

D&C Lesson # 33
Brigham Young Leads the Saints
(D&C 107:22-24; 136)
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(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. While several individuals temporarily confused some saints by making claims to lead the Church, **the Lord had previously made His will very clear.**

A. *Because* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a **“Restored Israel,” its leadership has to be by The Twelve Apostles.**

B. Note D&C 136 begins, “The Word and Will of the Lord concerning the **Camp of Israel** in their journeyings to the West.”

C. The pattern of **Twelve who would lead and judge Israel** began with the Twelve Tribes which made up “Israel.” **Anciently, Israel’s leadership consisted of one out of each tribe.** And when Israel camped in the wilderness, they were commanded to camp with a symbolic pattern of three tribes on each of four sides, thus surrounding the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God.

D. After Israel crossed the Jordan River, they were commanded to erect **twelve stones**, as **witnesses** that the Lord had accomplished this great feat. **These stones taught that Twelve Apostles would one day bear witness of Christ’s overcoming Death and opening the way to the True Promised Land --- Eternal Life.**

E. **When Jesus Christ chose Twelve to lead His Church, He confirmed the government of His Church and Kingdom was to be by Twelve Apostles.**

F. Thus the Lord, in establishing His Latter-day Israel, had commanded, “Of the Melchizedek Priesthood ...the twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world... And they form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three presidents previously mentioned” (D&C 107:23-4).

II. Joseph understood the Church should be led by the Twelve, and took particular pains to give to them the keys and the knowledge they needed to carry the Church forward.

A. Wilford Woodruff testified Joseph told the Twelve, “...I have now sealed upon your heads all the powers of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and Apostleship, with all the keys and powers thereof, which God has sealed upon me; and I now roll off all the labor, burden and care of this Church and Kingdom of God upon your shoulders, and I now command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to round up your shoulders, and bear off this Church and Kingdom of God before heaven and earth, and before God, angels and men.”

B. This was a very profound statement and powerfully tells the will of the Lord.

III. In fact, the **pattern of leadership by Twelve is eternal and will continue into the future.**

A. John’s “Revelation” speaks of that time when Christ will reign in glory, surrounded by 144,000. That is 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes. These will be servants, or high priests, who will serve and glorify Him through their testimonies of His great works (Revelation 7:3-8).

B. So the pattern, which is multiplied in “Revelation,” has been eternally established --- that the leadership of Israel would begin with especially ordained Twelve Disciples or Apostles.

C. Because the saints were still naïve, and unknowledgeable about many things, it took a special witness for them to come to understand the Twelve should lead.

D. It required the miraculous manifestation given when Brigham Young addressed them, visually bearing the mantle of Joseph, for the saints to realize he and the Twelve were the Lord's chosen servants to carry on the work of Christ's Church.

IV. The Lord's prophets were all different, chosen by Him for their unique and special qualities. Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, but Joshua, a warrior, was needed to conquer it.

A. Similarly, He anointed different prophets with different skills for His Last Days works.

B. Joseph was chosen to be the one who would receive the visions and great revelations needed to restore the lost precious truths.

C. Now the Lord needed a great organizer to move the thousands of saints into a wilderness.

D. He needed an American Moses. And Brigham Young was that man.

E. As we continue to see His Church develop, we will see that the Lord chose others with special preparations and responsibilities.

V. But first, Joseph, the great revelator, would receive the Vision of that Exodus.

A. The scriptures themselves and Joseph Smith clearly showed that Christ's Latter-day Church would be established in the mountains of the West.

B. There are many Biblical prophecies that the Latter-day Israel would be established in the mountains, and some specifically prophesied "in the top of the mountains;" (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:9; 52:7-8; 56:5-8; 57:13; Ezekiel 20:40-41; Daniel 2:35; Micah 4:1-2; Joel 2:1; 3:17.

C. **The Native American word, "Utah" specifically means "the top of the mountains."**

D. Joseph Smith knew the Church would go to the Rocky Mountains.

1. August 1842, he revealed the Saints would find refuge in the West and prophesied they would "become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains" (*History of Church* 5:85, footnote).

2. By February, 1844, the Twelve were told to prepare a delegation to explore where the Saints might go (Francis Gibbons, *Joseph Smith, Martyr, Prophet of God*, p. 318).

2. Joseph further action delegated certain members to go to Washington D.C. and lobby for a bill to allow the whole Church to go to the West and to be used to help resolve issues with Mexico and other countries concerning California and Oregon (Gibbons, p. 319).

3. The Saints also obtained maps of the West and records of John C. Fremont's explorations in the Rockies (*Ibid.*; Leonard Aarinton, *Brigham Young, American Moses*, p 123).

4. Before his martyrdom, when Joseph first fled for his life, he crossed over to the Western side of the Mississippi. His plans were to wait there until the Saints could join him with the goal of eventually organizing their long planned journey to the West.

5. Brigham Young continued to pursue this avenue, and by mid-1845 he and the Twelve had identified the Salt Lake Valley as the place for the Saints to settle (Aarinton, p. 124).

VI. The Temple was a great gift from the Lord to help prepare the Saints for what lay ahead in crossing a vast wilderness to their Promised Land.

A. It is amazing that being threatened every day with destruction, and with the temple in an unfinished state, and knowing that they would soon have to abandon it, that they worked feverishly, nevertheless, to complete it.

B. The fact that they thronged the temple day and night to receive its precious ordinances shows how meaningful it was to them before undertaking the grueling task ahead of them.

VII. Brigham Young and the Twelve did fulfill Joseph's mandate.

A. They had done as he commanded: "to round up your shoulders, and bear off this Church and Kingdom of God before heaven and earth, and before God, angels and men."

B. It is astonishing that 70,000 people from many different parts of the world traversed the western wildernesses and found their haven in the Rocky Mountains between 1847 and 1869.

C. Since then many others followed. And now millions have come into the Church worldwide.

VIII. As we face the increasingly strong trials of the last days leading up to the coming of Jesus Christ, it is again to the temple we must look to find the spiritual strength and guidance to help us endure what surely will be great challenges ahead.