

D & C Lesson 18

“ESTABLISH . . . A HOUSE OF GOD”: THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, May 2001

1. Other temples built before this dispensation

A. **King Solomon’s Temple:** The place, on Mt. Moriah, was chosen by God: *2 Sam. 6:12-17; 1 Chron. 21:18-28; 2 Chron. 3:1*. King David made the preparations for the temple, but God commanded that his son Solomon should build it: *1 Chron. 22:1-19; 28:1-21; 29:1-30*. Solomon built the temple, beginning in 1012 B.C., the fourth year of his reign, and finished it in seven years. [“Chronology,” *Bible Dictionary*, p. 636; “Temple of Solomon,” pp. 782-783], *2 Chron. 2-7*. The temple was built after the model of the tabernacle, but twice the size: approx. 60 cubits long [90 feet] by 20 cubits wide [30 feet] by 30 cubits high [45 feet]. The temple was looted several times by enemy kings, and was finally burned to the ground and utterly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, in his second siege of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. **The Temple of Zerubabel:** A more modest version of the temple was rebuilt (520-516 B.C.) by Zerubabel in the days of Ezra [Ezra 2-6] and stood through the Maccabaeian period. **The Temple of Herod:** When Herod took the city in 37 B.C. he decided to rebuild the temple on a lavish scale, and began doing so in 17 B.C. The temple wasn’t finished until A.D. 64. In A.D. 70, on the evening of the anniversary of the destruction of the first temple, the Roman army led by Titus completely destroyed the temple.

B. Book of Mormon Temples:

1. **Nephi’s Temple** [*2 Ne. 5:16*] in the land of Nephi [*2 Ne. 5:8; Al. 22:28*]. The temple was patterned after King Solomon’s Temple [*2 Ne. 5:16*] and they observed the Law of Moses [*2 Ne. 5:10*]. 588-570 B.C.

2. **King Benjamin’s Temple** [*Mos. 2:1-7*] in the land of Zarahemla. They offered burnt sacrifices according to the Law of Moses. [*Mos. 2:3*] About 124 B.C. It was probably this temple where God wrote with His finger on the wall. See *Al. 10:3*.

3. **Other Nephite Temples** are alluded to. See *Al. 10:2; 16:3; Hel. 3:14; 10:8*. 82-20 B.C.

4. **Lamanite Temples** are alluded to [non-Christian]. See *Al. 23:2; 26:29*. 90-77 B.C.

5. The **Bountiful Temple**. People are gathered around this temple when the resurrected Christ appears to them. [*3 Ne. 11:1-17*] A.D. 34.

2. Joseph Smith was a temple builder

A. Five temples were planned, and two built, under his direction: Kirtland, OH; Independence, Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman, MO [not built]; and Nauvoo, IL.

B. It was through Joseph Smith that Malachi’s prophecy of Elijah’s return was fulfilled [*Mal. 4:5-6*]. Elijah appeared to Joseph and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 and restored “the keys of this dispensation” to them. [*D&C 110:13-16*] “*Sealing power:* The power that makes priesthood ordinances valid in heaven. The sealing power makes possible temple marriage, sealings to children and ancestors, eternal families, and temple ordinance work for the dead.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 103]

3. Commandments to build the Kirtland Temple

A. **The Original Commandment:** *D&C 88:119* (December 27, 1832): “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house

of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.” (See verses 119-136)

B. *The Rebuke for Failing to Begin:* *D&C 95:2-3, 11* (June 1:1833): “Ye must needs be chastened and stand rebuked before my face; for ye have sinned against me a very grievous sin, in that ye have not considered the great commandment in all things, that I have give unto you concerning the building of mine house. . . . It is my will that you should build a house. If you keep my commandments you shall power to build it.” Dimensions and layout specified: 55 feet wide, 65 feet long (in the inner court). *Lower part of the inner court:* “for your sacrament offering, and for your preaching, and your fasting, and your praying, and the offering up of your most holy desires unto me, saith your Lord” [v. 16]. *Higher part of the inner court:* “dedicated unto me for the school of mine apostles” [v. 17].

C. *The Promise of a Revealed Design:* *D&C 95:14* (June 1, 1833): “Therefore, let it be built after the manner which I shall show unto three of you, whom ye shall appoint and ordain unto this power.”

D. *The design revealed to the First Presidency:* Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams: “President Williams said they knelt together in prayer, and a model of the building ‘appeared within viewing distance. . . . After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us.’ When the temple was completed, Frederick G. Williams said it looked exactly as it had in the vision. (In *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Lyndon W. Cook [1981], 198.)” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 100]

E. *The temple was built in less than four years and was dedicated on March 27, 1836.*

4. Lessons from comparing Solomon’s Temple and the Kirtland Temple

A. *The designs for both temples were revealed.* To King David (see *1 Chron. 28:12, 19*) and to the First Presidency (see D, above).

B. *The people consecrated their time and means* to build both of the temples. (See *1 Chron. 29:5*, “who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?” and *29:9*, “Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly unto the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.”) The handful of Latter-day Saints gave liberally of their time and ability; the women even donated their dishware to be ground up and added to the exterior finish so the building would shine.

C. *Beautiful dedicatory prayers were offered* for both buildings. (Compare *2 Chron. 6:12-42* and *D&C 109:1-80*. Joseph Smith wrote that “this prayer was given him by revelation.” [Heading, *D&C 109*] The central message of King Solomon’s dedicatory prayer: “Hear thou from the heavens” the prayers offered up in the temple, and offers many situations when the people’s prayers need to be heard. See the outline of Joseph Smith’s prayer at the beginning of the section, p. 222, then read the section carefully, and consider its varied messages carefully.

D. In both dedicatory prayers, ***indication that the LORD had heard and accepted their prayers and had come to dwell in the holy house were requested:*** *2 Chron. 6:18-20, 41-42*; and *D&C 109:11-13, 35-37, 78-80*. The promises mentioned in *D&C 109:11*: (A) *D&C 38:32*: “There will I give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high.” (B) *D&C 95:8*: “you should build a house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high.” (C.) *D&C 105:33*: “it is expedient in me that the first elders of my church should receive their endowment from on high in my house.” [Also vv. 11-12, 18] These promises were fulfilled with the revelations granted April 3, 1836, in *D&C 110*. See *110:9*.

E. *The Lord’s acceptance of each temple is recorded.* *King Solomon’s Temple:* See *2 Chron. 7:1-3* (fire came down from heaven and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple); also *5:13-14*. *The Kirtland Temple:* *D&C 110*, and a series of remarkable manifestations lasting more than three

months. See *History of the Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 309-428. Reading from Crowther, Duane S., *The Prophecies of Joseph Smith*, Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, pp. 260-263.

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