

Hard Questions in Church History

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Kirtland Temple Dedication: A Pentecost of the Spirit

The Restoration of Temples

Joseph Smith's restoration followed the biblical pattern of building and dedicating Moses' Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple (Exodus 25:9; 1 Kings 8:21,53), and also the continuation of that foundational tradition in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 5:16). Joseph received revelations which instructed him to build and dedicate temples. As early as Joseph's First Vision, he entered into the presence of the Lord—which makes it a temple experience. The Lord taught Joseph that temples are a place where He can reveal Himself to His people (D&C 109:5, 13, 15, 22, etc.). Elder Neal A. Maxwell added, "Temples' part the curtains to antiquity at the same time they part the curtains to eternity" ("Apostles affirm the Importance of Temples," *Deseret News*, August 26, 1989).

The first revelations that referenced temple work came from Moroni in September 1823 (D&C 2) and then with John the Baptist's visitation to the Prophet Joseph in May 1829: ". . . until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" (D&C 13). Another reference to a temple came with the Law of Consecration when the Lord said: "my covenant people may be gathered in one in that day when I shall come to my temple" (D&C 42:36). The first temple site identified in this dispensation was in Jackson County on July 20, 1831 (D&C 57:3), but it has not been built yet. Kirtland became the first temple built in this dispensation.

Building the Kirtland Temple

The first hint of restoring a temple had its beginning in January 1831 when the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to gather the Saints to Ohio, for there they would be endowed "with power from on high" (D&C 38:32). To receive the endowed power, a temple—"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" needed to be constructed (December 1832; D&C 88:119). Within two weeks, Joseph wrote to W. W. Phelps and said that he interpreted this to mean the Lord wanted them to build a temple in Kirtland (Jessee, *Person Wrights of Joseph Smith*, 263).

One Latter-day Saint suggested the temple be built of logs. "Shall we, brethren, build a house for our God, of logs?" the Prophet Joseph asked. "No," he retorted, "I have a better plan than that. I have a plan of the house of the Lord, given by himself" (Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 230). The Lord's plan for the Kirtland Temple was intricate and multi-faceted in design. The external design was similar to other houses of worship at the time. Plans for the interior design were unique. The interior was to be fifty-five feet wide and sixty-five feet long with a lower and a higher court. The lower court was to be dedicated "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." The higher court was to be dedicated for "the school of mine apostles" (D&C 95:16–17). Within each court, two separate four-tiered pulpits were to accommodate presidencies of the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthoods.

By June 1, 1833, the temple building committee—Hyrum Smith, Reynolds Cahoon and Jared Carter—began clearing the ground and fundraising. Money was a constant challenge, but “notwithstanding the Church was poor and there was not a scraper and hardly a plow that could be found among the Saints,” the followers of Joseph Smith moved forward with the temple Joseph had seen in visioned. On June 5, 1833, “George A. Smith hauled the first load of stone” from the quarry, and Hyrum Smith struck “the first blow upon the house” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:349, 353).

On July 23, 1833, the cornerstone was laid. There were six men at each corner, the First President at the north east corner. George A. Smith recorded the twenty four

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| 1. Joseph Smith Jr. | 9. Samuel H. Smith | 17. Edmund Durfee |
| 2. Sidney Rigdon | 10. Reynolds Cahoon | 18. Harpin Riggs |
| 3. Frederick Williams | 11. Joseph Kingsbury | 19. Sylvester Smith |
| 4. Hyrum Smith, | 12. Joel H. Johnson | 20. Joseph Coe |
| 5. Joseph Smith Sr. | 13. Don Carlos Smith | 21. Jared Carter |
| 6. Newel Whitney | 14. William Smith | 22. Jacob Bump |
| 7. Orson Hyde | 15. Gideon Carter | 23. Levi Hancock |
| 8. John Smith | 16. Solomon Humphrey | 24. David Elliot |

Throughout the summer of 1833 nearly every able-bodied Latter-day Saint had contributed time and labor to construct the temple. Lucy Mack Smith explained the reason: “There was but one main spring to all our thoughts and actions, and that was, the building of the Lord’s house” (*josephsmithpapers.org*, Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, 227).

Elder John A. Widtsoe estimated that the Kirtland Temple was the most expensive building in the nation at that time if we take into account the percent of the Saints’ time and means donated to build it. Men and women donated their time, labor, money and supplies. The saints were willing to make such enormous sacrifices because their hearts were soft, and they hoped to learn more about the kingdom of God. Temple preparation required them to live a form of the Law of Consecration. Various attempts have been made over the years to estimate the dollar cost of the temple and range from \$30,000 to \$100,000 with the actual cost probably reaching a little over \$40,000 (Mark Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith’s Ohio Revelations* [SLC, UT: Kofford Books, 2009], 436). The Lord has counseled the Saints not to go into debt, but for the Kirtland temple, this restriction was lifted (D&C 64:27-30).

One day in every seven days was donated to working on the temple. Every Saturday, farmers used their wagons in Kirtland to haul temple stones. The Prophet Joseph worked in the quarry with the Saints and wrote:

We must have all things prepared and call our solemn assembly as the Lord has commanded us, that we may be able to accomplish his great work: and it must be done in God's own way; the house of the Lord must be prepared, and the solemn assembly called and organized in it according to the order of the house of God (Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002], 110); spelling and punctuation modernized.

On February 22 and 23, 1836 Joseph recorded that devoted women were working on the temple veils—

Monday “. . . This afternoon the sisters meet met to make the veil of the Temple. Father Smith presided over them and gave them much good instruction, closed by singing & prayer . . .”

Tuesday “. . . This afternoon the sisters met again at the chapel to work on the v[e]il . . . I made some remarks from the pulpit upon the rise and progress of the church of Christ of Latter day Saints and pronounced a blessing upon the Sisters for the liberality in giving their servises [sic] so cheerfully to make the veil for the Lord’s house (Smith, History of the Church, 2:399).

However, the multiple accounts of sisters crushing their china to be used in the plaster or in the paint is not documented, although broken pieces of china have been found in the plaster. It is more likely that broken pieces of china were put in a nearby garbage dump and taken from there to add to the paint.

For Joseph, the contribution and sacrifice for the temple was very real. Naturally, he was seeing the great lengths to which his followers were sacrificing for the temple nearly at every level. He too contributed very significantly by being foreman of the quarry, laboring on the walls, and directing 50 men on temple works (Staker, Hearken; 436). For him, the verse in Section 109:5 was personal: “For thou knowest that we have done this work through great tribulation; and out of our poverty we have given our substance to build a house to thy name, that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people.”

For an expert architectural and historical treatment of the Kirtland Temple, and also a detailed time line of the building, see Elwin Robison’s First Mormon Temple, on line at doctrineandcovenantscentral.org and at archive.bookofmormoncentral.org.

Neighbor’s Reactions

The Saint’s neighbors in Ohio were not happy about their growth, nor their building a temple. According to the Apostle George A. Smith, the persecution became so intense that it took three men to guard the temple with guns or other weapons, to every one man working (Truman Madsen, Joseph Smith the Prophet).

The arrival of gathering Latter-day Saints to Ohio also caused other local economic challenges that would be a precursor of difficulties in Missouri and Illinois. The Saints had significant market power and could sway volumes and prices of goods locally. For example, non-Mormons Azariah Lyman and Austin Loud controlled the local sawmill as well as gristmill trade. When the Saints threatened to build their own mills (which they eventually did), Lyman and Loud refused to trade with the Saints. Joseph, according to George A Smith, “on learning the plan of our enemies, got the brethren to put their mites together and sent to Portage county and purchase a supply of wheat at a reasonable price and carried it to a mill...so that our Christian friends not only had the mortification of not starving out the Saints but had when harvest came around a large quantity of grain on hand and no market for it” (Staker, *Hearken*; 428).

Interior

The interior of the temple is unique. There are two floors. The main floor includes two pulpits located at the each end of the main floor. Nine pulpits stand on each end with abbreviated letters on the breastwork:

P.E.Q.	Presidency of Elders Quorum
P.H.P.Q.	Presidency of High Priests Quorum
P.S.Z.	Presidents of Seventy
P.M.P.H.	Presidency of Melchizedek High Priests
P.D.Q.	Presidency of Deacons Quorum
P.T.Q.	Presidency of Teachers Quorum
P.P.Q.	Presidency of Priests Quorum
P. A. P.	Presidency of Aaronic Priesthood

Preparation for an Endowment of Power

On June 22, 1834 the Lord taught the Saints that His purpose of building the temple “unto my name in the land of Kirtland” is for some to receive “their endowment from on high” (D&C 105:33, 12, 18). For over a year the leaders had been speaking of the Lord’s thrice promised “endowment” of power.

On a cold, snowy, November 12, 1835, the Prophet Joseph called the Saints to prepare spiritually to receive the promised “endowment” from God’s power.

The endowment you are so anxious about you cannot comprehend now, nor could Gabriel explain it to the understanding of your dark minds, but strive to be prepared in your hearts: be faithful in all things, that when we meet in the solemn assembly, that is, such as God shall name, out of all the official members, will meet, and we must be clean every whit. Let us be faithful and silent, brethren, and if God gives you a manifestation, keep it to yourselves; be watchful and prayerful and you shall have a prelude of the those joys that God will pour out on that day (josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/95).

Joseph encouraged them to focus on their own growth, not other’s faults.

Do not watch for iniquity in each other, if you do, you will not get an endowment, for God will not bestow it on such; but if we are faithful and live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. I will venture to prophecy that we shall get a blessing that will be worth remembering if we should live as long as John the Revelator; our blessings will be such as we have not realized before, nor in this generation. The order of the house of God, has, and ever will be the same, even after christ [sic] comes. . .

God’s gift will be so important its implications will last through the Lord’s Second Coming. And the endowment will be the same through all generations of time. Furthermore, the promised endowment is key to help disciples overcome all of the adversarial and mortal pit falls.

You need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things, and those that reject your testimony will be damned. The sick will be healed; the lame made to walk; the deaf to hear, and the blind to see through your instrumentality. But let

me tell you that you will not have power, after the endowment to heal those who have not faith.”

After a tangent or two, the prophet returned to the topic of preparing spiritually and made an astounding promise:

I feel disposed to speak a few words more, to you, my brethren, concerning the Endowment. All who are prepared, and are sufficiently pure to abide the presence of the Savior, will see him in the Solemn Assembly. (*josephsmithpapers.org*; "History, 1838–1856, vol B-1 [1 September 1834–2 November 1838]," p. 640).

Missionary Work

Lord’s Spirit also in prepared converts who flocked into the church at this time. One Saint recorded in a letter:

“Now to let you know a few of the thousand great things of God that is passing in this place, there has been no mobs as you have heard. But the work of the Lord is increascing [sic] daily. There has been from one to ten Baptized every day this week, some of the Elders have been out for a few days some have baptized 16 some five &” (Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 360).

Gifts of the Spirit Manifest

During the weeks leading up to the dedication of the temple, the Lord poured out the Spirit. A few days before the dedication Benjamin Brown recorded in a letter:

. . . some have seen the heavens open [sic] & seen the savior others have seen angels on the four corners of the house of the Lord with drawn swords & also stood thick on the ridge Elisha with his chariot of Fire, Peter John & James, & the highway cast up the ten tribes returning in chariots as far as the eye could extend some saw the Redemption [sic] of Zion and other thing to num[ber] . . . Old father Adam was seen Butiful [sic] man his hair stood back & curled most butiful [sic] even down on his shoulders. . . .

First Washings and Anointings

January 21-23, 1836

Portions of the Kirtland Temple were completed sufficiently enough by January 21, 1836 for the Prophet Joseph to introduce the ordinance of “washings and anointings.” The Encyclopedia of Mormonism describes washings and anointing as:

Preparatory or initiatory ordinances in the temple. They signify the cleansing and sanctifying power of Jesus Christ applied to the attributes of the person and to the hallowing of all life. They have biblical precedents (see Oil; Temples through the Ages; Washing and Anointing). Women are set apart to administer the ordinances to women, and men are set apart to administer the ordinances to men. Latter-day Saints look forward to receiving these inspired and inspiring promises with the same fervent anticipation they bring to baptism. They come in the spirit of a scriptural command: “Cleanse your hands and your feet before me” (D&C 88:74; cf. 1 John 2:27) (Allan Claire Rozsa, “Temple Ordinances,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* [NY: Macmillan, 1992], 4:1444).

The Prophet Joseph prepared the attic of the printing office for washings, and then “at early candle-light” the brethren went to the west room of the attic to perform the anointings. Oliver Cowdery recorded in his diary on January 21, 1836:

At about three o’clock P. M. I assembled in our office garret, having all things prepared for the occasion, with presidents Joseph Smith Jr., F. G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, John Whitmer and elder John Corrill, and washed our bodies with pure water before the Lord, preparatory to the anointing [sic] with holy oil. After we were washed, our bodies were perfumed with a sweet smelling oderous [sic] wash . . . Those named in the first room were anointed [sic] with the same kind of oil and in the man[ner] that were Moses and Aaron, and those who stood before the Lord in ancient days, and those in the other rooms with anointing [sic] oil prepared for them. The glorious scene is too great to be described in this book, therefore, I only say, that the heavens were opened to many, and great and marvelous things were shown (Lauritz G. Petersen, “The Kirtland Temple,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 [Fall 1972], 418).

Visions During Washings and Anointings

Those invited to be in the Kirtland Temple on January 21 had prepared themselves spiritually. By so doing, they were blessed with the gifts of the Spirit. Some saw visions, including a vision of the third heaven or Celestial Kingdom. (The three kingdoms of glory had been described four years previously in D&C 76:49-111.)

Joseph Smith Sr. was the first to receive his anointings. Each brother, in order of age, received their anointings. Father Smith, acting in his role as patriarch to the Church, then proceeded to give each of the anointed a blessing. Joseph Smith received a vision—parts of which were recorded as D&C 137.

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld [the] celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother Alvin. . . . Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me saying: All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God (D&C 137:1-5, 7).

The Lord led the Prophet to later expand the doctrine from this vision into vicarious baptismal work for the dead (D&C 137:7).

Other portions of Joseph’s January 21st vision that were not recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants include Joseph seeing the missionary service and labors of the Twelve:

I saw the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who are now upon the earth, who hold the keys of this last ministry, in foreign lands, standing together in a circle, much fatigued, with their clothes tattered and feet swollen, with their eyes cast downward, and Jesus standing in their midst, and they did not behold Him. The Savior looked upon them and wept (History of the Church, 2:381).

In addition to the Prophet, other brethren had visions and saw the Savior in the Kirtland Temple. Some were ministered to by angels; “the house was filled with the glory of God” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:382).

The next night—January 22, 1836—the Twelve and Seventy were anointed and experienced a spiritual outpouring. Some men saw visions of the Savior, the Twelve in the celestial kingdom, and “the redemption of Zion.” Others had angels minister to them, and saw “the house was filled with the glory of God” (ibid.). Individuals saw missionaries serving with angelic protection. The others included the bishopric and high councilors of both Kirtland and Zion. Joseph recorded that he “sealed” each with words that “the Lord put into my heart” (ibid., 3:383). Both nights, the anointings, heavenly visions, and spiritual manifestations lasted until about 2:00 a.m.

Some of the leading elders saw the Savior and the future of the Lord’s kingdom. Even during the “silent watches of the night,” Joseph remembered, “while my eyes were closed in sleep, the visions of the Lord were sweet unto me, and His glory was round about me” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:387).

Over the next two months, several more received their washings and anointings. Brother Benjamin Brown recorded in a letter to his wife:

Elders still continue to come in and wash and anoint for the solmn [sic] assembly which will be called next sunday [sic] for tithin[g] [page torn] & sacrifice with fasting & Prayr [sic] in the house of the Lord fr[page torn] 8 oclock [sic] in the morning until 4 in the afternoon [page torn] known how long the meeting will hold probaly [sic, page torn] we have meetings almost every evening and [page torn] and hold till 9. Many marvelous things [page torn] transpired even greater than at the day of Penti[cost] [page torn]

Later Women Receive Washing and Anointings as Priestesses

It wasn’t until six years later, after the organization of the Relief Society in 1842, that Joseph organized the women as priestess, “to the order of God connected with the priesthood,”—that women received their initiatories (“Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” josephsmithpapers.org). Sometime between May and September 28, 1843, Emma was ready and willing to receive her washings and anointings (Andrew R. Ehat, *A Holy Order—Joseph Smith, The Temple, And The 1844 Church Leadership Succession* [2003], 59).

Joseph first administered these priesthood ordinances to Emma in their home. Afterwards, she administered them to other women in the Relief Society in either her home or the Red Brick Store. Once the temple was finished, it was this select group of initiated Relief Society sisters who became the Nauvoo temple workers administering these ordinances to other worthy and willing women prior to leaving for Nauvoo.

First Dedicatory Session of the Kirtland Temple

Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836

For weeks before and after the Kirtland Temple dedication many Saints experienced “a Pentecost” of the Gifts of the Spirit—including faith, knowledge, revelation, prophecy, visions, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:432).

The saints began gathering two hours early. When the doors opened, nearly a thousand people filled the building for the seven-hour dedication on March 27, 1836. Yet the Prophet Joseph recorded there was “the most quiet demeanor during the whole exercise” (Smith, History of the Church, 2:428). The order of that dedicatory meeting was as follows—

- **7:00 am**—When Joseph arrived two hours early, he saw 500 to 600 Latter-day Saints already gathered outside the temple to wait in the snow for the doors to open.
- **8:00 am**—The doors open; Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdrey, and Sidney Rigdon seat 930 people plus those seated in the pulpit areas; those not able to be seated in the temple have worship services in another building, and returned for another dedication session on Wednesday.
- **9:00 am**— Meeting starts with Sidney Rigdon reading Psalms 24 and 96.
- Choir sings, “Ere Long the Veil Rent in Twain” (nine verses).
- Sidney Rigdon offers opening prayer.
- Choir and congregation sing, “Oh, Happy Souls Who Pray.”
- Sidney Rigdon speaks for 2 ½ hours; his scriptural message Matthew 18:18-20, “Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,” and Matthew 8, “Foxes have holes but the Son of Man . . .”
- Congregation sings “Now Let us Rejoice.”
- Sustaining of officers by Quorum
- Fifteen to twenty minute intermission.
- Congregation sings “Adam-on-di-Ahman.”
- Sustaining of Officers by quorums and by the congregation.
- Congregation sings, “How Pleased and Blessed Was I.”
- Joseph the Prophet stood and read the Dedicatory Prayer (D&C 109) “with his hands raised toward heaven.”
- Congregation sings, “The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning” (seven verses written by W.W. Phelps).
- Dedication of the Kirtland Temple accepted by the Priesthood Quorums and the congregation.
- Partaking of the Lord’s Supper; Don Carlos Smith blessed the bread and wine.
- Testimonies given by Don Carlos Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, and David Whitmer.
- Hyrum Smith thanks the builders of the Kirtland Temple.
- Sidney Rigdon gives closing remarks and offers prayer.
- The Hosanna Shout; uttered on the same day that Christians around the world celebrate Palm Sunday.
- Brigham Young gives a short address in tongues; David W. Patten interprets; David W. Patten speaks in tongues.
- The Prophet Joseph said, “I blessed the congregation in the name of the Lord.”
- 4:00 pm—Dedicatory session ends.

Children at the Dedication

Wanting to assure the continuance of the spiritual manifestations, Joseph said that well-behaved children could sit on laps in the temple suggesting that children who misbehaved were not in the House of the Lord. Sylvia Cutler Webb was one of the children who sat on her mother’s lap:

One of my earliest recollections was the dedication of the [Kirtland] Temple. My father took us up on his lap and told us why we were going and what it meant to dedicate a house to God. And although s[till] very young at that time, I clearly remember the occasion. I can look back through the lapse of years and see as I saw then Joseph the Prophet, standing with his hands raised towards heaven, his face ashy pale, the tears running down his cheeks as he spoke on that memorable day. Almost all seemed to be in tears. The house was so crowded the children were mostly sitting on older people's laps; my sister sat on father's, I on my mother's lap. I can even remember the dresses we wore. My mind was too young at that time to grasp the full significance of it all, but . . . I am very grateful that I was privileged to be there (Church manual, https://archive.org/stream/Primary5/Primary%205_djvu.txt).

Eliza R. Snow recorded an experience from the first dedication, March 27, were nursing mother begged for admittance with her two-month-old. She went to Joseph Smith Sr. "in great distress, saying that she knew no one with whom she could leave her infant; and to be deprived of the privilege of attending the dedication seemed more than she could endure." Father Smith, "told her to take her child, at the same time giving the mother a promise that her babe should make no disturbance; and the promise was verified." Eliza R. Snow add that the baby was silent for eight hours until the congregation offered the hosanna shout, the "babe joined in" (Welch, *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations 1820-1844*, pps. 327-372. Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/stream/womenofmormondom00tull#page/94/mode/2up>.)

Whether the Saints that are raised will remain on earth during the thousand, years, for they lived & reigned with Christ a thousand years Rev 20th 4th Book of Mormon 424th page Cain & his followers²⁴ Old father Adam was seen Butiful man his hair stood back & curled most butiful even down on his shoulders. . . . Sunday Evening after Joseph spoke opened & told them the day of Penticost was continued²⁵ the the [sic] Brethren began to to [sic] prophesy many prophesied in the name of the Lord then began speaking in tongues and it filled as it were the whole house, perhaps there were forty speaking at once Cloven tongues of fire was seen to sit on many of them an hand was seen laid upon one when he spake in tongues to the lamanites many Visions seen, one saw a pillow or cloud rest down upon the house bright as when the sun shines on a cloud like as gold, two others saw three personages hovering in the room with bright keys in their hands, and also a bright chain in their hands the I did not intend this for a letter But this morning while writing Brother Bovee concluded to start for home Sunday March 27th 1836 the order of the House of the Lord . . .

3 Witnesses of the Dedication

- 1) **Brigham Young:** "The Church was too few in numbers . . . and too poor in purse to attempt such a mighty enterprise. . . . Joseph [labored] in the stone quarry, quarrying rock with his own hands, and the few then in the Church, follow[ed] his example of obedience, and diligence, wherever most needed; with laborers on the walls, holding the sword in one hand to protect themselves from the mob, while they placed the stone and moved the trowel with the other" (*Deseret News*, Apr. 16, 1853, 42).
- 2) **Eliza R. Snow:** "The ceremonies of that [Kirtland Temple] dedication may be rehearsed, but no mortal language can describe the heavenly manifestations of that memorable day. Angels appeared to some, while a sense of divine presence was realized by all present, and each heart

was filled with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (In Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom*, [1877], 95).

- 3) **Orson Pratt:** “God was there, his angels were there, the Holy Ghost was in the midst of the people . . . and they were filled from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet with the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and uttered forth prophecies in the midst of that congregation, which have been fulfilling from that day to the present time” (*Deseret News*, Jan. 12, 1876, 788) <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/historic-sites/ohio/kirtland/kirtland-temple?lang=eng>

Doctrine and Covenants, Section 109

The dedicatory prayer is contained in Doctrine and Covenants, section 109. The message of the dedicatory prayer—

D&C 109:1-5 Temple built for Christ to visit—The “Name” of the Lord is repeated 18 times—the temple is a place where we take on us His Name sealed in our foreheads.

D&C 109:6-21 House of prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, order (quotes from D&C 88:118-119).

D&C 109:22-33 Enemies kept away.

D&C 109:34-42 Saints empowered to gather—asks for blessings similar to Pentecost as recorded in the Book of Acts.

D&C 109:43-53 Deliverance for Saints from plagues.

D&C 109:54-58 Prepare other nations; inference that America was the beginning place where the Gospel will go forward; honored the US Constitution.

D&C 109:59-67 Redemption of Israel; Jerusalem “from this hour” began to be redeemed.

D&C 109:68-80 Saints to be crowned with glory, receive exaltation.

As you study D&C 109, look for the great preparation needed before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and troy:

- Why** was section 109 composed?
- What does Joseph **thank** God for?
- What does Joseph **ask** for in this prayer?
- Who** does Joseph pray for in this prayer?
- What typology or **symbolism** is in this prayer?
- Which parts of this prayer quote from section 88?
- What happened** as a result of section 109?

Priesthood Evening Leadership Session

March 27-29, 1836

Benjamin Brown wrote: “the Spirit of the Lord, as on the day of Pentecost, was profusely poured out. . . . We had a most glorious and never-to-be forgotten time” (Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 359).

Notwithstanding the long dedicatory session on March 27, 1836, the Prophet Joseph experienced another spiritual outpouring with 416 priesthood leaders who remained in the temple that evening:

I met the quorums in the evening and instructed them respecting the ordinance of washing of feet, which they were to attend to on Wednesday following; and gave them instructions in relation to the spirit of prophecy, and called upon the congregation to speak, and not to fear to prophesy . . . Do not quench the Spirit, for the first one that opens his mouth shall receive the Spirit of prophecy. Brother George A. Smith arose and began to prophesy: all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place. This continued until the meeting closed at eleven p.m. (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:428).

Joseph believed the endowment of divine power paralleled the Spirit descending on the leaders of the primitive church. He retraced their steps under the same apostolic authority. In addition, the next few evenings included other quorum gatherings and manifestations. On Tuesday night March 29, 1836 Joseph administered another ordinance:

The word of the Lord came to us through Presdt. J. Smith jun that those who had entered the holy place must not leave the house untill morning but send for such things as were necessary, and also, that during our stay we must cleans our feet and partake of the sacrament that we might be made holy before Him, and thereby be qualified to officiate in our calling upon the morrow in washing the feet of the Elders.

Accordingly we proceeded and cleansed our faces and our feet, and then proceeded to wash each others feet—president S. Rigdon first washed presdt J. Smith jun and then in turn was washed by him—after which president Rigdon washed presdt J. Smith Sen. and Hyrum Smith <prsd> J. Smith jun washed presdt F. G. Williams, and then pres. Hyrum Smith washed . . . (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:430; <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1835-1836/190>).

After this they partook of the sacrament and stayed in the temple “all night, prophesying and giving glory to God” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:430).

Second and Third Dedicatory Sessions of the Kirtland Temple

March 30 and 31, 1836

A second dedicatory service was held three days later on March 30th to accommodate those not able to attend the first dedicatory service. At the second service Elders Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten spoke. Again Joseph reported “the Holy Spirit rested down upon us, and we continued in the Lord’s House all night, prophesying and giving glory to God” and—

. . . continued exhorting, prophesying, and speaking in tongues until five o’clock in the morning. The Savior made His appearance to some, while angels ministered to others, and it was a Pentecost and an endowment indeed, long to be remembered, for the sound shall go

forth from this place into all the world, and the occurrences of this day shall be handed down upon the pages of sacred history, to all generations; as the day of Pentecost, so shall this day be numbered and celebrated as a year of jubilee, and time of rejoicing to the Saints of the Most High God (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:432-433).

More expressions of the gifts of the Spirit continued the following day, March 31. The Prophet Joseph summarized: “The Spirit of God rested upon the congregation, and great solemnity prevailed” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2.433). This was especially meaningful in contrast to the uncontrolled behaviors associated with revivals of Joseph’s youth, or earlier Kirtland experience of the Spirit.

Easter Visions recorded in D&C 110

April 3, 1836

On April 3, 1836, one week later, other epochal manifestations were seen in the Kirtland Temple. Joseph wrote, “Attended meeting in the Lord’s House, and assisted the other Presidents of the Church [the First Presidency and quorum presidents] in seating the congregation . . . In the afternoon, I assisted the other Presidents in distributing the Lord’s Supper to the Church, receiving it from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate at the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to my brethren, I retired to the pulpit, the veils being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:434-435).

While in the act of prayer,

The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah.” The Savior said, “I have accepted this house. . . . And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people (D&C 110:7, 10).

When that vision closed, the heavens again opened. Moses appeared and committed unto Joseph and Oliver “the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.” Next came Elias, who bestowed the keys of “the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham,” which is the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant (see D&C 110:12; Abraham 2:9–11). And then “another great and glorious vision” was opened—Elijah appeared and bestowed priesthood keys to turn “the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers” (D&C 110:13, 15).

Elijah and Passover

Equally as momentous, the visions included a bestowal of further priesthood keys by Moses, Elias, and Elijah. This vision held additional significance as it fell on the second day of the week long Passover and Unleaven Bread holy days—as the Jews opened their doors to figuratively welcome in the prophet Elijah, he came to the temple—thus fulfilling Malachi’s prophecy: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Malachi 4:5).

In Joseph's lifetime, no week before or after, compares to this sustained climatic deluge of the gifts of the Spirit.

The Pentecost Continued

The glorious time of spiritual outpouring did not stop for weeks. Benjamin Brown wrote to his wife Sarah (original spelling):

April 29th an angels was seen over the Elders Many Propesys given & speaking in tongues, this 29th of March two corums continued all night in the House the twelve guarded it the Heavens was opened two saw the savior some saw chariots and other thing one lay about half an hour & saw from Eternity to Eternity many Miracilous Experiences told Many Visions told (Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 363).

Six Contemporary Accounts from the Dedication of the Kirtland Temple

With six eyewitness accounts, the remarkable endowment with divine power that occurred during the dedication of the Kirtland Temple ranks as one of the best documented key events in the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith's prophetic administration.

These accounts are:

1. A letter from Benjamin Brown to his wife (March 27, 1836);
2. Oliver Cowdery's Sketch Book (entry for March 27);
3. Oliver Cowdery's report in *Messenger and Advocate* (March 27);
4. Edward Partridge, *Diary* (1836);
5. William W. Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps (April 1-3);
6. Stephen Post, *Papers* (March 27-31); and
7. Joseph Smith's *Journal* (March 27-April 3).

The full text of all of these can be conveniently found in John Welch, *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations 1820-1844*, pp. 327-372, with a comparative chart on p. 332. Strongly reported events include the Hosannah shout, Frederick Williams's vision of the Savior, visions, gifts of prophesy and tongues, washing of feet, the vision of Jesus Christ and reception of priesthood keys from ministering angels. Here's a link: <https://byustudies.byu.edu/product/opening-the-heavens-accounts-of-divine-manifestations-1820-1844-second-edition/>

Legal Aftermath in Kirtland

Difficult days followed the temple dedication and the heavenly manifestations. A mob element combined with religious dissenters could not be kept at bay. By 1838, Latter-day Saints were forced to abandon the Kirtland Temple. The Kirtland Temple is owned by the Community of Christ, formerly known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. For the long and protracted legal complications that led to Grandison Newell's fraudulently obtaining title to the Kirtland Temple, and ultimately the sale of the land and building to the RLDS Church, see Jeffery N. Walker, "The Kirtland Safety Society and the Fraud of Grandison Newell," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2015): 32-148, esp. 98-139; <https://byustudies.byu.edu/article/the-kirtland-safety-society-and-the-fraud-of-grandison-newell-a-legal-examination/>

The Life of Joseph Smith and the Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts

The Prophet Joseph Smith surprised the world when he purported to reopen Christian canon. In addition to the Bible, he claimed that his personal revelations would become new scripture. He maintained that the Book of Mormon (1830) and Doctrine and Covenants (1836) came through the spiritual gift of inspiration, and as such were canonized as additional testaments for his supporters.

From the age of fourteen, he claimed to receive divine revelations through light-filled clear visions and inspired verbal directions. Unlike the majority of antebellum Christians, he placed the Holy Spirit in the Godhead of three ontologically separate personages and abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity. He referred to himself as a prophet using the biblical definition of one who depended on revelation from the Spirit of God for his teachings, received God's authority, and spoke for God. His novel perspective of eternal human spirits included a pre-mortal and post-mortal life that identified angels as glorified people who had lived or would live on the earth. In these ways he differed from most of the religious leaders of his day.

Sources:

John Welch, *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations 1820-1844*. Elwin Robison, *The First Mormon Temple* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 1997).