

## Hard Questions in Church History

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### Nauvoo Temple Endowment and Anointed Quorum

#### Questions to Consider:

- Is the Temple a Secret Society?
- Did Joseph Smith copy the Masonic Ritual?

#### Timeline

<b>1841</b>		
	Jan 19,	<b>D&amp;C 124:22-24, 56-82</b> —Lord commands building of Nauvoo Temple
	Nov 8,	Joseph Smith dedicates wooden baptismal font; 1,375 British Saints relocate to Nauvoo
<b>1842</b>		An additional 1,614 British Saints arrive in Nauvoo; Joseph marries eight more plural wives, plural marriage is taught privately to individual apostles
	Jan 5,	Joseph opens his Red Brick Store in Nauvoo; waits on customers
	Jan 15,	First Presidency issues proclamation to “All Saints scattered abroad” to gather to Nauvoo.
	Feb	Joseph resumes work on the Egyptian scrolls and Book of Abraham
	Mar 1,	The <i>Times and Seasons</i> publishes Joseph’s letter to John Wentworth, editor and proprietor of the <i>Chicago Democrat</i> . The letter included Joseph Smith’s History, the Articles of Faith, and the Book of Abraham chapters 1-5.
	Mar 15,	Joseph becomes a member of the Free Masons in Nauvoo; Joseph becomes editor of the <i>Times and Seasons</i> newspaper in Nauvoo
	Mar 17,	Joseph organizes The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo; his wife Emma is president
	Mar 20,	Joseph preaches sermon on the Salvation of Children
	Apr 19,	Joseph encouraged the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo to exercise gifts of the Spirit-healing
	May 4,	Endowment given in the Red Brick Store in Nauvoo
	May 6,	Former Governor Lilburn W. Boggs is shot by an unknown assailant
	May 19,	Joseph is elected Mayor of Nauvoo
	June	An Anti-Mormon political committee is formed in Warsaw, Illinois
	Aug 8,	Orin Porter Rockwell is arrested for complicity in the attempted assassination of Lilburn W. Boggs; Joseph Smith goes into hiding
	Sept	<b>D&amp;C 128</b> —Joseph writes more information on the ordinance of Baptisms for the Dead
	Dec 26,	Joseph stands trial in Springfield, Illinois
<b>1843</b>		
	Jan 5,	Joseph is acquitted of all charges in trial before Judge Nathaniel Pope in Springfield, Illinois
	Feb 9,	<b>D&amp;C 129</b> —Joseph’s instruction on identifying and distinguishing angels of God or the devil
	May 28,	Sun., Joseph and Emma sealed for time and all eternity—as well as James and Harriet Adams
	Apr 2,	<b>D&amp;C 130</b> —Joseph’s teachings on how to prepare to meet God
	Jul 12,	<b>D&amp;C 132</b> —Hyrum asks Joseph to record the revelation on celestial & plural marriage
	Late Sep	Emma receives her initiatory and endowment from Joseph in the Mansion House
	Sept 28,	The Holy Anointed Quorum met at 7:00 pm, when Joseph and Emma received the “Highest and Holiest Order of the Priesthood” (Ehat, <i>Holy Order</i> , 59)

#### Nauvoo

By 1842 Church membership had reached over 23,000 and the swamplands near the Mississippi had been turned into a beautiful city—Nauvoo. There were more than a thousand log cabins and a hundred or so framed or brick homes. Inhabitants lived in four political divisions called “wards.” Sabbath meetings were held as families gathered in homes or when the weather permitted, in a grove near the rising walls of the Nauvoo Temple. When the Saints gathered in the groves, the Prophet Joseph invited his brother Hyrum

or another Church leader to address them. But, more often than not, he was the speaker at the Sabbath meetings. Joseph rarely let weather detour a meeting. He preached in rain and in temperatures from freezing cold to blistering hot. One sermon began with this plea:

I have three requests to make of the congregation: The first is, that all who have faith will exercise it and pray the Lord to calm the wind; for as it blows now, I cannot speak long without seriously injuring my health; the next is that I may have your prayers that the Lord will strengthen my lungs, so that I may be able to make you all hear; and the third is, that you will pray for the **Holy Ghost** to rest upon me, so as to enable me to declare those things that are true (Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:339).

More and more his sermons focused on preparing the Saints for their temple ordinances.

### Preparatory Teachings proceeding the Endowment

The Prophet Joseph prepared the Latter-day Saints to receive an endowment from on High over a dozen years.

- 1829—Translation of 3 Nephi 11-14, the Sermon at the Temple (Jesus’s covenant text in Bountiful which contains parallels to our modern Endowment)
- 1830—Translation of Genesis, known as the Book of Moses
- 1831—The Law of Consecration introduced in Kirtland, later taught in Missouri and Nauvoo (D&C 42)
- 1832—D&C 76:49-111 discusses the three heavenly Kingdoms of Glory— telestial, terrestrial, celestial
- 1832/1833—D&C 88:17-31, 36-41,62-80, 116-141—Obedience to celestial laws presented
- 1830s—Joseph receives a revelation on exaltation through sealing of eternal marriages (D&C 132:5-26)
- January 21, 1836—Joseph receives a vision teaching the principles of salvation for the dead (D&C 137)
- Translation of the Book of Abraham—including Facsimile #2 with the “key words of the priesthood”
- August 15, 1840—Joseph preaches on Baptism for the Dead at the Seymour Brunson funeral
- January 19, 1841—Joseph receives revelation commanding him to build the Nauvoo Temple (D&C 124)
- 1841-1842—Joseph preaches sermons that prepare Latter-day Saints to make temple covenants and to become exalted heirs through Christ (See JosephSmithPapers.org; Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourse of the Prophet Joseph* [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980], 246-247, 366-368, 382)

### May 4-5, 1842—First Endowments in Red Brick Store

On May 3, 1842 Joseph and a few of the brethren (Lucius N. Scovil, Shadrach Roundy, Noah Rogers, Dimick B. Huntington, Daniel Carns, and perhaps Hosea Stout), prepared the upper story of the Red Brick Store for the endowment ceremony. The men helped Joseph divide the larger room with hanging rugs. He then decorated the room with plants and a newly painted mural depicting the Garden of Eden. He prepared his small office and another small room for the ordinances of washing and anointing.

When the rooms were prepared, those five or six men were dismissed and Joseph invited nine leaders—members of the first presidency, three apostles, two bishops, Nauvoo’s Stake President, a President of Nauvoo’s High Priest quorum, and a branch president. These men became the first group to receive the endowment from Joseph and the first initiated into the *Holy Quorum*.

1. Patriarch Hyrum Smith
2. Wm Law (name lined out)
3. Pres. Brigham Young
4. Elder Heber C. Kimball
5. Elder Willard Richards
6. Wm Marks (name lined out)
7. Bishop Newel K. Whitney
8. Bishop George Miller
9. General James Adams

These men came to the upper story of his Red Brick Store to receive an endowment from God. Although only men were invited to attend the first endowment ceremony, Joseph administered the ordinance to women after Emma was prepared. By way of a brief explanation, the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* describes the ordinances of—

“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. 1John 2:27)” (Allen Claire Rozsa, “Temple Ordinances,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* [NY: MacMillan, 1992], 3:1444).

Initially these ordinances were not given symbolically but included fully washing and anointing.

### ***Remembering Back to the Kirtland Temple Washings and Anointings***

On May 4, 1842, only two of the men present at the Red Brick Store had received their washings and anointings in the Kirtland Temple (January 21, 1836), Hyrum and Joseph Smith. The rest needed these initiatory ordinance:

[We] 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 annointed [*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” (*BYU Studies*, 12, [1971-72]), 418).

The same time Joseph introduced the Kirtland initiatories, January 21, 1836, he received a revelation in the temple: “all who had died without a knowledge of the gospel, but who would have accepted it if given an opportunity, were heirs of that kingdom” (D&C 137:7-8).

### ***Nauvoo Endowment***

Elder Heber C. Kimball, who was one of the brethren to receive his endowment on May 4, 1842, wrote to Elder Parley P. Pratt: “some precious things through the Prophet on the priesthood that would cause your soul to rejoice.” He added, “I cannot give them to you on paper for they are not to be written” (Letter of Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, June 17, 1842. Heber C. Kimball Papers, Church History Library).

Over the next two years (1843-1844), there were dozens of faithful Latter-day Saints who received the endowment. They met together as the Quorum of the Anointed. After Joseph’s death, under the direction of Brigham Young these members of that quorum served as ordinance workers in the Nauvoo Temple from December 10, 1845 until early February 1846 (See Church Educational System, *Church History in the Fullness of Times* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993], p. 303).

Joseph’s journal included:

*Wednesday, 4.*—I spent the day in the upper part of the store, . . . in council with [lists nine men] instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchisedek [*sic*] Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim [*sic*] in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days.

Later, Bishop Miller recorded, “Joseph washed and anointed [us] as Kings and Priests to God, and over the House of Israel, . . . [because] he was commanded of God, . . . and conferred on us Patriarchal Priesthood” (Ehat, *A Holy Order*, 28).

However, Joseph did not move ahead to add more to this quorum or further ordinances until the women were present. He wanted to wait for Emma to be ready to receive her initiatories and endowment before the wives of the other nine men could be sealed. It turned out to be over a year (Ehat, *A Holy Order*, 38). During that year the quorum met in prayer circles. The quorum was referred to by different names—Anointed Quorum, the Quorum, the council, or the Holy Order ([josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)).

### ***Nauvoo Endowment vs. Freemasonry***

The Gospel Topic Essay provides an excellent source for information on Freemasonry and the Nauvoo Endowment. In the essay we learn that Masonry is a fraternal organization that grew out of centuries-old European trade guilds. Freemasons (or Masons) meet in lodges, where they ritually reenact a story based on the brief biblical account of a stone mason named Hiram, whom Solomon commissioned to work on the temple in Jerusalem. During the reenactment, Masons advance by degrees. In Masonic rituals, Masons commit to be worthy of trust and to be loyal to their Masonic brothers. Masonic ceremonies promote self-improvement, brotherhood, charity, and fidelity to truth for the purpose of making better men, who in turn make a better society.

Heber C. Kimball and Hyrum Smith joined Masonic lodges in the 1820s. In December 1841 eighteen Latter-day Saint Masons organized a lodge in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith applied for membership the following day. On March 15, 1842, Illinois Grand Master Mason Abraham Jonas granted a dispensation for the organization of the Nauvoo Lodge, installed its officers, and initiated Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to

the degree of “Entered Apprentice.” The next day, Jonas passed Joseph and Sidney as “Fellow Craft” and raised them as “Master Masons.” Joseph was given this honor as a local leader, without the normal rise in the fraternity.

Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo who experienced the Masonic rites and the endowment acknowledged similarities in elements of the two ceremonies. Yet they testified that the endowment was the result of revelation. Willard Richards taught that the introduction of the endowment in Nauvoo was “governed by the principle of Revelation.” During temple ordinances, men and women covenant with God to obey His laws for the purpose of gaining exaltation through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The endowment ceremony that Joseph restored teaches disciples how to return to live with God. Restored temples provide a *templum* or template of the heavenly temple where God dwells.

The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* numerates the close similarities of the Temple Endowment to the Egyptian pyramid texts, Egyptian Book of the Dead, and to a lesser degree some the Masonic practices:

The philosophy and major tenets of Freemasonry are not fundamentally incompatible with the teaching, theology, and doctrines of the Latter-day Saints. Both emphasize morality, sacrifice, consecration, and service, and both condemn selfishness, sin, and greed. Furthermore, the aim of Masonic ritual is to instruct-to make truth available so that man can follow it.

Resemblances between the two rituals are limited to a small proportion of actions and words; indeed, some find that the LDS Endowment has more similarities with the Pyramid texts and the Coptic documents than with Freemasonry. Even where the two rituals share symbolism, the fabric of meanings is different. In addition to creation and life themes, one similarity is that both call for the participants to make covenants. Yet, the Endowment alone ties covenants to eternal blessings and to Jesus Christ. The Masonic ceremony does not emphasize priesthood or the need to be commissioned by God to represent him.

For more see Kenneth Godfrey’s article, “Freemasonry and the Temple” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, or [https://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Freemasonry\\_and\\_the\\_Temple](https://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Freemasonry_and_the_Temple)

### Preparing for Female Temple Blessings — Waiting for Emma

Joseph wanted Emma to be the first female to receive her priesthood garment, initiatories, and endowment. Because of the nature of the washing was not symbolic at that time, Emma was the only one that Joseph could administer it to. He wanted Emma to act as the first priestess to administer the ordinances to the other women. “The elect lady,” had to be willing to make the temple covenants though.

It became difficult because of Emma was not willing to obey all the Lord’s commandments. In particular, she rejected part of the revelation on plural marriage (D&C 132:58-66). Joseph did not want to push her into making temple covenants that she was not ready to make. So he waited sixteen months until she was ready.

In the late spring of 1843, Emma consented to Joseph practicing plural marriage and chose two sisters who had been helping her in their home—Emily and Eliza Partridge to join the family. Her choice was inspired as Joseph and the two sisters had also received independent personal revelation that they were to enter into a spousal sealing as plural wives of Joseph. The two ladies had actually been sealed to Joseph a few weeks before (March 4), but it appears Emma did not know. Emma acted as a witness in the sealing.

Yet Emma’s emotions understandably vacillated, and her support was not consistent. Shortly after the sealing, Emma had the Partridge sisters leave her house and asked Joseph to divorce them. In May 1843 Emma also invited two other sisters to move in as plural wives—Sarah and Maria Lawrence (Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents in the life of a Mormon girl,” undated, Ms 5220, 186–186b; see also *Saints*, chp 41). Joseph tried to work through Emma’s needs by making sure she had property deeded to her and means to care for their children in Joseph’s absence. By September, Emma was ready to make her temple covenants.

### Sept 1843—Top Rooms of the Mansion House Dedicated for Emma’s Temple Ordinances

The day arrived for Emma, the first woman to receive higher ordinances in late September 1843. Sometime before the 28<sup>th</sup>, Joseph dedicated part of the top floor of the Mansion House as a holy place to administer the washings and anointings to her. On or before that day Joseph administered Emma’s initiatories and endowment. On September 28, at 7:00 pm, the Holy Quorum met with Emma as the first woman to join the Holy Quorum.

Over the next three days, Emma acted as a priestess and administered the initiatory ordinances to the wives of the other nine men in the Holy Quorum. The prophet made certain that the first ordinances were administered the same for both women and men. Emma administered the ordinances of washings and anointings to the wives of the other nine men in the Holy Quorum. There were also fourteen other couples who received them that year under the prophet’s direction. However, all was not “happily ever after,” and Emma still struggled with plural marriage from time to time. Joseph did not enter into any more plural marriages after that fall.

### Sealings in the Holy Quorum

By the end of the summer 1843, we have a list of nine couples, whom Joseph sealed for eternity as members of the Holy Quorum. (Three of the original nine men did not receive their sealings though, as by 1844 they apostatized.)

1. Heber C and Vilate Kimball
2. John and Leonora Taylor
3. Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney
4. James and Harriett Adams
5. Hyrum and Jerusha (deceased), and Mary Fielding Smith
6. Brigham and Miriam Works (deceased) and Mary Ann Young
7. Mercy Rachel Fielding sealed to deceased Robert B. Thomson
8. Willard and Jennetta Richards
9. Joseph and Emma Smith (in May)

The Prophet Joseph preformed the ordinance for more up until his martyrdom, and the Brigham continued the work.

### September 28, 1843—Holy Quorum and the Highest Ordinances

Andrew Ehat detailed research shows that there was an additional ordinance which sealed Joseph and Emma, similar to what the Apostle Peter’s describes as one’s calling and election (2 Peter 1:10). Andrew Ehat explained:

On that day [Sept 28, 1843] two meetings of the Quorum were held. At the morning meeting, John Taylor, John M. Bernhisel, Lucien Woodworth, John Smith, and Amasa Lyman received their washings and anointings from under the hands of Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney and George Miller. These five men were the first male initiates into the Quorum since its May 1842 organization. After their initiatory ordinances, Joseph in the upper room of the Brick Store conducted them through the remainder of the endowment. That evening all the above men, plus Emma Smith, Willard Richards, William Law and William Marks met in the front upper room of the Mansion House at 7 p.m. First, Joseph was "by common consent, and unanimous voice chosen president of the quorum." His appointment to be head of the Quorum, while voted upon, was, as he said, by command of God. The Prophet led the group in the true order of prayer, after which, Hyrum Smith and William Marks at his dictation "anointed and ord(n) [Joseph] to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood," viz., a king and priest unto God. After this, Emma was anointed and ordained a queen and priestess unto her husband. In many respects this meeting was a formal reconstitution of Joseph's Prayer Circle (Ehat, *A Holy Order*, 61).

From this point, the Holy Quorum represented those introduced to the highest ordinances of exaltation. Elijah had given Joseph the keys for the sealing power on April 3, 1836, a week after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Now, on September 28, 1843 Joseph received this sealing and conferred them through an ordinance of the Gospel to others. Ehat observes, "In many ways 28 September 1843 must have been one of the greatest of Joseph Smith's life. He had seen the inauguration of the highest ordinances that it was possible for any man or woman to receive in mortality" (ibid, 61). He and Emma were promised eternal life that day.

By the end of the year, December 1843, there were sixty-five saints—36 men, 29 women—who had received their temple ordinances. Twenty-four of whom were couples. The short hand notes were written probably in 1844 by Newel K. Whitney (ibid, 76):

[1] John Smith & wife 2	[13] O. Spencer & do 2	[21] C.P. Lott & W 2
[2] Hyrum Smith & do 2	O. Pratt 1	L. Richards 1
Mercy R. Thompson 1	P. P. Pratt 1 [& w 2]	[22] W. W. Phelps & W 2
[3] W. Woodruff & Wife 2	[14] W. Richards & wife 2	S. H. Smith 1
[4] G. A. Smith & W 2	J.M. Bernhisel 1	[23] Isaac Morley & W 2
[5] N. K. Whitney & do 2	[15] L. Woodworth & wife 2	Agness Smith 1
[6] R. Cahoon & do 2	[16] W. Law & wife 2	[24] Jos. Young & W 2
[7] A. Cutler & do 2	Sis Durfee I	W. Clayton 1
[8] Jno Taylor & do 2	Mother Smith 1	J. P. Green 1
[9] O. Hyde & do 2	[17] Geo. Miller & W 2	S. Rigdon 1
[10] James Adams & do 2	[18] Jos. Smith & W 2	Wm. Smith 1
[11] H.C. Kimball & do 2	[19] Wm. Marks & W 2	Almon Babbit
[12] B. Young & do 2 1	[20] Jos. Fielding & W 2	Louisa Beaman 1

S. A. Whitney 1	Jn Page & w 2	Mrs Lyon 1
Lucy Decker	Jo C Kingsbury 1	Mrs Dirken (?)
Eliza R. Snow 1	[unreadable name]	Mrs Noble (?)
Olive Frost 1	Mrs [unreadable]	

### Prayer Circles—December 1843

One of the members of the Relief Society, Bathsheba W. Smith (wife of apostle George A. Smith), recalled:

Once when speaking in one of our general fast meetings, [Joseph Smith] said that we did not know how to pray to have our prayers answered. But when I and my husband had our endowments in [December, 1843], Joseph Smith presiding, he taught us the order of prayer. [He also] showed us . . . how to detect them when true or false angels come to us. Joseph Smith publicly explained to the Saints that in the endowment they would be taught essential teachings on prayer and on angelic ministrations (Ehat, *A Holy Order*, 33-34).

In 1914 the Apostle James E. Talmage wrote:

In the sacred endowments associated with the ordinances pertaining to the House of the Lord, woman shares with man the blessings of the Priesthood. When the frailties and imperfections of mortality are left behind, in the glorified state of the blessed hereafter, husband and wife will administer in their respective stations, seeing and understanding alike, and cooperating to the full in the government of their family kingdom. Then shall woman be recompensed in rich measure for all the injustice that womanhood has endured in mortality. Then shall woman reign by Divine right, a queen in the resplendent realm of her glorified state, even as exalted man shall stand, priest and king unto the Most High God. Mortal eye cannot see nor mind comprehend the beauty, glory, and majesty of a righteous woman made perfect in the celestial kingdom of God (James E. Talmage, “The Eternity of Sex,” *Young Woman’s Journal* 25 [October 1914]: 602–3).

### Further Sources:

JosephSmithPapers.org; Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourse of the Prophet Joseph* [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980], 246-247, 366-368, 382). Daniel H. Ludlow, ed. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* Allen Claire Rozsa, “Temple Ordinances,” [NY: MacMillan, 1992], 3:1444). James E. Talmage, “The Eternity of Sex,” *Young Woman’s Journal* 25 (October 1914). Andrew F. Ehat, *The Holy Order*, Unpublished. Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos* (1992). Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (2005). Hugh Nibley, *One Eternal Round* (2010). John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (1999). John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (London: Ashgate, 2009). See also the Interpreter Foundation’s series on The Temple on Mount Zion.