

D & C Lesson 29

BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN NAUVOO, ILLINOIS

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, August 2001

1. Historical Summary

“The Saints gathered first in Quincy, Illinois. After Joseph Smith returned from Liberty Jail, they moved about 35 miles up the Mississippi River to what was then the small village of Commerce. The Saints quickly started draining the swampy land, planting crops, and building homes. During the summer of 1839, the Prophet renamed the place Nauvoo. He said, ‘The name of our City [Nauvoo] is of Hebrew origin, and signifies a beautiful situation, or place, carrying with it, also, the idea of rest’ (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1976, p. 182.)

“In December 1840 the State of Illinois granted Nauvoo a charter that allowed the city to establish a militia, a municipal court, and a university. Nauvoo became the second largest city in Illinois as the Church grew rapidly and new converts gathered there.”

[Gospel Doctrine Instructor’s Manual, 1999, p. 164]

2. Analysis of D&C 124 [received January 19, 1841]

A. [1-11] The Lord’s commandment to ***prepare and make a solemn proclamation to the world***. *Purposes*: (1) so they will favor Zion [6], (2) so that oppressors shall be warned and left without excuse [7-8], (3) so that their hearts may be softened and they will come to the light of truth [9], (4) so that they will bring their gold and silver to help the Lord’s people [11].

B. [12-22, 73-118] ***Instructions to individuals***: Robert B. Thompson [12-14], Hyrum Smith [15, 77, 91-96, 124], John C. Bennett (who later apostatized and was excommunicated; notice the if clauses in his blessings) [16-17], Lyman Wight [18-19], George Miller [20-22], Vincent Knight [74-76], Isaac Galland [78-79], William Marks [80], Henry G. Sherwood [81], William Law (who later apostatized and was excommunicated; notice the if clauses again) [82-83, 85-91, 97-102], Almon Babbitt [84], Sidney Rigdon (who was excommunicated in 1844; notice the if clauses again) [103-10], Amos Davies [111-14], Robert D. Foster (who also apostatized and was excommunicated; notice the if clause again) [115-18].

C. [22-24, 56-61, 62-72] Instructions to ***build the Nauvoo House*** as a hotel, meeting house and home for Joseph and his family.

D. [25-27,] Commandment to ***build a temple in Nauvoo***.

E. [28-43] Instructions and allusions concerning ***temple ordinances and blessings*** which will be made available in the temple when it is built: (1) baptisms for the dead [28-30], (2) solemn assemblies [39], (3) anointings [39], (4) washings [39], (5) receiving of revelations [39], (6) endowments [39].

F. [44-48] ***Warnings of judgments*** if the temple is not built.

G. [49-55] ***Release from responsibility for not building the temple in Jackson County*** because enemies hindered the work there.

H. [56-61] ***Purposes for building the Nauvoo House***: (1) a residence for Joseph Smith and his family [56-59], a “delightful habitation for man” [60], “a resting place for the weary traveler, that he may contemplate the glory of Zion” [60] that people may receive counsel there from Church leaders [61].

I. [62-72] Instructions for ***fund-raising for the Nauvoo House*** by the sale of stocks.

J. [82-91] *Instructions to William Law* as he is called to be 2nd counselor (in the First Presidency) to Joseph Smith.

K. [91-96] *Hyrum Smith is called to be Patriarch* of the Church. The powers and blessings of that office are explained.

L. [97-102] Blessings and *powers to be given to William Law* if he is faithful in his calling as Joseph's Counselor.

L. [103-10] *Instructions to Sidney Rigdon* to be more faithful in his calling as 1st Counselor in the First Presidency.

M. [123-45] A setting forth of *the officers of the Church* who were to be approved (or disapproved) [v. 144] in the next General Conference: (1) *First Presidency* [125-26], (2) the *Twelve traveling council* [Quorum of the Twelve] [127-130], (3) the *high council* [131-32], *presidency of the high priests quorum* of the Church [133-36], *presidency of the elders quorum* of the Church [137], *presidency of the seventies quorum* of the Church [138-40], the *bishopric* [141], *presidency of the priests* of the Church [142], *presidency of the teachers* of the Church [142], *presidency of the deacons* of the Church [142]. "The above offices I have given unto you, and the keys thereof, for helps and for governments, for the work of the ministry and the perfecting of my saints." [143]

3. Missionaries sent from Nauvoo converted thousands of people

A. Wilford Woodruff's conversion of the United Brethren. [From *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors*, 1909, pp. 116-19]

B. **Harold B. Lee**: "In one year, 1840 to 1841—one year and fourteen days to be exact—nine members of the twelve were called to labor in the British Mission. If you remember the history [in Nauvoo], those years marked the period of some of the severest persecutions that the Church was to undergo in this dispensation. In that one year and fourteen days the nine members of the twelve, with their associates, established churches in every noted town and city in the kingdom of Great Britain. They baptized between 7000 and 8000 converts. They printed 5000 copies of the Book of Mormon, 3000 hymnbooks, and 50,000 tracts, . . . and [they] emigrated 1000 souls to America." [*Conference Report*, April 1960, p. 108]

4. The Relief Society was organized in Nauvoo

Joseph Smith: "I attended by request, the Female Relief Society, whose object is the relief of the poor, the destitute, the widow and the orphan, and for the exercise of all benevolent purposes. Its organization was completed this day. Mrs. Emma Smith takes the presidential chair; Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Whitney and Sarah M. Cleveland are her counselors; Miss Elvira Cole is treasurer, and our well-known and talented poetess, Miss Eliza R. Snow, secretary. There was a very numerous attendance at the organization of the society, and also at the subsequent meetings, of some of our most intelligent, humane, philanthropic and respectable ladies; and we are well assured from a knowledge of those pure principles of benevolence that flow spontaneously from their humane and philanthropic bosoms, that with the resources they will have at their command, they will fly to the relief of the stranger; they will pour in oil and wine to the wounded heart of the distressed; they will dry up the tears of the orphan and make the widow's heart to rejoice."

[Entry for Thursday, March 24, 1842. *History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 567]

**A PORTION OF THE PROCLAMATION
ISSUED BY THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE TO THE WORLD
ON APRIL 6, 1845**

The proclamation was addressed to the kings of the world, the president of the United States, and the rulers and people of all nations. The Leaders of the Church proclaimed that God had again spoken from the heavens and that the kingdom of God and the holy priesthood had been restored to prepare the way for the Second Coming of the Savior. They also declared:

“We send unto you with authority from on high, and command you all to repent and humble yourselves as little children, before the majesty of the Holy One; and come unto Jesus with a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and be baptized in his name, for the remission of sins . . . , and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles and elders, of this great and last dispensation of mercy to man.

“This Spirit shall bear witness to you, of the truth of our testimony; and shall enlighten your minds, and be in you as the spirit of prophecy and revelation. It shall bring things past to your understanding and remembrance; and shall show you things to come.

“It shall also impart unto you many great and glorious gifts; such as the gift of healing the sick, and of being healed, by the laying on of hands in the name of Jesus; and of expelling Demons; and even seeing visions, and convening with Angels and spirits from the unseen world.

“By the light of this Spirit, received through the ministration of the ordinances—by the power and authority of the Holy Apostleship and Priesthood, you will be enabled to understand, and to be the children of light; and thus be prepared to escape all the things that are coming on the earth, and so stand before the Son of Man.

“We testify that the foregoing doctrine is the doctrine or gospel of Jesus Christ, in its fulness; and that it is the only true, everlasting, and unchangeable gospel; and the only plan revealed on earth whereby man can be saved.” [*Gospel Doctrine Instructor’s Manual*, 1999, pp. 167-168]

In 1975, President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve quoted part of this document in general conference and declared that the Church was once again proclaiming these truths to the world. He said:

“As humble servants of the Lord, we call upon the leaders of nations to humble themselves before God, to seek his inspiration and guidance. We call upon rulers and people alike to repent of their evil ways. Turn unto the Lord, seek his forgiveness, and unite yourselves in humility with his kingdom. There is no other way. If you will do this, your sins will be blotted out, peace will come and remain, and you will become a part of the kingdom of God in preparation for Christ’s second coming. But if you refuse to repent or to accept the testimony of his inspired messengers and unite yourselves with God’s kingdom, then the terrible judgments and calamities promised the wicked will be yours.”

A
DECLARATION

PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE RELIEF SOCIETY

IN THE 1999 GENERAL RELIEF SOCIETY MEETING

“We are beloved spirit daughters of God, and our lives have meaning, purpose, and direction. As a worldwide sisterhood, we are united in our devotion to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Exemplar. We are women of faith, virtue, vision, and charity who:

“Increase our testimonies of Jesus Christ through prayer and scripture study.

“Seek spiritual strength by following the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

“Dedicate ourselves to strengthening marriages, families, and homes.

“Find nobility in motherhood and joy in womanhood.

“Delight in service and good works.

“Love life and learning.

“Stand for truth and righteousness.

“Sustain the priesthood as the authority of God on earth.

“Rejoice in the blessings of the temple, understand our divine destiny, and strive for exaltation.”