

## Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 110

In response to the Temple dedication prayer documented in D&C 109, occurring one week earlier, the Lord appears and announces His acceptance of the Kirtland Temple. Three additional persons appear as well, disbursing Priesthood keys.

1 THE veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. 2 We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. 3 His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

v1-3 Smith describes the theophany.

v1 "the veil was taken from our minds", cp. D&C 76:10, Ether 3:19-20.

"the eyes of our understanding were opened", cp. D&C 76:12, D&C 136:32, ct. Isa. 9-10.

v2 "the Lord standing upon the breastwork", indicating this is a bodily appearance of the Lord, not a vision into the environs of heaven.

"under his feet was a paved work of pure gold", it is curious that given a bodily appearance, as opposed to a vision into heaven, there would be such a manifestation. We know the streets of heaven appear to be paved with gold (cf. Rev. 21:21, D&C 137:4), but the Lord is standing upon the breastwork of the Temple. Smith is probably seeing a reflection of the Lord's countenance, described in Ezek. 1:27 to be "as the color of amber" similar to Smith's description "in color like amber", which makes it appear the floor is made of gold.

v3 A typical description of a Theophany of the Lord, cp. Dan. 7:9, Rev. 1:14-15.

4 I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father. 5 Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice. 6 Let the hearts of your brethren

rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name. 7 For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house. 8 Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house. 9 Yea the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house. 10 And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen.

v4-10 A quotation of the Lord.

v4 An authority statement. It is common in the D&C for a quotation of the Lord to start out with an authority statement, but this one exceeds them all in emphasis. In the preceding verse, Smith identifies the character as "Jehovah", which name translates to something like "I am, that I am". Then here in this verse the Lord states the divine name four times in conjunction with various authority statements identifying why He bears that authority.

v5-7 These verses compose an interesting set of rhetorically connected words. First, recall that a triple repeat form a superlative in the scriptures. Verse 5-6 present three statements all ending with "rejoice", then v. 6-7 present three pairs of "house" and "my name/myself". Thus, the rejoicing is connected with the house as the Lord has chosen to accept it.

On the "house" and "my name/myself", the purpose of a Temple is to provide a place where the Lord may manifest Himself to His people, cf. Exod. 33:7, D&C 84:19-25.

v8 The Lord appears to His servants in the Temple to communicate with them, as long as they do not pollute it, cp. 109:20-21.

v9 The Lord endows His people in His Temple, cp. D&C 124:40-42.

v10 This verse is apparently a paraphrase of Isa. 2:3 and Isa. 44:3, possibly with elements of 1 Chr. 22:5 included. It is paraphrasing those texts to indicate that the Lord's Temple

should be a House of splendor, beauty and renown (also cp. Haggai 1:2-8).

11 After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. 12 After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed. 13 After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said: 14 Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi--testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come-- 15 To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse-- 16 Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

v11-16 After the Lord's appearance, three additional persons were manifested. Note the three persons coincide with the threefold mission of the Church: Gather Israel by proclaiming the gospel (v. 11, cp. D&C 109:59-67); perfect the Saints by sealing families (v. 12); redeem the dead by turning the hearts of the children to their ancestors (v. 13).

v11 Moses appears and commits keys for the gathering of scattered Israel from the "north countries". The "north countries" is where Israel was scattered to by Assyria, cf. Jer. 16:14-15, D&C 133:13.

v12 The mysterious Elias (cp. D&C 27:6, D&C 77:9) appears and disburses the keys for the gospel of Abraham, or the keys for eternal marriage and the sealing of families, which is obviously associated with the Abrahamic covenant.

v13 Elijah appears and fulfills the statement of D&C 2. Apparently, that April 3, 1836 was the Passover Day and therefore was the returning of Elijah event the Jews have been waiting for.

v14, 16 The disbursement of these keys indicates the Day of the Lord is imminent. Preparation for this Day is a subject that

permeates the entire D&C, as is reflected by the "Day of the Lord" entry in the 1981 edition D&C index.

v15 See comments on D&C 2 for this particular reading of the Malachi prophecy, which is different from the reading presented in D&C 98:16.

## **Compiled Historical Material Pertaining to D&C 110**

The appearance of the Lord and the three additional personages one week after the dedication was apparently to fulfil the expectation that Elijah would appear on a Passover day, per Mal. 4:5-6.

This section was first published in the Millennial Star, volume 15, numbers 45 and 46, pages 729-739, dated November 5 and 12, 1853. It was not printed in any other Church periodicals. It was first published fairly late in the 1876 edition Doctrine and Covenants.

### **Excerpt from History of the Church**

Attended meeting in the Lord's House, and assisted the other Presidents of the Church in seating the congregation, and then became an attentive listener to the preaching from the stand. Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten spoke in the forenoon to an attentive audience of about one thousand persons. In the afternoon, I assisted the other Presidents in distributing the Lord's Supper to the Church, receiving it from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate at the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to my brethren, I retired to the pulpit, the veils being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer. After rising from prayer, the following vision was opened to both of us-

[text of D&C 110 quoted]

[Joseph Smith, History of the Church, volume 2, pages 434-435)

### **Excerpt from Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith**

On Sunday, 3 April 1836, one week after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Church members in Kirtland assembled in the sacred edifice to worship. In the afternoon the sacrament was administered and distributed to those present, after which Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery secluded themselves from the congregation by means of curtain partitions. After being engaged in silent prayer Joseph and Oliver saw a series of visions wherein four heavenly messengers appeared unto them: The Lord Jesus Christ, Moses, Elias, and Elijah. The Lord accepted the temple as his house, and the latter three dispensed keys that would assist in the restoration of all things. Although this revelation was not published until 1852, it was recorded

contemporaneously in the Prophet's diary in the hand of Warren A. Cowdery:

Sabbath April 3d He [Joseph Smith] attended meeting in the Lords House assisted the other Presidents of the Church in seating the congregation and then became an attentive listener to the preaching from the Stand. T.B. Marsh & D.W. Patten spoke in the a.m. to an attentive audience of about 1000 persons. In the p.m. he assisted the other presidents in distributing the elements of the Lords Supper to the church, receiving them from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate in the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to his brethren, he retired to the pulpit, the vails being dropped, and bowed himself with O. Cowdery, in solemn but silent prayer to the Most High. After rising from prayer the following vision was opened to both of them [here follows section 110]

(Lyndon W. Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith)

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