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## Beginning the Nauvoo Temple/Laying the Foundation — Reflections on the Sixth of April

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## Beginning the Nauvoo Temple



While missionary work moved forward in the British Isles, the Saints in Nauvoo focused their attention on their growing city and the building of another temple. On 6 April 1841, the cornerstones for the temple were set in place. Architects, under the direction of the First Presidency, lowered the chief cornerstone at the southeast corner with President Joseph Smith pronouncing the following blessing:

This principal corner stone in representation of the First Presidency, is now duly laid in honor of the Great God; and may it there remain until the whole fabric is completed; and may the same be accomplished speedily; that the Saints may have a place to worship God, and the Son of Man have where to lay His head.<sup>49</sup>

The other three stones were lowered at the southwest, the northwest, and northeast corners with blessings offered by other priesthood brethren after each was set in place. Brigham Young explained why this procedure was followed.

At this side of the equator we commence at the south-east corner. We sometimes look for light, you know, brethren ... You will tell me you go to the east for light? So we commence by laying the stone on the south-east corner, because there is the most light.<sup>50</sup>

As portions of the temple were finished, they were dedicated and used. The baptismal font was dedicated on 8 November 1841. Two weeks later baptisms for the dead were performed there. On 4 May 1842 a few Saints received their endowments in the upper room of Joseph's red brick store. From 1842 to 1844, approximately ninety persons received endowments. The Twelve were given the keys of these temple ordinances with instructions to give the endowment in the temple to those who were worthy once it was completed.

## Laying the Foundation — Reflections on the Sixth of April

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At the point of beginning,  
the scepter, firmly  
thrust into the earth, marks  
the planting of Alpha,  
the primal stone.  
The Prophet pronounces  
the blessing.

Walking westward  
on sun-mirrored path, we  
measure deliberate distances.  
Squarely turning right  
three times, we follow  
an undeviating course  
and return to the place  
where he began.

Here we write Omega  
and shout with joy.  
Counting a corner  
for each chamber  
of a compassed, pure heart,  
we seal level stones  
with charity's mortar  
to finish the sure foundation.

What will we build ...

A faith-framed legacy?  
A city called Zion?  
The first of unnumbered worlds?

*Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I AM, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made; The same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes; I am the same which spake, and the world was made, and all things came by me (D&C 38:1–3).*