

November 22–28

Doctrine and Covenants 135–136

"[He] Has Sealed His Mission and His Works  
With His Own Blood"



# Recommended Reading

Murder of the Mormon Prophet: The Political Prelude to the  
Death of Joseph Smith  
by LeGrand Baker

PDF:

<http://www.legrandlbaker.org/murder-of-the-mormon-prophet/>

# Overview

After Missouri, Joseph concluded that the Saints would only be safe outside of the United States.

He was considering Texas, Oregon territory, and Mexico (Eastern ridge of the Great Basin) as a permanent location

He wanted to stay in Nauvoo long enough to strengthen the church and build a temple to endow the Saints

He wanted time to financially and logistically prepare for the move. This involved seeking compensation from Missouri for the property and possessions that they had taken

# Political Power of the Saints in Nauvoo

- o Size and growth of Nauvoo
- o The importance of the Mormon vote
- o Appeal to congress and the president for compensation from Missouri
- o Find a presidential candidate that would support their cause
- o Joseph Smith becomes a presidential candidate

# Political Power of the Saints in Nauvoo

## o Size and growth of Nauvoo

When driven from their homes in Missouri, they sought shelter and protection in Illinois, they were fed, nursed, and hugged to the bosom by men of both political parties, each anxious to win their favor by excelling the other in kindness towards them. For a while all worked well. They purchased their town site, to which the Prophet and many of his followers removed, and in a short time their village numbered several hundred souls. Election after election came and so unsettled were they in political sentiments that each party dreaded their strength, yet feared to offend... neither party having independence enough to oppose it. (Bloomington Herald, Bloomington, Iowa, June 21, 1844)

# Political Power of the Saints in Nauvoo

- o The importance of the Mormon vote

It is very well known that the Mormons are numerous enough in the State of Illinois to control the character of its vote. If they control the vote of that State, they will succeed in a great measure, in controlling the vote of the whole western country, for it will be a very close vote at best. It therefore will be seen, that this insignificant body of men, may, in the event of the next Presidency, control the destinies of all the candidates. (New York Herald, March 20, 1844)

# Political Power of the Saints in Nauvoo

- o Appeal to congress and the president for compensation from Missouri

## Joseph Smith

“During my stay I had an interview with Martin Van Buren, the President, who treated me very insolently, and it was with great reluctance he listened to our message, which, when he had heard, he said: “If I take up for you I shall lose the vote of Missouri.”

Joseph reported that the president also said, “Gentlemen, your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you.” (Woodruff Journal, 6:243-244)

# Threats and Protection

- o Nauvoo Charter and Legion inhibits direct mob attacks
- o Attempt and failure to bring Joseph back to Missouri
- o Traitors within



# Threats and Protection

- o Attempt and Failure to bring Joseph back to Missouri

The reason why I made the remarks I did was on account of the reports brought from the Missouri jail by O. P. Rockwell, that my enemies were determined to get me into their power and take my life, and thereby thought they would accomplish the overthrow of “Mormonism.” And to enable them to effect this, they had secured the services of some of my most confidential friends, whom I did not suspect, and who were living in Nauvoo.... They did not design to try me, but hang me, or take my life anyhow. (HC, 6:164)

# Threats and Protection

## o Traitors within

### John C. Bennett

Drafted the Nauvoo City Charter

First Mayor of Nauvoo

First Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion

### William Law

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

### Wilson Law

Member of Nauvoo City Council, brigadier general in Nauvoo Legion

### Dr. Robert Foster

Appointed surgeon general in the Nauvoo Legion

A Regent of the University of Nauvoo

### William Marks

President of the Nauvoo Stake

# End-run: The Nauvoo Expositor

- o The threat presented by the Expositor
- o No way for the Saints to avoid the “Expositor” trap
- o The Expositor's first edition
- o The action of Mayor Smith and the City Council

# End-run: The Nauvoo Expositor

- o The threat presented by the Expositor

The Nauvoo Expositor is the title of a new paper about to be started at Nauvoo by the opponents of Joe. The prospectus has been issued, in which the proposed character of the paper is set forth. It will have nothing to do with religion; but goes in for the repeal of the Nauvoo City Charter, against political revelations, and unconstitutional ordinances. As the conductors of this paper are well acquainted with Joe, it will in all probability make some disclosures which will render Nauvoo too hot either for Joe or his enemies. We will endeavor to keep our readers well apprised of every thing of interest to them. In the mean time we say success to the new undertaking—for “a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.” (Warsaw Signal, May 15, 1844)

# End-run: The Nauvoo Expositor

- o No way for the Saints to avoid the Expositor trap

They couldn't destroy the press before the first printing

They couldn't allow it's printing to justify mob action

# End-run: The Nauvoo Expositor

- o The Expositor's first edition
  - Called for the repeal of the Nauvoo City charter
  - Mormonism was once true, but Joseph is a fallen prophet
  - Mormon leaders were at the center of a counterfeiting operation
  - Attacked Hyrum Smith, who was a candidate for the state legislature
  - Claimed Joseph Smith's candidacy for the presidency was tyrannical
  - Invited the mob to come into the city and expel the Mormons from their homes.

# End-run: The Nauvoo Expositor

- o The Expositor's first edition

Shall we... lie still and suffer Joseph Smith to light up the lamp of tyranny and oppression in our midst?... Let us arise in the majesty of our strength and sweep the influence of tyrants and miscreants from the face of the land....

The question is asked, will you bring a mob upon us... to bring every offender to justice and to protect the innocent, if it is necessary to make show of force, to execute legal process.  
(The Nauvoo Expositor June 7, 1844)

# End-run: The Nauvoo Expositor

- o The action of Mayor Smith and the City Council

Mayor [Joseph Smith] said, if he had a City Council who felt as he did, the [Nauvoo Expositor] would be declared a nuisance before night.... Here is a paper that is exciting our enemies abroad..... What the opposition party want, is to raise a mob on us and take the spoil from us, as they did in Missouri....

[Joseph said he] would rather die tomorrow and have the thing smashed, than live and have it go on, for it was exciting the spirit of mobocracy among the people, and bringing death and destruction upon us. (Minutes of Monday, June 10, published in Nauvoo Neighbor)



# The Expositor gives the mobs their justification

- o Joseph Smith charged with “riot”
- o Call to action for the mobs
- o Joseph agrees to face charges – but not in Carthage
- o The mobs gather

# The Expositor gives the mobs their justification

- o Joseph Smith charged with “riot”

After their press was destroyed, the proprietors of the Expositor rushed to Carthage, the county seat, and swore out a complaint against the mayor and all members of the city council - not on charges of violating their rights of freedom of the press, and not on charges of destroying their property - but on the charge that they “did on the 10th day of June instant commit a riot at and within the county aforesaid, wherein they with force and violence broke into the office of the Nauvoo Expositor.” (The writ is printed in History of the Church, 6:453-454)

# The Expositor gives the mobs their justification

- o Call to action for the mobs

... to command the efforts and the services of every good citizen to put an immediate stop to the career of the mad Prophet and his demoniac coadjutors, We must not only defend ourselves from danger, but we must resolutely carry the war into the enemy's camp,... that we hold ourselves in readiness to cooperate with our fellow citizens in this state, Missouri and Iowa to exterminate, utterly exterminate, the wicked and abominable Mormon leaders, the authors of our troubles,... A war of extermination should be waged, to their entire destruction, if necessary, for our protection. (Warsaw Signal, June 14, 19, 1844)

# The Expositor gives the mobs their justification

- o Joseph agrees to face charges – but not in Carthage

Constable Bettisworth arrived and presented his warrant to the Mormon leaders. After the officer got through reading the writ, I referred him to the clause in the writ—“Before me or some other justice of the peace of said county,” saying, “We are ready to go to trial before Esquire Johnson or any justice in Nauvoo, according to the requirements of the writ;” but Bettisworth swore he would be damned but he would carry them to Carthage before Morrison, who issued the writ and seemed very wrathful. I asked him if he intended to break the law, for he knew the privilege of the prisoners. (History of the Church, 6:454)

# The Expositor gives the mobs their justification

- o The mobs gather

We have one chance left. Joe will undoubtedly have the power to oppose, but if he attempts to exercise it, we will throw ourselves on our reserved rights. Justice we will have. If the law is cheated out of its efficacy and can no longer protect our persons and property, we have the consolation to know that steel and gun powder can. (Warsaw Signal, June 12, 1844)

We are informed by gentlemen direct from Carthage that the citizens are ordered to assemble at their various places of rendezvous on Wednesday next. (Warsaw Signal, June 14, 1844)

# Show of Force Saves Nauvoo From the Mob

- o Mayor Joseph Smith declares martial law
- o General Joseph Smith address the Nauvoo Legion
- o The mob needs the State Militia to defeat the Nauvoo Legion

# Show of Force Saves Nauvoo From the Mob

## o General Joseph Smith address the Nauvoo Legion

We are American citizens. We live upon a soil for the liberties of which our fathers periled their lives and spilt their blood upon the battlefield. Those rights so dearly purchased, shall not be disgracefully trodden under foot by lawless marauders without at least a noble effort on our part to sustain our liberties....

I call God and angels to witness that I have unsheathed my sword with a firm and unalterable determination that this people shall have their legal rights, and be protected from mob violence, or my blood shall be spilt upon the ground like water, and my body consigned to the silent tomb.... I do not regard my own life. I am ready to be offered a sacrifice for this people. (History of the Church, 6:498-500)

# The Actions of Governor Ford

- o Ford comes to Carthage to control the situation
- o Ford demands Nauvoo city leaders come to Carthage
- o Ford threatens Nauvoo if Joseph does not come to Carthage
- o Ford takes State issued arms away from the Nauvoo Legion
- o Other overt acts while Joseph is in Carthage



# The Actions Governor Ford

## o Ford demands Nauvoo city leaders come to Carthage

After waiting the Governor's pleasure for some time, we had an audience—but such an audience! He was surrounded by some of the vilest and most unprincipled men in creation.... Wilson, and, I believe, William Law were there, Foster, Frank and Chauncey Higbee, Mr. Marr, a lawyer from Nauvoo, a mobocratic merchant from Warsaw—in all fifteen or twenty persons, most of whom were recreant to virtue, honor, integrity and everything that is considered honorable among men. I can well remember the feelings of disgust that I had in seeing the Governor surrounded by such an infamous group...

About five o'clock in the afternoon we took our departure with not the most pleasant feelings. The associations of the governor, the spirit that he manifested to compromise with these scoundrels, the length of time that he had kept us waiting, and his general deportment, together with the infernal spirit that we saw exhibited by those whom he admitted to his counsels, made the prospect anything but promising. (John Taylor's account is in History of the Church, 6:543-545)

# The Actions Governor Ford

- o Ford threatens Nauvoo if Joseph does not come to Carthage

“submit yourselves to be arrested by the same constable, by virtue of the same warrant and to be tried before the same magistrate whose authority has heretofore been resisted.... I tell you plainly that if no such submission is made as I have indicated, I will be obliged to call out the militia; and if a few thousand will not be sufficient, many thousands will be, [and] your city will be destroyed, and your people, many of them, exterminated.” (History of the Church, 6:533-7)

# Joseph leaves Nauvoo to face charges in Carthage

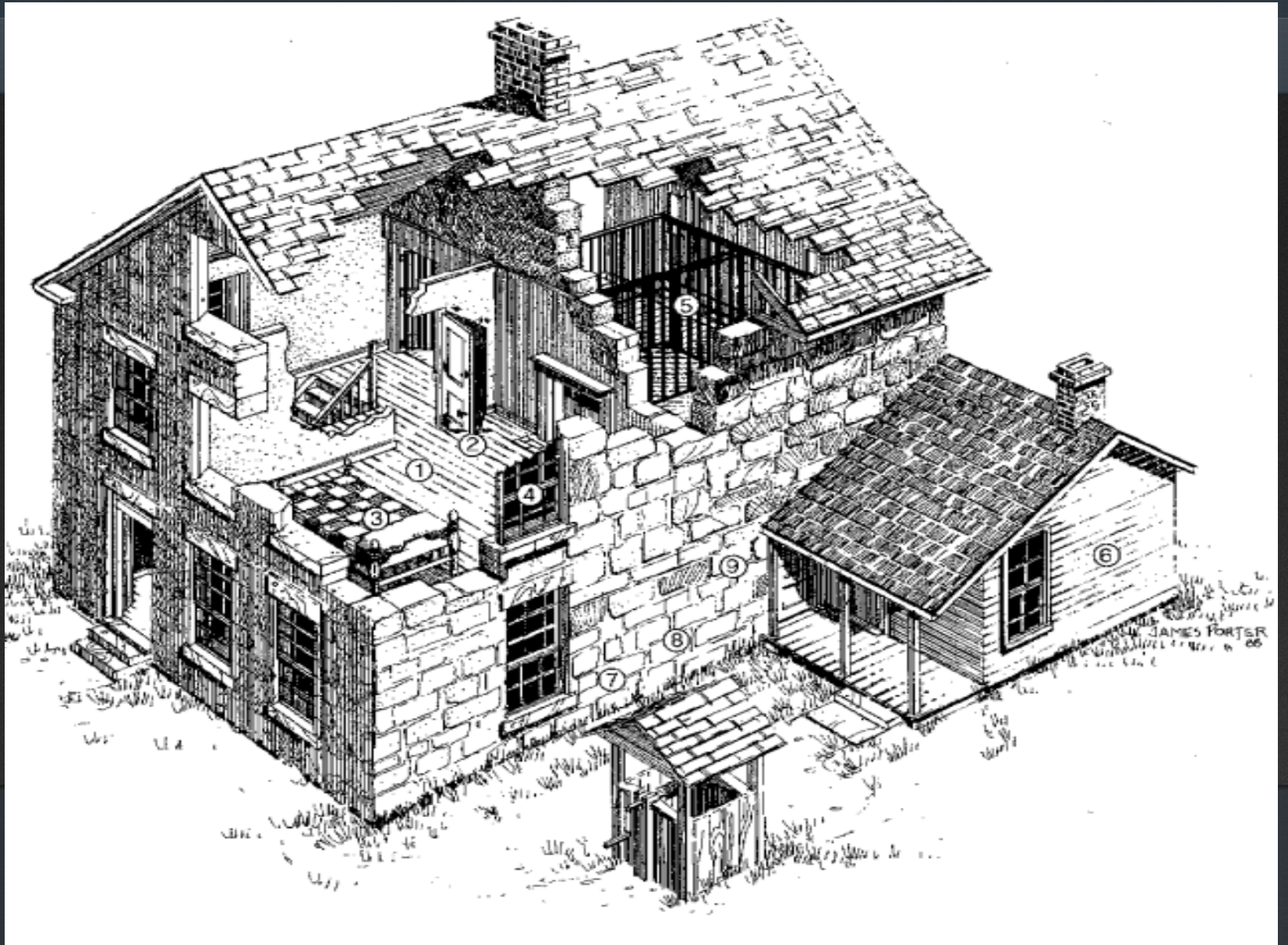
- o Last option: Joseph escapes to the West
- o Joseph goes to Carthage to face charges of riot
- o But is charged with treason
- o Ford “convicts” Joseph and Hyrum of treason

# Joseph leaves Nauvoo to face charges in Carthage

- o Ford “convicts” Joseph and Hyrum of treason

8:30 a.m.—Governor Ford called all the troops and ordered them to form a hollow square on the public ground near the Court House; and when formed, he mounted an old table, and addressed them in a most inflammatory manner, exciting the feelings of indignation against Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith,... giving his assent and sanction to the rumors that had gathered them together, and stating that although they were dangerous men in the community, and guilty of all that they might have alleged against them, still they were in the hands of the law, which must have its course. (History of the Church, 6:562-3)

# Joseph and Hyrum Are Murdered



Next Week:

November 29–December 5

Doctrine and Covenants 137–138

"The Vision of the Redemption of the Dead"



# The Actions Governor Ford

- o Ford threatens Nauvoo if Joseph does not come to Carthage

“submit yourselves to be arrested by the same constable, by virtue of the same warrant and to be tried before the same magistrate whose authority has heretofore been resisted.... I tell you plainly that if no such submission is made as I have indicated, I will be obliged to call out the militia; and if a few thousand will not be sufficient, many thousands will be, [and] your city will be destroyed, and your people, many of them, exterminated.” (History of the Church, 6:533-7)