

D&C Lesson # 9
The Only True and Living Church
(D&C 20; 21; 27; 115-116; 121:26-32)
By Lenet Hadley Read

I. Christ's Latter-day Church was to be organized! And the Lord **chose precisely when.**

A. "We obtained of him [Jesus Christ] the following, **by the spirit of prophecy and revelation, which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to his will and commandment,** we should proceed to organize his Church once more here upon the earth." (Heading, D&C 20). (Emphasis added)

B. Why would the Lord care *what day* His Church would be organized?

1. He had given His answer through Isaiah. There He had challenged all other supposed gods of the world, "shew the things that are to come that we may know that ye are gods" (Isaiah 41:23). Then the Lord testifies that in contrast to false gods, *His power* can be recognized by **His ability to foretell what will occur in the future and to fulfill it precisely** (Isaiah 41:17-29).

C. This usually included **when** He would fulfill them. ⁱ

D. He would reveal His purposes for setting precise dates in the last days when "nothing shall be withheld ... [including] all the **appointed days, months, and years.**" To make sure we do not miss this point, He repeats that the "set times" shall be revealed," and that those times were "**ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God**" (D&C 121:25-32)ⁱⁱ (Emphasis added).

E. Thus **the day set to organize** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the beginning of Christ's Latter-day Kingdom, **was determined in the Council in Heaven. And that precise day had been chosen as part of a pattern of many events which carried similar importance.**

II. The Birth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints **was set for the "Time of Birth or Rebirth."**

A. The Lord revealed this to Joseph Smith more fully while in Missouri.

B. In April 1833, he was in Jackson County, Missouri, and on April 6th was inspired to celebrate the three year anniversary of the Church. The very next day was Easter. Joseph realized **this place and this time were conjunctions of past, current and future events and times.**

C. The Place, Jackson County, MO, was revealed to him as "The center place of Zion" (D&C 57). Here, Adam and Eve began earth's time in the Garden of Eden, and here Adam would return in the Last Days for significant purposes (D&C 116).

D. In this "Conjunction Place," Joseph learned there were also "Conjunction Times" of great events. He rejoiced and recorded the importance of this new revelation.

1. He was obviously under the influence of the Spirit for he said, "the solemnities of eternity rested upon them."ⁱⁱⁱ **And there and then he revealed the** significance of this conjunction of Times: [I have highlighted each in red].

2. "**On the 6th of April,** in the land of Zion, about eighty officials... met for instruction and the service of God.... It was an **early spring,** and the leaves and blossoms enlivened and gratified the soul of men like a glimpse of Paradise. The day was spent... giving and *receiving knowledge* which appertained to this last kingdom --- it being just 1800 years since **the Savior laid down His life that men might have everlasting life, and only three years since the Church had come out of the wilderness,** ^{iv} preparatory for the last dispensation. [Together the group rejoiced as] they thought of the time when Israel ate the 'Passover;' they felt like the **shepherds who watched their flocks by night, when the angelic choir sweetly sang the electrifying strain, 'Peace on earth, good will to men.'** This was the first attempt made by the Church to celebrate... her birthday."

III. Note that Joseph spoke of several events, each of which was **a time of a birth or rebirth**.

A. **Springtime is the time of birth and rebirth** of the things of nature.

B. Passover brought the liberation of Israel **and its birth as a nation**.

C. The **Birth** of Jesus Christ, **the true Liberator** [D&C 20:1 plus Joseph's reflections in MO about Jesus' birth would indicate this happened on April 6th].^v

D. The Atonement and **Resurrection** of Jesus, offering True Liberation **and new birth to all**.

E. The beginning of Christ's Church, **a Rebirth of Israel** in the Last Days.

F. There would be at least one more important event to come --- on April 3, 1836.

1. **The restoration of the priesthood keys** for full salvation and exaltation of all the earth, living and dead. [Those in spirit prison could now be fully liberated].

2. Not to be forgotten was the **Liberation and Rebirth of captives in the Spirit Prison in His Day**. Christ visited them after His Crucifixion and many were resurrected immediately after He was (D&C 138, especially 15-16).

IV. Why did the Lord perform all these works at the same time period --- **at the time of birth and rebirth in Nature**? Was it that by this **"All things testify in one!"**

A. Knowing these patterns can swell our hearts to almost sing His praises.

* Israel was **born at Passover Time in the spring!**

* Christ's body was **born** from His mother's womb --- and His body **born** from death and the tomb --- **at Passover Time in the spring!**

* **New Birth** to mankind through Christ came at **Passover Time in the spring!**

* His Church and Kingdom were **Reborn at Easter Time in the spring!**

* His Priesthood Keys were **reborn at Easter Time in the spring, so all might be reborn and sanctified!**

V. Additional insights about these patterns come through other parallels.

A. The Kirtland Temple, built "according to the pattern of the priesthood," had six pulpits: Three for the Aaronic Priesthood and three for the Melchizedek priesthood. Similarly, the six spires of the Salt Lake Temple ascending into heaven represent the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood. And here inside these and all temples is the ultimate work for which the Priesthood was restored --- **the liberation from bondage and rebirth** of those deceased.

B. Temples proclaim this significance in other ways: Phases of the moon carved on the Salt Lake Temple's East Tower point to April 6th. On April 6th, the cornerstone of the temple was placed. Forty years later, on April 6th, the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated.

C. April 6th became the date of annual conferences of the Church. Current work schedules make this difficult, but General Conference is as close to April 6th as possible.

VI. Far beyond setting its birth date, The Lord **showed in all things it was His True Church**.

A. The Lord Himself will direct His Church (D&C 20:1-16).

B. Its foundation will be Prophets and Apostles called by God.

1. "thou shalt be called a seer... a prophet, and apostle of Jesus Christ... through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ. Being inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof and to build it up unto the most holy faith... For thus saith the Lord God: **Him have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good**" (D&C 21:1,2,7).

2. All members of the Church are called to this great healing work (D&C 20:38-71).

C. No one would be beyond the saving reach of His Church. It would administer to all God's people, including the deceased. This verifies the timing of its birth was significant.

1. "That as many as would believe and be baptized in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved --- Not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time, in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things, should have eternal life" (D& C 20:25-6).

2. Any Church whose ministry is not to all mankind is not of God.

VII. Partaking of the sacrament in remembrance of Jesus Christ, its Head, was to be the chief purpose of Sabbath meetings.

A. "It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus" (D&C 20:75).

B. So sacred was this event, specific prayers to be used were given by the Lord for its holy services (D&C 20:76-9).

VIII. The lives of the members would reflect Christ's example, and so be blessed.

A. The "members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation, that they are worthy of it, that there may be works and faith agreeable to the holy scriptures --- walking in holiness before the Lord" (D&20:69).

1. "By doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory (D&C 21:7).

On April 6, 1830, Christ's Church was reborn. It reflected His will in all things.

ⁱFor evidences see Lenet Hadley Read, "Symbols of the Harvest," *Ensign*, January 1975; or Lenet Hadley Read, *The Lord's Holy Days*, which gives greater details.

ⁱⁱ Some might argue this scripture refers only to the times set for the motion of Heavenly bodies. But we should know those motions were set to coincide with the Lord's saving works.

ⁱⁱⁱ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 Vols., introduction and notes made by B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: 1932), 1:336.

^{iv} Scriptures teach that *Christ's kingdom* would be preserved in the wilderness after the apostasy until the time for its coming forth in the Last Days (Revelation 12:6 is one). Presidents of the Church have said this "Revelation" scripture refers to the Kingdom of God.

^v Presidents Spencer W. Kimball and Harold B. Lee, plus James E. Talmage, expressed belief Jesus was born on April 6th. Some LDS scholars feel these authorities assumed D&C 20:1, [which says it was "one thousand and eight hundred and thirty years" since Jesus' birth], was pinpointing the very day, rather than simply referring to that current year as 1830. However, such a claim makes its own assumption that the General Authorities **did not speak from their own revelation**. Is it not unwise to make *that* assumption?

Above all, when Joseph Smith spoke of Jesus' birth in Missouri, was he not clearly relating it to all the other great works of salvation he spoke of, which occurred at similar times? Otherwise, his statements about Jesus' birth would have been incongruous. This is a strong indicator that *he* saw Jesus' birth as part of the overall pattern. [This matter is not worth contention, however, only of trying to ascertain the real truth so that the full works of Jesus Christ might be known].