

05-19-20 Institute *A Pentecost of Spiritual Gifts—The Dedication of the Kirtland Temple (Jan 21-Apr 3, 1836)*

As part of the restoration of all things, temples were restored as a place for God to reveal Himself to His people (D&C 109 and 110). Elder Neal A. Maxwell said that, “Temples part the curtains to antiquity at the same time they part the curtains to eternity” (*Desert News*, 8-26-1989).

Church Membership	
1830	290
1831	680
1832	2,661
1833	3,140
1834	4,372
1835	8,835
1836	13,293

1833-1836 Announcing and Building the Kirtland Temple

The Joseph Smith’s restoration followed the biblical pattern of building and dedicating Moses’ Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple (Exodus 25:9; 1 Kings 8:22-53). Joseph received revelation which instructed him to build and dedicate temples.

The first hint of a temple in the restoration came from 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). The next hint 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.

The Kirtland Temple was announced in December 1832, with the Kirtland members totaling well under two thousand (including children). God revealed the design to Joseph and others in a vision. Truman O. Angell, the architect, designed and organized the project. The Kirtland saints began construction in June of 1833. They finished in March 1836 (with a slow period during Zion’s camp in 1834).

Elder John Widtsoe estimated by that the Kirtland Temple was the most expensive building in the nation—if we take into account the percent of the saints’ time and means donated to build it. One day in every seven days was given to work at the temple. Every Saturday, every wagon in Kirtland was used to haul stone. Money, work, time, and supplies were donated. The saints were willing to make such enormous sacrifices because their hearts were soft, they hoped to learn more about the kingdom of God, and were living closer to live the Law of Consecration. Prophet Joseph also worked in the quarry with them. He explained:

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.” (*Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (2002), 110; spelling and punctuation modernized.)

Joseph’s journal recorded the women’s work on February 22 and 23, 1836.

22 February 1836 • 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

23 February 1836 • 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 also upon the congregation and dismissed (ibid., 2.399; <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1835-1836/161#full-transcript>)

However, the story about the breaking the china is probably a wrong theory. Broken pieces of china were found in the plaster. But archeologists found an old garbage dump dating from that time where many broken pieces of china were found. The china for the paint may have come from pieces that were already broken, or from the dump.

The neighbors were not happy about the growth of the saints’ arrival, nor building a temple. According to Apostle George A. Smith said the persecution got so bad 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 inside work is unique and not repeated in our other temples. The pulpits included abbreviation:

“P.E.Q.” (Presidency of Elders Quorum).

“P.H.P.Q.” (Presidency of High Priests Quorum)

“P.S.Z.” (Presidents of Seventy). Perhaps the Z was meant to be a Q for “Quorum.”

“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).

January 21-33, 1836—Thursday and Friday—First Washings and Anointings

Even before the interior was finished, the Kirtland Temple became associated with spiritual manifestations. Portions of the temple were completed sufficiently enough by January 21, 1836, for the Prophet Joseph to introduce another ordinance to a few of his leaders: “washings and anointing.” 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). (Daniel Ludlow, 3.1444)

Those invited on January 21 had prepared themselves spiritually that they saw many visions, including a vision of the third heaven or Celestial Kingdom. (The kingdoms had been described four years previously in D&C 76:49-111.) Joseph prepared the attic of the printing office for washings, and then “at early candle-light” they went to the west room in the temple to perform the anointings. Oliver Cowdery recorded in his diary from that day:

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 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 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*, 1972, vol. 12.418).

Joseph taught them 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” (which Joseph later expanded on with vicarious baptism work). (Daniel Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3.1444).

First “aged Father Smith” received his anointings, and then a group blessing. Each person in order of age received their anointings next, and Father Smith, the patriarch, gave each a blessing (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2.379). When it came to his son Joseph’s blessing:

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld 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 or 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.

All this and a few other verses is recorded now as D&C 137. However, other gems from the same vision are not recorded in our scriptures. Joseph also saw the service and labors of the Twelve serving as missionaries :

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 (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 2.381).

The vision then gave individual views of different missionaries serving with angelic protection. The Twelve in the celestial kingdom, and “the redemption of Zion.” Other men also saw visions, the Savior, and angels ministered to them, so that “the house was filled with the glory of God” (*ibid.*, 2.382-382). The others included the bishopric and high councilors of both Kirtland Zion. The next night the Twelve and Seventy experienced a similar anointing and spiritual outpouring. Joseph recorded that he “sealed” each with words that “the Lord put into my heart” (*ibid.*, 3.383). Both nights the anointings and heavenly visions and outpourings lasted until about 2:00 am. I cannot find examples of women receiving their washings and atoning’s yet, but they were later.

Many spirit and vision filled meetings were held over the next two months. Many 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” (*ibid.*, 2.387).

Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836—1st Session of Dedication of the Kirtland Temple

After three years of sacrifice and labor, the Kirtland Temple dedication began on Sunday March 27, 1836. During the days before and after the dedication, Joseph and many saints experienced “a Pentecost” of the Gifts of the Spirit—including faith, knowledge, revelation, prophecy, visions, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 2.432).

Joseph announced that well-behaved children could sit on laps, and many came. Here’s Sylvia Cutler Webb early recollections:

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).

Nearly a thousand people filled the building for the seven-hour dedication and yet, Joseph recorded that “the most quiet demeanor during the whole exercise” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 2.428). Here’s the meeting outline in bullet notes:

- **7:00am** — Two hours early ~500 to 600 gathered outside the temple in the snow
- **8:00 am**—The doors opened and Joseph, Oliver, and Sidney seated 1,000 people (930 seated plus the priesthood on the stand. The rest of the crowd had their Sabbath services in another building, and returned another dedication session on Wednesday)
- **9:00 am**— Meeting started with Sidney Rigdon reading 96th and 24th Psalms
- Choir sang, “Ere long the veil rent in twain” (nine verses)
- Pres. Sidney Rigdon offered opening Prayer
- Choir and Congregation sang “Oh happy souls who pray”
- Pres. Rigdon spoke for 2 ½ hours on Matt 18:17-20, “Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,” and Matt 8: “Foxes have holes but the Son of Man . . . ”
- Hymn: “Now Let us Rejoice”
- Sustaining officers by quorum—first for Joseph as Prophet (with 15 to 20-minute intermission).
- Hymn: Adam-on-di-Ahman”
- Sustaining of Officers by each quorum and then by the congregation.
- Hymn: “How pleased and blessed was I”
- Joseph read Dedicatory Prayer (D&C 109), which he previously had received as a revelation. “I saw that Joseph the Prophet stood with his hands raised toward heaven and then speaks”
- Hymn, “The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning” (seven verses written by W.W. Phelps)
- Dedication of the Temple Accepted by the Priesthood and the Saints
- Sacrament: All partook of the Lord’s Supper (Joseph’s younger brother, Don Carlos blessed both bread + wine)
- Testimony by Don Carlos Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, David Whitmer
- Pres. Hyrum Smith thanked those who built the Temple
- Pres. Rigdon Closing Remarks and Closing Prayer
- Hosanna Shout on the same day that Christians around the world celebrate Palm Sunday, calling Hosanna.
- Pres Brigham Young gave a short address in tongues, with David W. Patten interpreting, and then he also spoke in tongues.
- The Prophet Joseph recorded that next, “I blessed the congregation in the name of the Lord”
- **4:00 pm**—Session ends

D&C 109

The dedicatory prayer was inspired earlier and then Joseph read it half way through the dedication. It announces the purpose of temples, so the “to manifest unto his people” (D&C 95:8), Those early saints sacrificed so much—they gave everything and had an outpouring of the Spirit at the dedication and many felt and saw the Lord.

- :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.
- :6-21 House of prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, order (quotes from D&C 88:118-119)
- :22-33 Enemies kept away
- :34-42 Saints empowered to gather-- Prays for blessing similar to Pentecost as recorded in Acts. (This happened!)
- :43-53 Deliverance for saints from plagues
- :54-58 Prepare other nations—Inference that America was the beginning place of where the Gospel will go forward—honored the constitution of the USA
- :59-67 Redemption of all Israel—from this time, Jews began to return and are now the largest group there. Jerusalem “from this hour” began to be redeemed
- :68-80 Saints be crowned with glory, receive exaltation

When you study D&C 109 next, you may see a great preparation for what we need to learn for the Second Coming:

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

March 27-29, 1836—Priesthood Evening Leadership Session

Notwithstanding the long day, 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. (*History of the Church*, 2.428)

Joseph felt this 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 Joseph introduced 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 . . . (ibid., 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.”

March 30 + 31, 1836—3rd and 4th Dedicatory Sessions of the Kirtland Temple

A second dedicatory service was held three days later on March 30th to accommodate those not able to fit into the temple for the opening 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.” Under Joseph’s leadership the group:

. . . 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 31st, and Joseph summarized: “the Spirit of God rested upon the congregation, and great solemnity prevailed” (Ibid., 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.

April 3, 1836—Easter Visions recorded in D&C 110

On Easter Sunday, April 3rd, the saints met in the temple for their worship service. Joseph blessed and the Quorum of the Twelve passed the sacrament. Joseph and Oliver then privately prayed behind a lowered curtain and received a great vision:

:1-10 The Lord Jehovah appears in glory and accepts the Kirtland Temple as His house

:11-12 Moses and Elias each appear and commit their keys and dispensations

:13-16 Elijah returns and commits the keys of his dispensation as promised by Malachi.

The vision of the Lord accepted the Kirtland temple:

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, saying: . . . I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house (D&C 110:1-3, 7).

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 Passover—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.

Conclusion on Joseph’s use of Spiritual Gifts

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The Prophet Joseph Smith surprised the world when he purported to reopen the Christian canon. In addition to the Bible, he claimed that his personal revelations could 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 his religious colleagues of his day.