

Lesson 44: D&C 124, “A House Unto My Name”

Overview

Because of Extermination Order issued by Governor Boggs and the resulting murders and persecutions performed by the State sanctioned mob/militia, Joseph Smith admonishes all Saints in outlying areas to move to Far West for protection. The residence of Far West barricaded the city with wagons and timber.

By 31 October, 1838 about 2,000 mob/militia forces had gathered just South of Far West. The mob/militia ask for peace talks but it was just a ruse to take Church leaders captive. With the Church leaders taken captive under the ruse of peace talks, the mob moved on Far West and did what mobs do....

On November 6th anti-Mormon militia general John Clark arrived at Far West, took control of the mob, told the Saints that they didn't have to leave the State in the middle of winter and said:

“For this lenity you are indebted to my clemency. I do not say that you shall go now, but you must not think of staying here another season, or of putting in crops.... As for your leaders, do not once think— do not imagine for a moment— do not let it enter your mind that they will be delivered, or that you will see their faces again, for their fate is fixed—their die is cast—their doom is sealed.” (HC 3:203)

Brigham Young was the ranking member of the quorum of the Twelve in Far West. He created the Committee on Removal to facilitate the exodus. Throughout the winter and spring this committee arranged to feed, clothe, and transport the poor. By formal resolution nearly four hundred Latter-day Saints covenanted to place all of their available property at the disposal of the committee

For the purpose of providing means for the removing from this state of the poor and destitute who shall be considered worthy, till there shall not be one left who desires to remove from the state. (HC, 3:251)

Brigham Young found that they would be welcome in Illinois. So in the middle of winter the saints made their way to Quincy.

Benevolent residents in Quincy, a community of twelve hundred, were generous and sympathetic to the plight of the exiles. Many of them opened their homes and provided jobs. They collected money, food, clothing, and other necessities on more than one occasion. The Democratic Association of Quincy was particularly instrumental in assisting the Saints. It convened three times during the week of 25 February to consider ways of helping the homeless exiles. Sidney Rigdon was invited to report on the condition of the Saints; collections were taken up, and resolutions were passed condemning Missouri's treatment of the Mormons. (Church History in the Fulness of Times - Student Manual Religion

341 Through 343, pg. 213)

By April, 1839 when Joseph Smith arrived in Illinois about 12,000 saints had immigrated to Quincy and neighboring communities. Two days after he arrived he went to check out some swamp land that included the small town of that the leaders were considering buying.

J. Smith renamed it Nauvoo the meaning of which he said, "signifies a beautiful situation, or place, carrying with it, also, the idea of rest." In an open letter in July he ask the saints to begin migrating.

(Church History in the Fulness of Times - Student Manual Religion 341 Through 343, pg. 193-215)

Attempt to Build Temples in Missouri

The Saints were unsuccessful in building the temples in Jackson Co. and Far West Missouri although the sites were dedicated and cornerstones were laid. The Lord acknowledges the effort of the Saints to accomplish this work

D&C 124:49-53

49 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

50 And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God.

51 Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.

52 And I will answer judgment, wrath, and indignation, wailing, and anguish, and gnashing of teeth upon their heads, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord your God.

53 And this I make an example unto you, for your consolation concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work and have been hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by oppression, saith the Lord your God.

What did the Lord say to comfort those who had done all they could to be obedient?

(I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name

I make an example unto you, for your consolation concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work and have been hindered by the hands of

their enemies)

Charles W. Penrose

“The people were to build the house at [Jackson county] in that generation.... But their enemies came upon them and prevented them from doing that which the Lord commanded them, and therefore the Lord accepted their offering. The Lord lays down there a principle which it is well for us to understand. The Lord says that whenever he gives a commandment, no matter what it is about, to the children of men, and they go to with their might and endeavor to fulfil his commandment, and do that which is required of them, and they are prevented by their enemies, or by any other means, from accomplishing it, he does not require it any more at their hands. He accepts of their offering." (CR, April 1924)

Along this same theme Neal A. Maxwell said the following

Neal A. Maxwell

“Some of us who would not chastise a neighbor for his frailties have a field day with our own. Some of us stand before no more harsh a judge than ourselves, a judge who stubbornly refuses to admit much happy evidence and who cares nothing for due process. Fortunately, the Lord loves us more than we love ourselves....

“Yes, brothers and sisters, this is a gospel of grand expectations, but God’s grace is sufficient for each of us. Discouragement is not the absence of adequacy but the absence of courage, and our personal progress should be yet another way we witness to the wonder of it all!” (CR, Oct. 1976)

Baptisms For the Dead

The Lord explains His requirements for accepting the sacred ordinance of baptisms for the dead

D&C124:29-31,36

29 For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—

30 For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me.

31 But I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me; and I grant unto you a sufficient time to build a house unto me; and during this time your baptisms shall be acceptable unto me.

36 For it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead.

Where does the Lord command us to perform the sacred ordinance of baptisms

of the dead?

(For this ordinance belongeth to my house those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead.)

When does the Lord make exceptions to baptisms for the dead being performed in a the temple?

(belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty)

The Saints were very anxious to begin this work and were allowed to start before the Nauvoo temple was ready

Jane Neyman asked Harvey Olmstead to baptize her in the Mississippi River in behalf of her deceased son, Cyrus. Joseph Smith asked what words were used in performing the ordinance, and then he approved what had taken place. In the ensuing weeks, several more baptisms for the dead were performed in the river or in nearby streams. On 19 January 1841, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple with a baptismal font for these vicarious ordinances. (Church History in the Fulness of Times - Student Manual Religion 341 Through 343, pg. 251)

The Nauvoo temple was build and dedicated in phases. The first phase to be dedicated was the area with the baptismal font

Nauvoo Temple

The Saints are commanded to build a temple in Nauvoo

D&C124:26-28,34

26 And send ye swift messengers, yea, chosen messengers, and say unto them: Come ye, with all your gold, and your silver, and your precious stones, and with all your antiquities; and with all who have knowledge of antiquities, that will come, may come, and bring the box tree, and the fir tree, and the pine tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth;

27 And with iron, with copper, and with brass, and with zinc, and with all your precious things of the earth; and build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein.

28 For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.

34 For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory.

First, why do you think it's important to the Lord that we build temples using the most precious materials and highest quality workmanship?

Follow the example and commandments of building temples in Old Testament times
Commitment, sacrifice, faith, creates a sense wonder and awe

“there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again... even the fulness of the priesthood”

All the keys of the priesthood had been restored. What was still needed to be restored in order to have the “fulness of the priesthood”?

When they build the Kirtland temple there was a place where Elija could come and restore the sealing powers. It was just the assembly hall part of the temple. It was not designed to for endowments or work for the dead, principles that, apparently, weren't revealed at that time.

Parley P. Pratt describes the principles that he learned from Joseph Smith during the Nauvoo period – Principles about eternal families that are a basic part of the gospel

Parley P. Pratt

“It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter. It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore. ... I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this grovelling sphere and expand it as the ocean. ... In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also.”
(Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, pg. 297–98)

These eternal blessing can only be bestowed in temple.

Theodore M. Burton

"In order to obtain a fullness of the priesthood of God, we must have temples wherein those sacred ordinances of the priesthood can be revealed to people who are willing and worthy to receive them.... This temple was constructed at Nauvoo, Illinois, and dedicated to the Lord. It was used by the saints, therein to receive these sacred ordinances which were mentioned in the revelation." (CR, Oct. 1967)

Adney Y. Komatsu,
"In this revelation, which is recorded in section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants, reference is made to 'the fulness of the priesthood.'... It is clear, then, that unless we go to the temple of the Lord and receive all the ordinances and obey the commandments, we cannot receive a fulness of priesthood blessings and neither can we receive exaltation. These are wonderful blessings that have been made available to us through temple work." (CR, Oct. 1983)

He tells us why Moses had a temple, and why it is especially important to us

D&C124:38,40-42

38 For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

40 And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

41 For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.

42 And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house, and the priesthood thereof, and the place whereon it shall be built.

What will he reveal in His temples?

(that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people
I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from
before the foundation of the world)

Joseph Smith

"What was the object of gathering the... people of God in any age of the world?... The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose." (TPJS, pg. 307-308)

He describes other activities reserved for the temple.

D&C124:37,39

37 And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?

39 Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places

wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name.

What does the Lord promise to bless His saints with if they obey His commandments and build temples?

(your anointings, and your washings,
and your baptisms for the dead,
and your solemn assemblies
and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi
and for your oracles in your most holy places
and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all [Zion's] municipalities)

All of these these blessings “are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house”

Orson Pratt

"Here then you perceive that there are certain places appointed, and certain provisions to be complied with before the face of the Lord can be seen. He has said that his people are always to build unto his name a house. What for? That his name might be there; that his angels might be there; that his presence might be there; and that there the fullness of the holy Priesthood might be more fully revealed, and that there all the ordinances might be performed, that were ordained from before the foundation of the world. This is the object of Temples. It is to connect the children to the fathers: it is to bring about an organization between the living and the dead" (JD, 19:8)

D&C124:45-46

45 And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

46 But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest, because they pollute mine holy grounds, and mine holy ordinances, and charters, and my holy words which I give unto them.

What are the saints promised if they obey the Lord and His leaders and obey the commandment to build temples?

(I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place)

Russell M. Nelson

"The Lord revealed that 'the ordinance of baptizing for the dead... was instituted from before the foundation of the world.. Salvation was thus made available for those 'who should die without a knowledge of the gospel.' A welding link between generations was provided, that a whole, complete, and

perfect union of dispensations, keys, powers, and glories should take place.

"Brothers and sisters, these unseen but sure pillars were in place before the world was. They undergird the everlasting gospel—now restored in its fulness. With such a foundation, this Church will not be moved from its place." (CR, April 2002)

Boyd K. Packer

"In 1841 the Saints were commanded to build a temple in Nauvoo in which to perform baptisms for the dead, and they were given time to do it. They would be rejected if they failed....

"The Saints did not fail. However impossible it may have seemed to them, given the terrible opposition they faced, the Lord promised to guide them through His appointed servants." (CR, Oct. 1989)