

D&C Lesson 18
Establish a House
(D&C 95, 109, 110)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background as well as evidence supporting the Restoration)

I. Latter-day Israel can be identified because it fits in amazing detail the patterns of ancient Israel and **patterns Jesus set up when He established Israel in His day.**

- A. Latter-day Israel was led into the wilderness where they were given God's Law, just as ancient Israel received theirs in the wilderness at Mt. Sinai. (See my material for lesson 13).
- B. The next part of the "Israelite" pattern was to build a house of God (Wilderness Tabernacle).
- C. Latter-day Israel was now to build a temple in *their wilderness, at Kirtland, OH.*

II. Both ancient and Latter-day Houses of God were built *according to a specific pattern revealed by the Lord Himself.*

- A. Compare Exodus 25:8 and D&C 95: 14-17 where these commands are given.
The reason these structures were to follow a pattern established by God Himself was *because the patterns teach of Jesus the Christ.* (1)

B. **The pattern of the Kirtland Temple bore witness that His Kingdom had come:** for it represented His Holy Priesthood which governed that Kingdom.

C. It witnessed of His Holy Priesthood by sets of three pulpits on both ends, representing the three orders of the Aaronic and the Melchizedek Priesthoods.

D. This pattern is still used as a major witness in some temples today. **It is a witness that the Kingdom of God is among us, and here is God's Holy Temple.**

E. The bell in the tower which Joseph Smith asked to be rung 50 times, taught of the Israelite time of Jubilees, held on the 50th year, which signified the re-gathering of Israel.

1. "The trumpet of Jubilee [will] sound... and proclaim liberty ... Ye shall return every man unto his possession and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Lev. 25:9-10).

III. The Kirtland Temple also fit the pattern Jesus' set, of preparing for that gathering by being "endowed with power from on high."

A. When Jesus prepared to ascend from Jerusalem, He reminded His disciples of their duty to "go ye into all the earth" and to begin a harvest of Saints at that time. Yet He also told them to tarry just a bit. They were to tarry until they were endowed with the power of the Holy Ghost, which was bestowed at Pentecost, **50 days from His Resurrection. Then they began His First Harvest.**

B. **Now, the Lord was initiating His Great Final Harvest, and He prepared His Saints by endowing them with powers and authority from Heaven.**

IV. The Dedicatory Prayer definitely included the witness that **the time of the Gentiles had come in, and Israel's time to be gathered and to become "God's People" was here.**

- A. The promise had been the First shall become last, and the last shall become first.

The Gospel had first gone to Israel, then to the Gentiles; It was now to return to Israel

1. When we read the **dedicatory prayer** of the Kirtland Temple, especially D&C 109:61-67, 72-80, we see how *essential the temple is to the gathering of Israel.*

2. First the prayer acknowledges the **saints have until now been identified as Gentiles**, (as they have come out of the Gentile Nations) (D&C 109:60).

3. But now, the Gospel and God's Kingdom is to return to the scattered House of Israel.

"But thou knowest that thou hast a great love for the children of Jacob, who have been scattered upon the mountains for a long time, in a cloudy and dark day. We therefore ask thee to have mercy upon the children of Jacob, that **Jerusalem, from this hour may begin to be redeemed.**"

4. Note the prayer says "From this hour may [they] begin to be redeemed. This verifies that the time of the Fullness of the Gentiles had come in. Now Israel was to be regathered!"

V. The building of the Kirtland Temple was indeed a necessary step in that gathering.

A. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that the missionaries **had to be endowed with power in the temple in order to carry out the final gathering.**

B. "The Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in which he could reveal the keys of authority and where the apostles could be endowed and prepared to prune his vineyard for the last time." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols., 2:234).

VI. An important part of the gathering of Israel was to **regather descendants of Lehi for temple blessings. The prayer pleads:**

A. "...cause that the remnant of Jacob, who have been cursed and smitten because of their transgressions, be converted from their wild and savage condition to the fullness of the everlasting gospel; That they may lay down their weapons of bloodshed, and cease their rebellions" (D&C 109:65-6).

B. In fact the development of the Church in Kirtland came as a direct result of the Latter-day Saints seeking to redeem the Lamanites.

1. Parley P. Pratt and others were sent on a mission to the Lamanites, at the border of Missouri. As they passed through Kirtland on their way, they found a people ripe for the Gospel. This led to the settling of the Church in Kirtland.

2. While temporarily thwarted in fulfilling that mission to the Lamanites, the **Gospel and its temple blessings would still go to Lehi's seed.**

3. **And there are strong evidences that the Native Americans had indeed previously held such blessings.**

a. Researchers have shown that those settlers who came from Europe to North America were surprised to discover the Indians were familiar with signs they considered masonic signs. They wrote with puzzlement of how the Indians knew such symbols.

4. However the source was not masonry, but **the temple ritual their ancestors once possessed.** On this topic, Dr. Hugh Nibley observed:

"**Thousands of American Indians and Pacific Islanders**, including many of the greatest chiefs and wise men, have become Mormons in their time and engaged in the work of the Temple. They have been quick to detect the often **surprising parallels** between the rites of the Temple and the traditions and practices of their own tribes --- though those have been guarded with the greatest secrecy. Far from being disaffected by this discovery, these devoted workers have rejoiced that at last they could understand the real meaning of what they had inherited from their fathers, corroded as it was by time and overlaid with thick deposits of legend and folklore." (Dr. Hugh Nibley, "What is a Temple", Truman Madsen, ed., *The Temple in Antiquity*), 32. (Emphasis added).

Dr. Nibley goes on to explain, “Among the first to engage in the Latter-day Temple work were many members of the Masons, a society that [makes no claim to be a religion] but whose rites present unmistakable parallels to those of the Temple. Yet, **like the Indians**, those men experienced only an expansion of understanding. (*Ibid.*)

C. Note: far more Native Americans eventually joined the church in the early days than members have realized.

VII. The Savior and prophets appeared in Kirtland to bestow keys and authority, not only to gather Israel on earth, but **also for the sake of those who had died without hearing the gospel.**

A. The promise that Elijah would return to bestow his essential keys to bless the deceased had been given anciently by Malachi.

B. This prophecy was so vital that Jesus repeated it to the Nephites at His appearance to them. He then commanded them to record Malachi’s words --- for us. “The Father commanded that I should give [Malachi’s prophecy] unto you; for it was wisdom in him **that they should be given unto future generations**” (3 Nephi 26:2).

C. Today the gathering of Israel is not only occurring among those on earth, but among the deceased. And anyone who is willing to make and keep the covenants Jesus offers is a part of this great gathering and saving work.

VIII. **Only through the temple can the Abrahamic Covenant be fulfilled.**

A. Remember, the True Promised Land *is actually Eternal Life*, and “seed without number” *is actually Eternal Lives*, or the continued increase of seed in the eternities.

B. For these reasons **the number eight, which signifies the Abrahamic Covenant** (as infants were initiated into it on the 8th day, and now baptism initiates saints into God’s Kingdom on the 8th year), will be fulfilled at the beginning of the Eighth Age, right after the Millennium. The Eighth Age is **the time when the truly righteous enter into their Kingdom of Glory.**

IX. The Kirtland Temple has led to more Temples and Temple Ordinances, which are among our greatest blessings.

A. After being married in the Salt Lake City Temple, we moved back East. At that **time there were no temples east of the Rocky Mountains.**

Because I had been insufficiently prepared for the heavy symbolism in the temple rituals, I had found myself puzzled and spiritually unfulfilled when I first went.

But while living back East, I began a study of the scriptures. The Book of Mormon had taught me how to read the Old Testament for its witnesses of Christ (2 Nephi 11:4). **As I began to read the scriptures for their deepest meaning, my eyes were opened to the symbolic meanings in the temple ceremony. I found its symbolism had been established from the beginning.**

So while being denied temple attendance for several years due to distance, my understanding of the temple ceremony grew. This situation, being denied access to the temple yet growing ever more aware of the significance of the temple, **created in me a great longing to return.**

Eventually a temple was built in Washington D.C. We had to drive sixteen hours to get to it. In succeeding years, due to temples being built in new locations, my ability to attend and receive temple blessings became more frequent. But the years of denial made me greatly appreciate the Lord’s works to bring temples to the people.

I continually express my deepest gratitude to the Lord and to His prophets for providing the great blessings of temples and temple ordinances!

(1) The Symbolism of the “Wilderness Tabernacle.” In addition to its place, it was likely called that because it was built in a manner which testified of the upcoming mortal “tabernacle” in which Jesus the Christ would dwell. [That is, He would “tabernacle” in that form during His mortal life. Mortality was often represented as a “wilderness” in comparison to the Garden of Eden and dwelling with God]. Paul connected the tabernacle to Jesus in every way in Hebrews and specifically called Him “a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands.” (Hebrews 9:11-12). The tabernacle is elsewhere referred to as both a tabernacle of witness and of testimony (Numbers 17:7; 1:50, 9-15) [Meaning it testified of Jesus Christ and of His ministry]. The ancient Israelites saw the tabernacle as sign that God’s presence was among them. But the fullest truth is that it *taught that God would at some future time, come down and physically dwell in their midst, and His mortal tabernacle and ministry would fulfill the witnesses given through the Wilderness Tabernacle.*

One example: The Lord commanded the tabernacle be covered with four layers: a drab outer layer of animal skins; one beneath of dyed-red ram’s skins; one beneath of goat’s hair curtains, and one last of “fine-twined linen” embroidered with cherubim.

The plain animal skins witnessed that Jesus’ outward appearance would be common, (Isaiah 53:2). The goats’ hair layer taught he would be scapegoat for others’ sins; The red ram skins taught of His sacrifice as the ram slain; The linen taught of His rich heritage [a God], but that He would be beaten as flax is beaten.

Everything about the Wilderness Tabernacle taught of some aspect of Jesus and His ministry.

Later the interior of Solomon’s Temple would be built in a pattern similar to that of the Tabernacle, but its *exterior would testify of Christ after His Resurrection and in His glory.* (Jesus Himself confirmed the temple taught of Him. John 2:19, 21). Its exterior was made of costly, great stones, representing splendor and imperishability. Nearly everything was overlaid with “tried-in-the-fire,” “symbol of glory” gold. The temple would also contain many of the same elements in the Tabernacle but be multiplied.

Similarly, when we seek to understand the meaning of the temple structures in our day, both exterior and interior, and the temple ceremony itself, we will find witnesses over and over again of Jesus the Christ and of His ministry and glorious promises to the faithful.