them the entire purpose of them building the Temple is for their own benefit. He wants them to build it so he can give them Heavenly power (v. 8) even as he gave his ancient apostles (v. 9). But, their hardness has resulted in them having to be chastened (v. 10)

The Lord commands them again to build the Temple and informs them that if they seek to keep the command they will have power to build the Temple (v. 11). If they do not seek to keep the command they will end up walking in spiritual darkness (v. 12).

The Lord then tells them not to build it after the manner of the world (v. 13), but after the manner that He instructs them (v. 14-15) for the purposes He dictates because He is the Lord (v. 16-17).

v8-9 The Lord is referring to the disbursement of the Holy Spirit which occurred anciently among His apostles and preceded the ministry to the Gentiles, cf. Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4, Acts 2:33, Acts 2:39. He wishes to bless the modern Church in a similar manner.

v8 The commandment to build a Temple was alluded to in D&C 88:119, but not explicitly given.

v10 "my servants sinned a very grievous sin", this may be referring to the substance of D&C 93:41-50.

"contentions arose in the school of the prophets", this seems to be a general statement rejecting any kind of contention among His people, cf. 3 Ne. 11:28-30. If it referring to a specific event, examples might be the council held on March 26, 1833 wherein some who were exercising unrighteous dominion were admonished:

Now, therefore, as many of the High Priests and Elders-whose calling was to travel and preach to the world-went up to Zion, and commenced, regulating and setting the branches in order, and claiming for themselves as much power by the authority of their

Priesthood, and gift of the Holy Ghost, as those set apart and appointed to preside over the branches, it became necessary to call the council now spoken of, to set in order the Elders of Israel. (cf. History of the Church, Vol. 1, page 336)

Or, perhaps the disbarment, and presumably excommunication, of some persons who apparently had taken it upon themselves to minister in the Church without proper authority:

A council had previously been held in Norton Township, Medina county, Ohio, at which Sidney Rigdon presided. The council took into consideration the standing of Baldwin Welton, Aaron Smith, and Hays, Elders; and James Braden, Priest; and decided that their ordinations were illegal, and that the churches should not receive them in their several offices. The doings of the council were reviewed, and sanctioned by the First Presidency, viz: Joseph Smith, Jun., Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and entered on record in Kirtland. (cf. History of the Church, Vol. 1:343).

"I sent them forth to be chastened", the Lord's intent was to have them "tarry" per v. 8-9 but their recalcitrance necessitated Him chastening them instead, so He sent them out to do missionary work.

v11 The Lord's promise that if they seek to build the Temple they will have power to do so is a significant one. At that time there were less than 100 members of the Church in Kirtland and they were generally very poor and unskilled in constructing such a structure.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 95

The Church was commanded in December 1832 (cf. D&C 88:119) to start construction on a Temple in Kirtland. No immediate action was taken. The first major activity was on May 4, 1833 when a building committee was convened. On June 1, 1833 the committee issued a circular requesting support from the Church members in constructing the Temple, but no action was taken to begin construction. The slow pace and lack of imminent construction prompted the Lord to reprimand the leadership, and they responded promptly.

One would assume the initial lack of action by the leadership was because it was winter when the command was given. It would be approaching impossible to break ground for a new building in the middle of winter in Ohio. However, once Spring came that was no longer an issue. There were no overwhelming concerns within the Church at that time so it wasn't a matter of the leadership being entirely distracted by some pressing matter. On June 1st the building committee issued a request for subscriptions, but made no plans whatsoever for a construction start. This is what prompted the Lord to respond with the substance of D&C 95.

Below is a historical summary by Cook, then some first-person accounts by Smith and his mother, then a lengthy historical treatment by Joseph Fielding Smith, and finally are two summaries of the conditions of the Saints during the construction of the Temple.

This section was first published in the Kirtland edition Doctrine & Covenants in 1835, pages 233-234. It was published in Times and Seasons, volume 6, number 2, page 784, dated February 1, 1845. It was published in the Millennial Star, volume 14, number 28, page 436, dated September 4, 1852.

Excerpt from The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith

On 4 May 1833 a conference of high priests met in Kirtland, Ohio, to take into consideration the commandment in section 88 to build a house for the School of the Prophets. Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon were appointed by the conference as a committee to obtain subscriptions for the above-named purpose. [cf. HofC 1:342-343]

On 1 June 1833 this committee issued a circular in which they urged the Saints to fulfill the commandment of the Lord to

build a house wherein they could call a solemn assembly and "treasure up words of wisdom." [cf. HofC 1:349]

Two days later, 3 June 1833, during another conference of high priests in Kirtland, it was decided that the dimensions of the sacred edifice should be specified. Thereupon the Prophet

received a revelation on the size of the house the word of the Lord was that it shall be fifty five feet wide and sixty five feet long in the inner court and the conference appointed Bro Joseph Jr Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams to obtain a draft or construction of the inner court of the house.

[Kirtland Council Minute Book, page 12]

Verse 14 of the revelation directed that the building be erected "after the manner which I shall show unto three of you." Accordingly Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, members of the First Presidency, were privileged to see the house in vision prior to its construction. Concerning this vision, Frederick G. Williams stated,

Joseph received the word of the Lord for him to take his two counsellors Williams and Rigdon and come before the Lord, and he would show them the plan or model of the House to be built. We went upon our knees, called on the Lord, and the Building appeared within viewing distance: I being the first to discover it. Then all of us viewed it together. After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us, and the Makeup of this Hall seems to coincide with what I there saw to a minutia. [As recorded in Truman O. Angell Journal (typescript), Brigham Young University Library, Special Collections. Angell also referred to this vision in a letter to John Taylor in 1885: "F.G. Williams came into the Temple about the time the main hall 1st floor was ready for dedication. He was asked, how does the house look to you. He answered that it looked to him like the model he had seen. He said President Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and himself were called to come before the Lord and the model was shown them. He said the vision of the Temple was thus shown them and he could not see the difference between it and the House as built" (Angell to Taylor, 11 March 1885, Church

Archives). A letter, dated 16 March 1836, in the Ohio Atlas also reported the divine pattern of the Kirtland Temple: "Their temple, in Kirtland, is a huge misshapen edifice, that comes nearer to the Gothic than any other style of architecture. The pattern...was given by direct revelation from Heaven, and given to those individuals separately" (letter reprinted in Painesville Telegraph, 20 May 1836).]

(Lyndon W. Cook, Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pages 197-198)

Excerpts from History of the Church

May 4. [1833] - A conference of High Priests assembled in Kirtland, to take into consideration the necessity of building a school house, for the accommodation of the Elders, who should come together to receive instruction preparatory for their missions, and ministry, according to a revelation on that subject, given March 8, 1833, [i.e., D&C 90] and by unanimous voice of the conference; Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon were appointed a committee to obtain subscriptions, for the purpose of erecting such a building. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, pages 343-344)

June 1. [1833] - Great preparations were making to commence a house of the Lord; and notwithstanding the Church was poor, yet our unity, harmony and charity abounded to strengthen us to do the commandments of God. The building of the house of the Lord in Kirtland was a matter that continued to increase in its interest in the hearts of the brethren, and the building committee issued the following circular to the different branches of the Church:

CIRCULAR.

KIRTLAND, June 1, 1833.

We feel under obligations to write to you as well as to all the brethren of the different branches; and we do this, that you, with us, may exert yourselves to bring about the fulfilment of the command of the Lord concerning the establishing, or preparing a house, wherein the Elders who have been commanded of the Lord

so to do, may gather themselves together, and prepare all things, and call a solemn assembly, and treasure up words of wisdom, that they may go forth to the Gentiles for the last time; and now, in order to accomplish this, we are directed, yea, we are under the necessity, to call upon the whole Church as a body, that they make every possible exertion to aid temporally, as well as spiritually, in this great work that the Lord is beginning, and is about to accomplish. And unless we fulfil this command, viz: establish an house, and prepare all things necessary whereby the elders may gather into a school, called the School of the Prophets, and receive that instruction which the Lord designs they should receive, we may all despair of obtaining the great blessing that God has promised to the faithful of the Church of Christ; therefore it is as important, as our salvation, that we obey this above-mentioned command, as well as all the commandments of the Lord.

Therefore, brethren, we write this epistle to you, to stir up your minds to make that exertion which the Lord requires of you, to lend a temporal aid in these things above written; and in order that you may know how to conduct the business, we will relate what we have done and are doing here.

We have met in conference, and agreed to form a subscription, and circulate it through the churches. The conference also appointed Hyrum Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, and Jared Carter, a committee to superintend this business, viz: that of circulating subscriptions to establish a fund to build a house, and to aid the Elders to attend this school. The subscriptions are now in circulation among us, and our Heavenly Father is opening the hearts of our brethren beyond the expectation of many; and not one brother among us, as yet, refuses to exert himself to do something in a temporal way to bring about the establishing of this house and school: and we say, may our Heavenly Father open your hearts also, that you, with us, may gather together something to aid as a temporal benefit.

Probably you had better call the officers of the

Church immediately together, and appoint someone to circulate a subscription that each individual, after signing, may have a sufficient time to make preparations to pay what he subscribes; for it will be necessary, wherever the brethren are at a distance from Kirtland, that they exert themselves to send on their gift or assistance as soon as they can to Kirtland; though-they can, if they believe best, wait on those that sign until the first of September, and then collect and send it to Kirtland.

These considerations we have written to you, knowing it to be our duty thus to do, and may the Lord help you to exert yourselves with us, in raising the means to bring about the glorious work of the Lord; and may we all be kept by the grace of God unto eternal life. Amen.

HYRUM SMITH,
REYNOLDS CAHOON,
JARED CARTER,
Committee.

The same day [June 1st] I received the following:

[text of D&C 95 quoted]

June 3. ... The next matter before the conference was to ascertain what should be the dimensions or size of the house, that is to be built for a house of worship and for the School of the Prophets. I had received a revelation on the size of the house in which the word of the Lord was that it should be fifty-five feet wide, and sixty-five feet long, in the inner court. The conference appointed Joseph Smith, Jun., Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams to obtain a draft or construction of the inner court of the house. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, pages 348-352)

Excerpt from History of Joseph Smith by His Mother

Preceding Joseph's return from Missouri, the brethren called a council with the view of investigating the subject of building a meetinghouse, to accommodate the increased congregation.

In this council, Joseph requested that each of the brethren should give his views with regard to the house; and when they had all got through, he would give his opinion concerning the matter. They all complied with his request. Some were in favor of building a frame house, but others were of a mind to put up a log house. Joseph reminded them that they were not building a house for a man, but for God; "and shall we, brethren," said he, "build a house for our God, of logs? No, I have a better plan than that. I have a plan of the house of the Lord, given by himself; and you will soon see by this, the difference between our calculations and his idea of things."

He then gave them a full pattern of the house of the Lord at Kirtland, with which the brethren were highly delighted, particularly Hyrum, who was much more animated than if it were designed for himself.

After the close of the meeting, Joseph took the brethren with him, for the purpose of selecting a spot for the building to stand upon. The place which they made choice of was situated in the northwest corner of a field of wheat, which was sown by my sons the fall previous, on the farm upon which we were then living. In a few minutes the fence was removed, and the standing grain was leveled, in order to prepare a place for the building and Hyrum commenced digging a trench for the wall, he having declared that he would strike the first blow upon the house.

On the following Monday, the brethren went to work at the house with great ambition; and although not thirty families of Saints now remained in Kirtland [footnote states: The great majority of the members of the Church had moved to Missouri or had gone on the expedition with Zion's Camp], they never suffered the work to stop until it was accomplished. They had to endure great fatigue and privation, in consequence of the opposition they met with from their enemies, and which was so great, that they were compelled to keep a guard around the walls much of the time until they were completed. They "gave no sleep to their eyes, nor slumber to their eyelids, until they found a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

Mary Bailey and Agnes Coolbrith were then boarding with me; they devoted their time to making and mending clothes for the men who were employed on the house. There was but one mainspring to all our thoughts and actions, and that was, the building of the Lord's house.

I often wonder, when I hear brethren and sisters complain at the trifling inconveniences which they have to suffer in these days, and I think to myself that salvation is worth as

much now as it was in the commencement of the work. But "all like the purchase, few the price would pay." How often I have parted every bed in the house for the accommodation of the brethren, and then laid a single blanket on the floor for my husband and myself, while Joseph and Emma slept upon the same floor, with nothing but their cloaks for both bed and bedding. (Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, chapter 43, pages 230-232)

Excerpt from Church History and Modern Revelation

A conference of high priests assembled April 30, 1833, in the school room in Kirtland and took steps to raise means to pay the rent for the house where their meetings had been held during the past season. John P. Green was appointed to take charge of a branch of the Church in Parkman County. It was also decided that Sister Vienna Jaques should not proceed immediately on her way to Zion, but wait until William Hobart and others were ready, as it would be a matter of safety. The next day the conference again convened and took into consideration the necessity of building a schoolhouse, for the accommodation of the elders, who were to come together to receive instruction preparatory to taking missions and continuing in the ministry according to the revelation of March 8, 1833. By unanimous voice of the conference, Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter and Reynolds Cahoon were appointed a committee to obtain subscriptions for the purpose of erecting such a building. Two days later the Lord gave a revelation with directions for the building of this house. He declared that it should be built according to his pattern and not according to the pattern of the world. A lot was set apart for the building of a house for the use of the First presidency and where revelation could be given and all matters pertaining to the progress of the Church could receive proper attention. The dimensions of the house were to be fifty-five by sixty-five feet "in the width thereof and in length thereof, in the inner court." There were to be a lower and a higher court, and the Lord promised to give the pattern for these at a later time. It was to be dedicated unto the Lord from the foundation thereof according to the order of the Priesthood. There is no question that the First Presidency needed a place where they could attend to the matters of Church government. This was to be a sacred house; no unclean thing was to be permitted to enter it, and if the builders would remember this the presence of the Lord should be in the building.

The second lot south of this building was to be dedicated for the building of another house where the printing for the Church could be done and the translation of the Scriptures, on which the Prophet had been working off and on for many months, could be published. This building likewise to be fifty-five by sixty-five feet, with a lower and an upper court. This house also was to be dedicated to the service of the Lord, and set apart for the printing, "in all things whatsoever I shall command you, to be holy, undefiled according to the pattern in all things, as it shall be given unto you." The third lot was to be given to Hyrum Smith for his inheritance. Reynolds Cahoon and Jared Carter were also to receive inheritances, "that they may do the work which I have appointed unto them, to be committed to build mine houses, according to the commandment, which I, the Lord God have given unto you." These two houses, although the Lord approved these plans, he further said were not to be built until he should give the commandment for the building of them.

The committee according to their appointment issued a circular and sent it forth among the members of the Church in the different branches asking that they bring about the fulfillment of the command of the Lord concerning the establishing, or the preparation of a house, "wherein the elders, who have been commanded of the Lord so to do, may gather themselves together, and prepare all things, and call a solemn assembly, and treasure up words of wisdom, that they may go forth to the Gentiles for the last time." This appeal went forth to the whole Church. It was a strong appeal and in their pleading they said: "And unless we fulfill this command, viz.: establish an house, and prepare all things necessary that the elders may gather into a school, called the School of the Prophets, and receive the instruction which the Lord designs they should receive, we may despair of obtaining the great blessing that God had promised to the faithful of the Church of Christ; therefore it is as important, as our salvation, that we obey this above-mentioned command, as well as all the commandments of the Lord." They then called attention to their appointment to superintend the business in building this house for the elders so they could attend this school. They appealed to the branches that someone in each branch be appointed to obtain subscriptions and thus help the general committee. This appeal was issued June 1, 1833.

The same day the Lord gave another revelation (Sec. 95.) in which he rebuked the elders of the Church for their delay in building another house which they had been commanded to build.

This was the Kirtland Temple. "For ye have sinned against me a very grievous sin, in that ye have not considered the great commandment in all things, that I have given unto you concerning the building of mine house." This house was to be prepared for the apostles in which they might be endowed to prune the vineyard "for the last time, that I may bring to pass my strange act, that I may pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." The Lord said that there had been many ordained to go forth and do his will, but few of them are chosen, and the reason why they were not chosen was that they had sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noonday. "And for this cause I gave unto you a commandment that you should call your solemn assembly, that your fastings and your mourning might come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, which is by interpretation, the Creator of the first day, the beginning and the end. Yea, Verily I say unto you, I gave unto you a commandment, that you should build a house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high; for this is the promise of the Father unto you, therefore I command you to tarry, even as mine apostles in Jerusalem. Nevertheless my servants sinned a very grievous sin, and contentions arose in the School of the Prophets, which were very grievous unto me, saith your Lord; therefore I sent them forth to be chastened."

It was Dec. 27, 1832, that the Lord gave the command to the Church that his house should be built, in which he said: "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God." (Sec. 88:119.) The elders of the Church it would appear, had not taken this command seriously, presumably it had been overlooked in the consideration of so many wonderful things in that particular revelation. The month of May, in the following year, had arrived; the officers of the Church had met in solemn council to consider other matters, the building of other houses for which there was sore need, and the building of the more weighty and important building had been neglected. While the Lord approved the plan for the building of these other houses, and commended the brethren for their enthusiasm and energy in taking steps to erect them, yet he called attention to the grievous sins of the brethren in their neglect to build the more important structure. The Kirtland Temple was necessary before the apostles (who had not yet been called), and other elders of the Church could receive the endowment which the Lord

had in store for them. The elders had been out preaching the Gospel and crying repentance ever since the Church was organized and many great men had heard and embraced the truth, nevertheless the elders could not go forth in the power and authority which the Lord intended them to possess until this Temple was built where he could restore keys and powers essential to the more complete preaching of the Gospel and the administering in its ordinances. This point will be further discussed when we consider the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.

At the time of which we are now speaking, we have discovered that the anger of the Lord is kindled against the brethren for neglect of their most important duty, and now the Lord says: "Verily I say unto you, it is my will that you should build a house. If you keep my commandments you shall have power to build it. If you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore you shall walk in darkness." (Vs. 11-12.)

This house was not to be built after the manner of the world, but after the manner which the Lord would show them. The saints also were not to live after the manner of the world. This building also was to be fifty-five by sixty-five feet in the inner court as the Lord had instructed in the buildings previously mentioned. The lower part of the inner court of this Temple was to be dedicated unto the Lord for the sacrament offerings and for the preaching, and for fasting and prayer, and the offering "of your most holy desires unto me, saith your Lord." The upper floor, or court, was to be dedicated unto the Lord as "the school of mine apostles," the Lord declared in closing his revelation. However, this building was to be erected for other and greater purposes than those made known at this time to the officers and members of the Church. The time had not come for the real purposes and the nature of the endowment to be revealed. The elders, much less the members, were not prepared in 1833 for the fulness of the revelation which the Lord declared would be bestowed upon them. The severe rebuke administered to the Church had its effect and the brethren forgot the need of other buildings and commenced to concentrate their efforts upon his house of the Lord.

Two days after this revelation was given the brethren again assembled to see how to dispose of property, or to carry out the provisions of the commandment. They also considered the matter of dividing lots according to wisdom (D. & C. 96.) and the Lord gave them counsel in relation to these matters. The Stake of

Zion was to become strong. The poor were to be cared for. The bishop, Newel K. Whitney, was to take charge of the matter of assigning lots and preparing them for the building of a city and a Temple to the name of the Lord. John Johnson was to be given responsibility and admitted into the united order, so that he could assist in bringing forth the word of the Lord to the children of men.

Four days after the Lord had rebuked the brethren for their neglect, without waiting for subscriptions, the brethren went to work on the Temple. Elder George A. Smith, a recent convert, hauled the first load of stone for the Temple. Hyrum Smith and Reynolds Cahoon commenced digging the trench for the walls, and they finished the same with their own hands. June 6th, a conference was held of the high priests with the Presidency of the High Priesthood where the matter was considered of appointing a committee to take the oversight of the building of the House of the Lord. The conference appointed Reynolds Cahoon, Jared Carter and Hyrum Smith, who were instructed to "proceed immediately to commence building the house, or the obtaining materials, stone, brick, lumber, etc., for the same." This instruction to the members of the committee was unnecessary so far as their enthusiasm was concerned. They had already commenced the work of building, and this work continued with haste, in the poverty of the people. July 23, 1833, the building had advanced to the point that the cornerstones were laid after the order of the Holy Priesthood. (Joseph Fielding Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, Vol. 2, pages 165-168)

Excerpt from The Prophet Joseph

When the Saints received the initial instructions to build this temple, the Kirtland branch numbered only about one hundred members. Many converts, including most who joined the Church in Kirtland township, had migrated to western Missouri, the main gathering place for the Saints. Subsequently, in 1833 Latter-day Saints were not only few in number but they also owned fewer than two hundred acres and lacked money for such a project as building a temple. In 1833 only ten members of the Church were assessed a land or personal property tax (the latter tax being an assessment on horses, cattle, or merchandise). Moreover, not one member in that community had practical architectural knowledge of the kind needed for planning a major building. They did not lack faith, however; they believed the revelation that they would receive guidance from the Lord.

The Lord possibly played a greater direct role in the planning of this temple than in the planning of any other building constructed in the latter days. According to Orson Pratt (who used Kirtland during the 1830s as a base for his missionary labors), Latter-day Saints built this house of the Lord according to a heavenly pattern unfolded by visions. Truman O. Angell, who became one of the supervisors in the construction of the temple, explained that after the First Presidency (Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams) knelt in prayer, the building appeared before them in vision. He also reported that while standing in the foyer of the temple, Frederick G. Williams told him that the hall coincided precisely with that which he beheld in vision. Further, Joseph Smith told him that the seats were located where he had seen them in vision. And Truman Coe, Presbyterian minister of Kirtland, verified an understanding in that community that the temple was built "according to the pattern shown to Joseph in vision."

The building of the Kirtland Temple was a massive communal enterprise, successful only because of great sacrifice, dedication, and cooperation of all the Mormon community. Latter-day Saints worked together with an inspiration and spirit that distinguished them from many other people. Many laborers worked at least one day a week without compensation, cutting and hauling stone for masons to fashion. "Come, brethren," Joseph Smith would say, "let us go into the stone-quarry and work for the Lord." Some men worked full time on the temple, receiving only food and clothing in payment. Women labored as diligently on this project as the men. They made clothes and provided meals for the workers, drove the wagons that hauled stone from the quarry, assisted the masons, and made carpets, draperies, and veils for the temple. Along with the men, women made great financial sacrifices throughout the building of this house for the Lord. Although china and glassware were mixed with the stucco, giving a sparkle to the exterior, no surviving contemporary records inform us of the extent of the women's contribution of this glass.

For three years, from the summer of 1833 to March 1836, most Kirtland Saints sacrificed their time, talents, and material goods for the building of this house for the Lord. Most materials used for the construction of the temple were secured locally. For example, oak timber that was cut into massive beams was obtained from nearby forests, and most of the stone was chiseled from a quarry located about one mile south of the building. There were a few major expenses for such materials as

glass and special tools and for payment to a contractor for plastering the building. Since only a few workers were paid, and much of the building material was secured at little or no cost, contemporary estimates that the building cost \$40,000 to \$60,000 are rough approximations.

Recognizing the need for help and sensing a missionary responsibility, elders of Kirtland, throughout the building of the temple, devoted part of their time to missionary work. They not only preached and baptized but they also solicited contributions for that building and encouraged converts to gather in Kirtland. Their labors and the service of other self-supporting missionaries proved fruitful. During the mid-1830s there was an accelerated growth of Latter-day Saints in that community. Primarily as a result of the gathering of converts to Kirtland, Church membership increased from about one hundred in early 1833 to thirteen hundred in 1836. By 1838 there were more than two thousand members in the Kirtland branch. (Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Establish a House of Prayer, A House of God: The Kirtland Temple*, from *The Prophet Joseph*, edited by Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, pages 209-211)

Excerpt from Joseph Smith and the Doctrine and Covenants

The Lord has revealed that his Saints must sacrifice to build houses to his name (D&C 97:12). Nearly all the Latter-day Saints united in building the Kirtland Temple for the Lord. Eliza R. Snow wrote:

"With very little capital except brain, bone and sinew, combined with unwavering trust in God, men, women, and even children, worked with their might; while the brethren labored in their departments, the sisters were actively engaged in boarding and clothing workmen not otherwise provided for—all living as abstemiously as possible so that every cent might be appropriated to the grand object, while their energies were stimulated by the prospect of participating in the blessing of a house built by the direction of the Most High and accepted by him" (Tullidge, *Women of Mormondom*, p. 82).

When Heber C. Kimball arrived in Kirtland, he noticed that the Prophet didn't just direct the construction; he worked alongside the others in building the temple. "Joseph said, 'Come, brethren, let us go into the stone-quarry and work for the Lord.' And the Prophet went himself, in his tow frock and tow breeches, and worked at quarrying stone like the rest of us. Then, every Saturday we brought out every team to draw stone to

the Temple, and so we continued until that house was finished; and our wives were all the time knitting, spinning and sewing, and, in fact, I may say doing all kinds of work; they were just as busy as any of us, and I say that those women have borne the heat and burden of those early and trying days and God will bless them for evermore" (Journal of Discourses,10:165).

Church membership increased from one hundred to nearly one thousand during the time the temple was being built, but the Saints' poverty persisted. Nearly all the converts gathered to Kirtland from other areas, many from New England and New York. Most had to leave belongings behind and to sacrifice financially to make the move. When they arrived, instead of buying land and homes or otherwise improving their own standard of living, many sacrificed a portion of their material means to support various Church programs, notably building the temple.

One immigrant to Kirtland, Jonathan Crosby, recalled an incident that illustrates the poverty of the Saints in 1836: "Shortly after our arrival in Kirtland, brothers Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Parley P. Pratt, came to me to borrow money. I was in possession of nearly one hundred dollars at the time, and they were very destitute of provisions and comforts of life generally. Brother Young said he had nothing in his house to eat, and he knew not how to get anything. He said he had been standing in the door of the printing office thinking of his condition and felt so bad that the sweat rolled off of him. Soon Brother Parley came along, and he said to him, 'What shall we do I have nothing to eat, and I don't know how nor where to get it.' Brother Pratt said, 'There is a brother and his wife who have just arrived at my house, and he has got some money, and I think he will lend us some.' (I had lent Brother Pratt seven dollars before this.) So they all three came, and I lent them seventy five dollars; twenty-five for each, and they gave me their joint note" ("Autobiography," p. 16).

It appeared almost impossible that the commandment to build this temple could be fulfilled. Not only were the Saints poor, but their "enemies were raging and threatening destruction" upon them. "We had to guard ourselves night after night," Heber C. Kimball said, "and for weeks were not permitted to take off our clothes, and were obliged to lay with our fire locks in our arms" (Times and Seasons, 15 Jan. 1845, p. 771). Amid this poverty and persecution, Latter-day Saints realized that God would continue to aid them. "The Lord had promised [in D&C 64:21, given during the fall of 1831] to keep a stronghold in Kirtland for the space of five years; therefore," Joel Johnson

testified, "we were warned of all the devices of our enemies in time to elude them until the temple was completed, the saints endowed and the five years expired" ("Autobiography," p. 5). The temple was dedicated in 1836 just before the promised five years ended. (Milton V. Backman, Jr. and Richard O. Cowan, Joseph Smith and the Doctrine and Covenants, pages 87-88)

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