

D&C Lesson # 29
Building the Kingdom of God in Nauvoo
(D&C 124, 126)
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(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

The Kingdom of God is Reborn!

I. The travail in Missouri was indeed as the travail of a woman giving birth. The intended birth was the Kingdom of God.

A. This rebirth was not done in a vacuum. It had been prophesied.

B. John's "Revelation" spoke of the birth of Christ's Kingdom in these terms. "And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered....And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations..." (Rev. 12:1-2, 5).

[This imagery had extended beyond Christ's birth to become, more particularly, the birth of His Kingdom].

B. Anciently, Satan overcame that newly born Kingdom ---but only for a time. It had also been prophesied: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, ... [until] a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Revelation 12:4-6).

C. In these Latter days, Christ's Kingdom was meant to be reborn --- at the center place of the Land God had prepared for it.

1. The attempts to establish it in Missouri failed. But the Lord made clear that He would not require anything more of the Saints when the failure was due to the hindrance of their enemies (D&C 124:49-53).

2. Thus the center place of Zion would not be built in Missouri at that time.

II. In spite of its enemies, the Kingdom of God *would* be reborn, **for now was its set time**. Its beginning was simply changed --- to Nauvoo, IL (D&C 124:6)* And this time the Kingdom would endure.

1. As in the past, the Lord established "set times" for His works to be accomplished.

2. He had previously said that His "set times" would now be revealed (See D&C 121:26, 31-32).

3. Nauvoo would be His Kingdom's cornerstone (D&C 124:2).

a. Interestingly, when the 1,000th stake was created, it was also created in Nauvoo, IL, on February 18, 1979.

III. What boldness! **Because this was the beginning, not of the Church, but of the Kingdom of God, the Lord commanded a proclamation be sent to all the kings and leaders of the world** (D&C 124:2-11).

A. Christ was forewarning them that the time when He would assume rule over the earth was fast approaching.

B. Daniel's prophecies (Ch.2) spoke of Christ's kingdom being set up in the Last Days, and, when Christ comes, and only when Christ comes, will these prophecies be fully fulfilled.

While Nauvoo had to be built up through much sacrifice, the Saints received great blessings as a result.

IV. The Lord seldom makes His commands easy, but they are still accomplished with His ultimate blessings.

A. Because most of the land where Nauvoo was built was swampy, it was bought cheaply in comparison to other lands. But then there was much work to drain it and to make it fruitful.

B. For a time the Saints were hindered by illness, but through Joseph Smith and the priesthood, many were miraculously healed and they continued on until successful.

C. Through the saints hard work Nauvoo truly became a “beautiful city.”

1. According to an historical posting in Nauvoo itself, many years after the Saints were driven west, a few Latter-day Saints stopped for a visit in Nauvoo. **Certain residents there pleaded for them to come back, saying that since their departure, Nauvoo was no longer a place of beauty nor of profitability. [Due to the fact the drainage system, etc., was not maintained].**

V. The Kingdom of God was blessed with a surge of thousands of new converts from England.

A. This too was accomplished with much sacrifice. Many of those who went to preach abroad left while they were ill and their families were also very ill.

1. Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball were so ill they could hardly stand as they departed for their missions. Sadly, they were also leaving families who were bedridden. Yet they found the strength and courage to stand and shout, “Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah for Israel.” Their families then found strength to come out of bed and to wave goodbye. [*Our Heritage*, pp. 56-7).

2. The thousands of converts who came due to this missionary work brought new manpower, new skills, new resources, and new enthusiasm for the building of Zion.

VI. The Saints were eventually blessed with the return of the Twelve to assume leadership roles.

A. Most of the Twelve spent years doing missionary work abroad. The affairs of the Church were then handled by local leaders.

B. But when the Twelve returned, they were set next to the First Presidency to assume leadership roles over the Church as a whole (D&C 124:127-129. See D&C 126 for the Lord’s word to Brigham Young that his work abroad was acceptable and finished).

C. Having the Twelve return to assume these leadership roles at the head of the Church was very important.

1. For **some of those who had been working with Joseph would soon betray him.**

2. The Twelve would give the Church the true leadership it needed to deal with the betrayal of such men.

3. **Placing the Twelve at the Head of the Church prepared the Church to move forward after the death of the prophet, which was soon to occur.**

a. When Christ’s Church in the Meridian of Time was overtaken by apostasy, it was largely due to the death of the Twelve Apostles of that dispensation. As the Church spread, some of those in various congregations turned the Saints against the leadership established by the apostles, and usurped it for themselves.

b. **The Lord helped prepare His Latter-day Church against this same kind of apostasy. Without the Twelve, it would likely have occurred again.**

VII. The Saints were finally blessed with an ordinance-performing temple.

A. While it was finished only in the final days, portions were finished early enough to be used for the great ordinances of Temple Work.

B. Furthermore, **many testified that it was attending the Temple and receiving their endowments which gave them the courage to begin their terrible journey across a vast and treacherous wilderness.**

VIII. The Saints were also blessed with elevation of the Sisters.

A. The True Church of Jesus Christ has always provided greater spiritual opportunities to its women.

B. The blessings were not to just *a few women* who are granted a claim to the priesthood, as some churches have given today, ***but to all its women, through unique methods of empowerment.***

1. During the time of Christ, Jesus showed His honor for women by His ministering unto them in very personal ways, and by their becoming the First Witnesses of His Resurrection.

2. In these Latter-days, the sisters were empowered at Nauvoo by being organized into their own Society to stand beside the Priesthood, to unitedly express their voices, and to become involved in the most sacred kinds of ministering --- through stewardships in visiting teaching and auxiliary callings, and by becoming involved in the most sacred of all work --- Temple Ordinance Work.

3. Today, of their own free will and choice, the sisters are becoming more involved than ever in missionary work. (I am blessed to have three granddaughters now serving missions.)

4. Relief Society has been a great blessing to the sisters of the Church. With greater freedom now through modern labor-saving devices, women are encouraged to become scriptorians, and to become educated in other ways. They are encouraged to develop their talents and to use those talents to bless the lives of many, not only in their own congregations, but in the community at large. Relief Society empowers them in all these ways.

5. **While The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is often accused of diminishing its women, the opposite is true. From the beginning they were lifted to their rightful place in God's Kingdom.**

C. However this was accomplished without making the mistake made by so many modern feminists, which is to diminish their roles as nurturers in the vital unit of family. Rather Latter-day Saint sisters have been empowered for greater success in those traditional roles, and also to fill many other important roles in the community.

D. **The Relief Society has been a factor in giving women greater knowledge and strength in fulfilling their many vital roles, while keeping them focused on their Eternal destinies.**

IX. The Saints were also greatly blessed with specific patriarchal blessings to the members.

A. Joseph's revelations directed to individuals had brought specific blessings to those receiving them.

B. Now Hyrum was ordained as patriarch by his father, (D&C 124:91-96), and **“henceforth he shall hold the keys of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people. That whoever he blesses shall be blessed... ”** (D&C 124:92-93). Through the role of patriarch, specific revelation would be available to all the Saints. **This is a remarkable gift from the Lord!**

C. Patriarchal blessings are very important in helping prepare the Saints for their ultimate roles.

D. By receiving a specific blessing through the Holy Spirit under the hands of a priesthood bearer, individual members are set on a course to seek and to be guided by the Holy Spirit

throughout their lives. They learn that the Lord knows them personally, and *will speak to them directly*. Thus the Saints are encouraged to continue to seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost themselves.

E. Many see The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as an “authoritarian-driven” group. Actually, the opposite is really true. **The Lord and his leaders have always encouraged the Saints to seek guidance and answers through the Spirit.** That encouragement, when humbly followed, leads to the cohesiveness and obedience in the body of Saints. This unity and obedience gives the impression to outsiders that we are an authoritarian-driven church. **But in reality we are unified because we are a “Spirit-driven” Church.**

While enemies of the Church, as anciently, tried to abort the birth of the Kingdom of God, it was born nevertheless. Its beginnings were in Nauvoo the Beautiful. It continues to grow throughout the world. It will, as prophesied, help ready the earth to receive its true King --- Jesus the Christ.

*The “set time” given in Revelation for the coming forth of the Kingdom of God in the Last Days is given in Revelation 12:6.