

## Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 112

This section addresses Thomas B. Marsh, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, in specific and the Quorum of the Twelve in general. At the time of the revelation the Twelve had fallen out of harmony with the First Presidency as a result of ecclesiastical conflicts and the economic problems which were plaguing Kirtland and the surrounding areas.

It is plain from the text that members of the Twelve were in need of repentance and Marsh had formerly strayed as well. The revelation comes largely as an admonition to Marsh and a reprimand to the Twelve.

The ecclesiastical conflict immediately addressed by this revelation was Smith's calling some of the members of the Twelve to start the missionary efforts overseas, specifically in England. Marsh was upset by this move by Smith as he apparently felt Smith was usurping his right or privilege as President of the Twelve to dictate their missionary efforts. Marsh had intended to summon all of Twelve together for a conference only to discover that some of them were already on the other side of the Atlantic, and Parley P. Pratt had apparently taken it upon himself to travel over to England as well without receiving any direction from Smith or Marsh.

The calling of the Twelve to minister to the nations appears in D&C 107:33-35.

1 VERILY thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Thomas: I have heard thy prayers; and thine alms have come up as a memorial before me,

v1a-c Thomas Marsh is addressed and the Lord states that He has heard his prayers.

in behalf of those, thy brethren, who were chosen to bear testimony of my name and to send it abroad among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, and ordained through the instrumentality of my servants,

v1d-k. Marsh's prayers were in behalf of the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Lord restates what the Quorum's responsibilities are per the command in D&C 107:33-35.

2 verily I say unto you, there have been some few things in thine heart and with thee with which I, the Lord, was not well

pleased. 3 Nevertheless, inasmuch as thou hast abased thyself thou shalt be exalted; therefore, all thy sins are forgiven thee.

4 Let thy heart be of good cheer before my face; and thou shalt bear record of my name, not only unto the Gentiles, but also unto the Jews; and thou shalt send forth my word unto the ends of the earth. 5 Contend thou, therefore, morning by morning; and day after day let thy warning voice go forth; and when the night cometh let not the inhabitants of the earth slumber, because of thy speech. 6 Let thy habitation be known in Zion, and remove not thy house; for I, the Lord, have a great work for thee to do, in publishing my name among the children of men. 7 Therefore, gird up thy loins for the work. Let thy feet be shod also, for thou art chosen, and thy path lieth among the mountains, and among many nations. 8 And by thy word many high ones shall be brought low, and by thy word many low ones shall be exalted. 9 Thy voice shall be a rebuke unto the transgressor; and at thy rebuke let the tongue of the slanderer cease its perverseness. 10 Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers.

v2-10 The Lord addresses Marsh and indicates that He is generally pleased with him, and encourages him to continue to deal constructively with his pride (v. 2-3). The rest of the text encourages Marsh to fulfill his responsibility as a member of the Twelve and preach to all nations (v. 4-10).

11 I know thy heart, and have heard thy prayers concerning thy brethren. Be not partial towards them in love above many others, but let thy love be for them as for thyself; and let thy love abound unto all men, and unto all who love my name. 12 And pray for thy brethren of the Twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name's sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins, and be ye faithful before me unto my name. 13 And after their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.

14 Now, I say unto you, and what I say unto you, I say unto all the Twelve: Arise and gird up your loins, take up your cross, follow me, and feed my sheep. 15 Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph; for verily I say unto you, I am with him, and my hand shall be over him; and the keys which I have given unto him, and also to youward, shall not be taken from him till I come.

v11-15 The Twelve are addressed and Marsh is instructed to not be partial to the Twelve (v. 11), but to "admonish them sharply...for all their sins" (v. 12). If, after their

temptations, they do not harden their hearts the Lord will heal them (v. 13). The Lord then admonishes them to get busy and do their job in ministering the gospel to all nations (v. 14), and to stop rebelling against Smith who holds the Lord's keys (v. 15).

v11 "for my name's sake", if prominent members of the Church like the Quorum of the Twelve cause division, contention and ultimately apostatize it reflects badly on the Church and therefore on the Lord in the eyes of the world (cp. Romans 2:24). It also obviously voids covenants made in the name of the Lord on the part of the apostates and incurs Judgement against them.

16 Verily I say unto you, my servant Thomas, thou art the man whom I have chosen to hold the keys of my kingdom, as pertaining to the Twelve, abroad among all nations-- 17 That thou mayest be my servant to unlock the door of the kingdom in all places where my servant Joseph, and my servant Sidney, and my servant Hyrum, cannot come; 18 For on them have I laid the burden of all the churches for a little season. 19 Wherefore, whithersoever they shall send you, go ye, and I will be with you; and in whatsoever place ye shall proclaim my name an effectual door shall be opened unto you, that they may receive my word. 20 Whosoever receiveth my word receiveth me, and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth those, the First Presidency, whom I have sent, whom I have made counselors for my name's sake unto you.

21 And again, I say unto you, that whosoever ye shall send in my name, by the voice of your brethren, the Twelve, duly recommended and authorized by you, shall have power to open the door of my kingdom unto any nation whithersoever ye shall send them-- 22 Inasmuch as they shall humble themselves before me, and abide in my word, and hearken to the voice of my spirit.

v16-22 Marsh is addressed specifically as the President of the Twelve and the Lord explicitly states that his keys as president only pertain to the Twelve (v. 16) and that the burden for the whole Church is laid upon the First Presidency (v. 18). Marsh is called to be the Lord's servant in going to places that the First Presidency cannot go (v. 17). And again, the mission of the Twelve to spread the gospel to all nations is emphasized (v. 19-21) as well as the need to do it in humility (v. 22).

23 Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. 24 Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a

day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

25 And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord; 26 First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord. 27 Therefore, see to it that ye trouble not yourselves concerning the affairs of my church in this place, saith the Lord. 28 But purify your hearts before me; and then go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel unto every creature who has not received it;

29 And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not, and is not baptized, shall be damned. 30 For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times. 31 which power you hold, in connection with all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation; 32 For verily I say unto you, the keys of the dispensation, which ye have received, have come down from the fathers, and last of all, being sent down from heaven unto you. 33 Verily I say unto you, behold how great is your calling. Cleanse your hearts and your garments, lest the blood of this generation be required at your hands.

v23-33 The calling of the Twelve is to all nations (v. 23) and not to Zion in particular (v. 27), so they are to go out and warn all nations of the impending day of the Lord's wrath (v. 24-26, cp. D&C 29:7-8). They have this calling and commission and must fulfill their responsibilities in order to keep the blood of the wicked from their own hands (v. 30-33).

v24-26 Compare Isa. 66:5-6 and D&C 63:6.

34 Be faithful until I come, for I come quickly; and my reward is with me to recompense every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega. Amen.

v34 The Lord concludes the section with an admonition and authority statement.

## **Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 112**

Below are two excerpts from History of the Church. The first are a series of comments describing the economic difficulties of the time. It also discusses the calling of some of the Twelve to missions in England. The second gives some of the details regarding those missionaries who departed for England and indicates D&C 112 was received the same day as the missionaries arrived in England.

The second excerpt is a historical summary detailing the difficulties the Church was having when this revelation was received.

The third excerpt is a brief first-hand journal account commenting on the fall of the Kirtland Bank.

The fourth excerpt is a copy of a letter from Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten to Parley P. Pratt wherein they reprimand him for heading out on a mission to England without any direction from Church leadership.

This section was first published in the Doctrine and Covenants in 1844, pages 414-417. It was published in Deseret News, volume 3, number 5, page 17, dated January 22, 1853. It was published in the Millennium Star, volume 16, number 2, pages 29-30, dated January 14, 1854.

### **Excerpts from History of the Church**

At this time the spirit of speculation in lands and property of all kinds, which was so prevalent throughout the whole nation, was taking deep root in the Church. As the fruits of this spirit, evil surmisings, fault-finding, disunion, dissension, and apostasy followed in quick succession, and it seemed as though all the powers of earth and hell were combining their influence in an especial manner to overthrow the Church at once, and make a final end. Other banking institutions refused the "Kirtland Safety Society's" notes. The enemy abroad, and apostates in our midst, united in their schemes, flour and provisions were turned towards other markets, and many became disaffected toward me as though I were the sole cause of those very evils I was most strenuously striving against, and which were actually brought upon us by the brethren not giving heed to my counsel.

No quorum in the Church was entirely exempt from the influence of those false spirits who are striving against me for

the mastery; even some of the Twelve were so far lost to their high and responsible calling, as to begin to take sides, secretly, with the enemy.

In this state of things, and but a few weeks before the Twelve were expecting to meet in full quorum, (some of them having been absent for some time), God revealed to me that something new must be done for the salvation of His Church. And on or about the first of June, 1837, Heber C. Kimball, one of the Twelve, was set apart by the spirit of prophecy and revelation, prayer and laying on of hands, of the First Presidency, to preside over a mission to England, to be the first foreign mission of the Church of Christ in the last days. While we were about ordaining him, Orson Hyde, another of the Twelve, came in, and upon listening to what was passing, his heart melted within him, (for he had begun to drink of the cup filled with the overflowings of speculation), he acknowledged all his faults, asked forgiveness, and offered to accompany President Kimball on his mission to England. His offer was accepted, and he was set apart for that purpose. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, volume 2, pages 487-490)

While the passengers were going on board a steamer Elders Kimball, Hyde, Richards, and Goodson jumped into a small boat and were rowed toward shore. When within leaping distance Elder Kimball sprang from the boat as if impelled by some superior power and alighted on the steps of the dock, followed instantly by Elders Hyde and Richards, all three of whom had not one farthing on earth at their command, while Elder Goodson, having a heavy purse of silver in his hand, waited until the vessel touched shore.

On the brethren went to Preston, about thirty miles from Liverpool, and as they alighted from the coach a large flag was unfurled nearly over their heads, with this inscription, in letters of gold, "Truth will Prevail," it being election day for members of Parliament. King William the Fourth had recently died and Queen Victoria was about to organize her cabinet. Taking lodgings in Wilford street, some of the Elders had an interview that evening with the Rev. James Fielding, brother of Joseph Fielding, who had a chapel in that place, where all the seven brethren went to hear him preach on Sunday, 23rd. After his sermon in the morning Mr. Fielding gave notice to his congregation that there were present some ministers from America, and they would occupy his pulpit in the afternoon. This unexpected offer was unsolicited but joyfully received, and in

the afternoon President Kimball gave a brief relation of the history of the Church from the commencement, followed by Elder Hyde, who bore testimony to the same; thus was the key turned and the door of salvation opened to the inhabitants of England. At the close of the meeting Mr. Fielding offered his pulpit for the evening, when Elder Goodson preached and Brother Fielding bore testimony.

The same day that the Gospel was first preached in England I received the following:

[text of D&C 112 quoted]

(Joseph Smith, History of the Church, volume 2, pages 498-499)

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

Section 112 was received by the Prophet Joseph Smith for Thomas B. Marsh, President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. In the spring of 1837, while residing in Missouri, Marsh was experiencing frustration relative to his position as president of his quorum. Although an 1835 revelation (section 107) seemed to place his quorum next to the First Presidency in the Church government, in reality, the Presidency of the Church in Missouri (David Whitmer, William W. Phelps, and John Whitmer) and the two church high councils had retained their supremacy (having been organized before the Twelve) next to the First Presidency. Furthermore, Thomas lamented that his quorum had not maintained close contact since their 1835 mission to the Eastern States, nor had they been unified in fulfilling their divine calling as special missionaries. Of a more serious nature was news which had reached Marsh that members of his quorum had fallen into apostasy, and he was likewise mortified upon learning that Parley P. Pratt, one of his quorum, was planning a mission to England.

On 10 May 1837, Marsh and David W. Patten, first and second respectively in seniority among the Twelve, and both residing in Missouri, dispatched word to Parley requesting him to defer his mission across the Atlantic until the quorum could convene. Marsh considered taking the gospel abroad an act of such magnitude that no one of the quorum should attempt such an action independently. In the letter Marsh called a meeting of the entire quorum for 24 July 1837 in Kirtland. Marsh and Patten left for Ohio sometime the following month.

In the meantime, however, Joseph Smith had directed Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde of the Twelve to travel to England to introduce the gospel. It is not known when Marsh and Patten

learned of the departure of these missionaries, but it seems clear that the news angered them and shattered their hopes of unifying the quorum. Brigham Young, remembering their arrival in Kirtland, said, "As soon as they came I got Marsh to go to Joseph But Patten would [not].... He got his mind prejudiced & when He went to see Joseph David insulted Joseph & Joseph slapped him in the face & kicked him out of the yard this done David good." It appears that Marsh himself desired to introduce the gospel abroad.

Section 112, received one day before the scheduled meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve, gave instructions to Marsh regarding his responsibilities in relation to other members of his quorum and the First Presidency. According to one source, Thomas B. Marsh served as scribe. (Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pages 222-224)

**Excerpt from Truman Angell Autobiography**

After some months passed in this manner, persecution commenced against the Heads of the Church in consequence of the failure of the Bank of Kirtland. This institution would have been a financial success and a blessing to the Saints--which they needed very much--had the Gentiles who borrowed the money of the bank fulfilled their promises. Also [Warren Parrish] Parish, the clerk and cashier, robbed the bank of about \$20,000. These things crippled the bank and caused it to suspend business soon after; and false brethren in consequence forced President Smith to Missouri, seemingly to save himself. (Truman Angell *Autobiography, Writings of Early Latter-day Saints*, page 197 [originally printed in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, volume 10 (1967), pages 195-213])

**Excerpt from Joseph Smith Letterbook**

Thomas [B. Marsh] & David [W. Patten], Apostles of Jesus Christ to Parley [P. Pratt] who is also an apostle called and chosen of God and anointed.

Dear brother we having heard that you have left Kirtland for Toronto Upper Canada & that you intended to leave there soon for England and having important business which we greatly desire to do with you before you leave this continent, we hastily write this letter with a hope that you will meet us in Kirtland this Summer.

Dear Brother— are we not fellow labourers & fellow sufferers in the same cause? the same ministry! And in the same apostleship!!! Will you— Can you— leave this land— our native land for a distant Island of the sea in such a hasty without consulting, without exchanging with us the first word upon the subject, No, when you reflect, we think you will say I cannot, this is an important step, this mission if rightly managed will be both glorious and sublime. Much depends, very much on the way and manner in which the glorious gospel is first introduced into that country then be not hasty, but grant us, or unto me Thomas at least to council you upon this subject, for unto this was I anointed & unto the 12 it belongs to know within themselves, or within their own quorum when and how to go to the nations, and to spread the light of the Everlasting truth to the ends of the earth— The Salvation of the Nations hangs upon our shoulders, O Br Parley— hear us this once, as the God was our teacher and we was yours— do not go till we see you!!! do not go till we see you!!!

Where is Luke Johnson and John [F. Boynton] and Lyman [Johnson], is it well with them we hear much evil concerning them by letter and otherwise & will you leave while things are thus— No! the 12 must get together difficulties must be removed & love restored, we must have peace within before we can wage a successful war without. The time has now undoubtedly come for us to leave here, nevertheless we must proceed in a proper manner or nothing is gained. Again shall the 12 apostles of the Lambe be a disorganized body pulling different ways, shall one to his plough another to his merchandise, another to England & No! I even I Thomas will step in (if there is none other for it is my right in this case) And give council to you upon this subject.

We must be one or the great wheel will not move, you cannot leave here, in the present unsettled state of things & prosper as you otherwise would, Thus saith the voice of the Spirit— therefore let the 12 be assembled together as soon as circumstances will admit, and obtain wisdom and council from God. And inasmuch as the 12 humble themselves before the Lord, their meeting will be glorious & prove a lasting blessing to many & I think that I have an eye to the Spirit upon this subject. We have many things to say to you but cannot with pen and paper, we have important business with you but cannot tell you now therefore meet us in Kirtland on the twenty fourth of July next, for we intend to break through every obstacle & be there at that time if the Lord will for the express purpose of attending to our great Mission to the Mother Nation, and we

shall write to the 8 in Kirtland appointing a Council of the whole 12 to take place on the 24th day of July next at 9 oclock A. M. Fail not to be there.

Thomas B. Marsh  
David W Patten

Far West May 10th. 1837

[\(Joseph Smith Letterbook 2, 1839-1843, pages 62-63\)](#)

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