

TimeLine

1841	Nov 8	Dedicated wooden baptism font in Nauvoo temple Immigrating British Saints numbered 1,375
1842		Throughout 1842, an additional 1,614 more British Saints arrive in Nauvoo “Plural marriage” is taught to privately to a few apostles
	Jan 5	Joseph opened his “Red Brick Store” and waited on the saints there.
	Jan 15	1 st Pres issued proclamation to all saints “scattered abroad” to gather to Nauvoo
	February	Returned to work on the Egyptian scrolls and book of Abraham
	March 1	Published Letter to John Wentworth, editor and proprietor of the Chicago Democrat, for a friend who was writing a history of NH. It included JS-H and the Articles of Faith Commenced publication of the Book of Abraham (only published chapters 1-5).
	March 15	Under the encouragement of John Bennett and other masons, like Heber Kimball, Hyrum Smith (and the late Joseph Sr.), Joseph Jr. joined the fraternity of freemasons in Nauvoo
	March 15	Joseph Smith became editor of Times and Seasons
	March 17	Organized “The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, ” with 19 women (age 15-54), “under the priesthood” after the “order of the priesthood” with Emma as President.
	March 20	Preached Sermon on Life & Death; the Resurrection and the Salvation of Children
	March 27	Began baptisms for the dead in Mississippi River
	March 31	Joseph’s Letter to Relief Society to denounce illicit sex as John Bennett proposed
	May 4	Introduced temple endowment
	May 6	Lilburn Boggs shot, wounded in MO by an unknown assailant
	May 7	Excommunicated John Bennett tried to assassinate Joseph in a “mock battle” with the Nauvoo Legion. Joseph declined.
	May 19	Joseph is Elected Mayor of Nauvoo
	June	Thomas Sharp forms an anti-Mormon political party in Hancock County
	August 8	Joseph and Porter Rockwell were arrested for complicity in attempted assassination of Boggs; Joseph was forced into hiding again. Stayed with Uncle John in Iowa
	Sept	Received revelation known as 128—discussing the Spirit, baptisms for dead, etc.
	Dec 26	Second arrest in Boggs case. Joseph agreed to go to trial in Springville, IL. While in Springville, possible meeting with Peter Cartwright as recorded in his memoirs
1843	Jan 5	Acquitted of charges in Boggs case by Judge Nathaniel Pope

Nauvoo

By 1842, church membership reached over 23,000. The swampy land on the banks of the Mississippi had been mostly drained and more converts arrived from Britain and the eastern states. Nauvoo grew to a city with more than 1,000 log cabins, and a hundred or so framed and brick homes. Simultaneously, the saints in homes welcomed new immigrants who still lived out of their covered wagons, or in tents. Small towns of saints spread into the neighboring communities on either side of the Mississippi River. Joseph called his uncle John Smith to act as a Stake President in Iowa.

There were four wards in Nauvoo by this time, but Sabbath meetings were either held as families gathered in homes or when the weather permitted, or with all the saints together outside in a grove near the west side of the temple, on the hillside. Before the saints gathered in Nauvoo, Joseph often had Sidney, Oliver, Parley, or others address the saints. But after his experience in Liberty Jail and Washington DC., Joseph became the main voice at their unified Sabbath meetings.

Joseph rarely let the weather detour their church meetings. We have accounts of him preaching in the rain, with high winds, and in all 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 (*History of the Church*, 5: 339).

Preparatory Teachings Proceeding the Endowment

For years Joseph had been preparing the saints to receive an endowment of power. He needed the temple finished to teach it to the saints, but in preparation for that, he wanted to prepare the church leaders for this important ordinance. Nearly everything Joseph taught in the temple had been introduced previously. As we look at a brief overview, we can appreciate how much of the plan of salvation had been restored that would soon be organized into a ceremony.

- 1830—Translation of Genesis, known as the Book of Moses
- 1831—D&C 42—The Law of Consecration introduced in Kirtland, and later taught in Missouri, and Nauvoo
- 1832—D&C 76:49-111 discusses three heavenly kingdoms of glory prepared as rewards for resurrected humans depending on how they lived their earthly lives. The kingdoms include: telestial, terrestrial, celestial
- 1832/33—D&C 88:17-31, 36-41, 62-80, 116-141—Obedience to celestial laws laid out, establish a house of God.
- D&C 132:5-26—Joseph received a revelation about exaltation through sealing of eternal marriages
- Jan 21, 1836—D&C 137—Joseph had a vision where he was taught about the salvation of the dead
- Translation of the Book of Abraham—including facsimile #2 with the “key words of the priesthood”
- Aug 15, 1840—Baptisms for the Dead first taught to the saints
- Jan 19, 1841—Revelation to build the Nauvoo Temple (D&C 124)
- 1841-1842—Preached many sermons that prepare the saints to make temple covenants and becoming exalted heirs through Christ (See JosephSmithPapers.org, and Ehat and Cook, *Words of Smith*, 246-247, 366-368, 382)

Endowment

On May 3, 1842, Joseph and a few men prepared the upper floor of his red brick store to restore the “endowment.” He divided the larger room with hanging rugs, he used his small office and another small room for the initiatories (the Washings and Anointings). The larger room was divided by hanging rugs and decorated with plants and a newly painted mural to depict the garden of Eden.

The next day, the prophet invited nine other church leaders to a special meeting where they would learn more things that they would later teach the rest of the saints in the Nauvoo Temple. The ten men included: Joseph, his counselors—Hyrum Smith and William Law, three apostles—Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, and Willard Richards, as well as Bishops—Newel Whitney and George Miller, Stake President William Marks, and Br. James Adams.

Although, on May 4, 1842, no women were invited to this meeting, Joseph hoped to raise up the Relief Society sisters as priestesses to serve in the temple. He knew that the temple ordinances were for both men and women and that men and women could not be exalted unless they were united in Eternal Marriage (D&C 132). The women were not there in part, for modesty’s sake. The space was limited and the washings and anointings were *not* symbolically given. There were not rooms enough to respect the modesty of each female initiate. Joseph needed to separate out the genders in this first six-hour ceremony. However, before his death—within the next two years—he also had noble women initiated and endowed with God’s priesthood power, before the saints generally received it in the temple in 1846.

The invitatories and endowment are for men and women who were baptized and spiritually prepared with a desire to learn more. They needed to be spiritually minded. 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).” (Ludlow, 3.1444)

Remembering Back to the Kirtland Temple Washings and Anointings

Of the ten men present in the Red Brick Store for the first endowment, only Hyrum and Joseph had been present on January 21, 1836, as two of the seven church leaders in Kirtland also received their initiatories that day, even before the interior of the Kirtland Temple was finished. They began the ordinance at 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon and it lasted throughout the evening. That first ordinance became associated with spiritual manifestations. Those present saw many visions, including a vision of the third heaven or Celestial Kingdom. They learned that “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” (Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3.145).

Those experiencing the visions and revelation of knowledge felt they received an ancient practice and outpowering

of the Spirit. They described:

“[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 oduous [*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” (*BYU Studies*, v.12, 1971-72, 418).

Nauvoo Endowment

In addition to repeating the sacred washings and anointings, the ten men were given sacred undergarments to remind them of their covenants, act as a protecting shield against Satan, and the symbols from the veil. Initially the saints each were responsible for making their own sacred garments after they were endowed. They covered their bodies from their wrists to their ankles.

The ceremony taught a step by step progression through the plan of salvation. The saints to received their endowment made covenants to keep all of God’s commandments, to live chaste lives, and sacrifice whatever was needed to build the kingdom of God. The prophet told Brigham Young (president of the Quorum of the Twelve) that with the limitations of their room, the experience was not arranged right. He asked Brigham to “organize and systemize all these ceremonies.” After the experience, Elder Heber C. Kimball wrote a letter to Br and Sis Pratt who were still serving their mission in England that they had learned things, “some precious things through the Prophet on the priesthood that would cause your soul to rejoice.” However, he added, “I cannot give them to you on paper for they are not to be written” (Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, 17 June 1842, Heber C. Kimball Papers, LDS Church History Library).

Over the next two years of 1843 and 1844, Joseph continued to endow a few other faithful brothers and sisters. Before his death in June 1844, more than fifty saints had been endowed. They called themselves the “Anointed Quorum” or “The Holy Order” These became the first temple ordinance workers when the temple was finished. (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/anointed-quorum?lang=eng>)

1845-1846 Endowment Given to Saints who were Prepared

The Lord answered the prophets and saints and held the attackers off until the temple as finish enough to endow 5,615 members between Dec 10, 1845 and early February 1846 (*Church History in the Fullness of Times*, 1993, p. 303).

The Nauvoo Endowment vs. Freemasonry

On March 15, 1842, a month and a half before Joseph first introduced the Temple Endowment, at the encouragement of John Bennett and other masons, he joined their fraternity. As a leader in the community, Joseph was welcomed without going through all the usual initiation rites and was propelled into full membership as a “master mason.” Masons were a fraternal organization which began as a trade association for men who worked as stone or brick masons. They claim to have earlier origins, but historical records can date them only to the 17th Century. Their signs and symbols are used by masons and even the dress stems from the mason’s work apron.

There are several different branches that have diversified the groups in both rites, dress, and purposes. Most branches act out a fictitious story about a mason who helped build Solomon’s Temple. Most also honor those who have money and political power. None of them, though, are religious organizations. They do refer to the Great Architect or God, and have a Deist perspective—meaning that the Creator left the world to run by itself and does not interfere.

The American branches became known as “freemasons,” and were not restricted to those men who worked as brick or stone masons. Instead they focused on building good men—without religion. In the USA the male fraternity was most popular between 1790 and 1826, and was anti-Catholic and anti-royalty. Several early American deists like George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Andrew Jackson, were also freemasons. Later in the 19th century, anti-mason groups were established and published their own newspapers, and even formed a national political party. Nevertheless, other branches grew, including the Shriner freemasons, who formed a branch focusing on philanthropy and service to the community.

Freemason members can be removed for immoral behavior. Such was the case of John Bennett when the Ohio Mason lodge removed his membership for dishonesty and seducing women. The same thing happened in Nauvoo. But Bennett moved onto the Missouri lodge without anyone checking on his membership status.

The Gospel Topics essays include details that separate the differences between the endowment and mason practices. Although it was not an issue for the Nauvoo members. The Gospel Topics essays mention:

Many Latter-day Saints joined the Nauvoo Lodge, which soon became the largest in the state. This rapid growth made many Masons suspicious that Mormons would dominate the organization in Illinois. At first, the state’s Grand Lodge continued the Nauvoo Lodge’s dispensation, giving it time to correct irregularities in its admission

of new members, but in October 1843, it withdrew the dispensation.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/masonry?lang=eng>

After several hours of study, I see the two as very distinct, but overlapping in a few areas—like a green leaf and a green apple both share commonalities, but are not the same. For more comparisons see the research by Jeffery Bradshaw in <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/freemasonry-and-the-origins-of-modern-temple-ordinances/>. There is only one point that I beg to differ with Brother Bradshaw: he sees the masonic lodge acting as a stepping stool to prepare the saints for the endowment. I disagree. The Nauvoo masonic fraternity only lasted for a little over a year and a relatively small proportion of the saints were initiated. On the other hand, Joseph taught the saints prior to that year far more important teachings to understand the temple.

Persecution of Joseph Rises

Springville, IL Dec 1842

Several years earlier, Joseph had prophesied of Governor Boggs' death. When an attempted assassination occurred, enemies of Joseph trumped up a charge claiming his involvement. Initially Joseph went into hiding, in different places near Nauvoo—on an island in the Mississippi, his Uncle John's home in Iowa, etc. Emma and the Relief Society women wrote to the Illinois governor repeatedly to ask for a fair trial for the prophet. Encouraged by their efforts, in late December, Joseph submitted himself to court authorities to be tried as an accomplice in the Boggs' attempted assassination. Joseph was acquitted on Jan 3, 1843.

During his week in Springville (or perhaps during another visit there), a famous Methodist minister, Peter Cartwright, recorded his conversation with Joseph. Unfortunately, Joseph never reported the meeting so we only have a one-sided account of their conversation. According to Cartwright's autobiography, their conversation focused on the gifts of the Spirit:

On a certain occasion I fell in with Joe Smith . . . we soon fell into a free conversation on the subject of religion and Mormonism in particular. I found him to be a very illiterate and impudent desperado in morals, but, at the same time, he had a vast fund of low cunning. . . . He expressed great and almost unbounded pleasure in the high privilege of becoming acquainted with me, one of whom he had heard so many great and good things, and he had no doubt I was one among God's noblest creatures, and an honest man. He believed that among all the Churches in the world the Methodist was the nearest right, and that, as far as they went, they were right. But they had stopped short by not claiming the gift of tongues, of prophecy, and of miracles, and then quoted a batch of Scripture to prove his positions correct. Upon the whole, he did pretty well for clumsy Joe (Cartwright, *Autobiography*, 225).

According to Cartwright, Joseph Smith directed the conversation to his topic of choice—the gifts of the Spirit. The Prophet felt passionate about the subject, while Cartwright was skeptical. Their "high debate" concluded when Joseph invited Cartwright to visit the saints in Nauvoo:

"Now," said he [Smith], "if you will go with me to Nauvoo, I will show you many living witnesses that will testify that they were, by the saints, cured of blindness, lameness, deafness, dumbness, and all the diseases that human flesh is heir to; and I will show you," said he, "that we have the gift of tongues, and can speak in unknown languages, and that the saints can drink any deadly poison and it will not hurt them;" and closed by saying, "the idle stories you hear about us are nothing but sheer persecution" (Cartwright, *Autobiography*, 226).

Cartwright's recollections sound exaggerated, but it unmistakably provides his impressions. Cartwright saw the whole experience as "presumptuous and blasphemous nonsense" (ibid.). Cartwright ended his dialogue by denouncing Joseph and his followers: "'Yes,' said I, 'Uncle Joe; but my Bible tells me, 'the bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days;' and I expect the Lord will send the devil after you some of these days, and take you out of the way'" (ibid., 227). Cartwright and many others, like Alexander Campbell, felt justified in exposing Joseph as a false prophet.

Other Attackers: Mr. Sollars

Again in 1842, another critic, Mr. Sollars, confronted Joseph:

"May I not repent and be baptized, and not pay any attention to dreams, visions, and other gifts of the Spirit?"

Joseph passionately responded, "Suppose I am traveling and am hungry and meet with a man and tell him I am hungry, and he tells me to go yonder. . . . I go and knock, and ask for food, and sit down to the table, but do not eat, shall I satisfy my hunger? No. I must eat. The gifts are the food; and the graces of the Spirit are the gifts of the Spirit" (Smith, *History*, 5.219).

The prophet hungered after truth, including the gifts of the Spirit, and preached and exercised them often.

Other enemies of the saints, like the Warsaw Illinois, newspaper editor, Thomas Sharp, and the Missouri mobs, were fearful of the saints' rising political and financial power. Many of the once-insiders—like John Bennett's bad example and deceitful lies—harmed the peace and prosperity of the saints in Nauvoo.