



# DOCTRINE & COVENANTS

## & CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

### Lesson 18: “Establish ... a House of God,” D&C 95; 109; 110; Our Heritage, pp. 33–36

#### Introduction

As far as we know, only four temples were built by the Lord’s covenant people before our dispensation. Solomon’s temple was the first and it was rebuilt twice. It was also known as the temple of Zerubbabel and the temple of Herod. The Book of Mormon mentions three other temples—one built by Nephi (2 Nephi 5:16), another located in the land of Zarahemla (Mosiah 1:10) where King Benjamin gave his farewell address, and the third being the Bountiful temple where people gathered after the resurrection of the Savior (3 Nephi 11:1).

At the beginning of this dispensation Joseph Smith was a temple builder who constructed or planned five temples: Kirtland, Independence, Far West, Adam-Ondi-Ahman, and Nauvoo. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to be a temple-building church today with 129 currently built and 17 under construction.

#### The Lord commanded the Saints to build the Kirtland Temple.

In **D&C 95**, the Lord called on His people to repent of their disobedience and begin immediately to construct the temple in Kirtland. They had previously been commanded in December 1832 to build the temple, but they had accomplished nothing in that five months. However, only four days after D&C 95 was received, digging of the foundation trenches and cutting of stone commenced.

The purpose(s) of the Kirtland Temple differed from that of present-day temples where we perform saving ordinances for the living and the dead. Its purposes included:

- Preparation of the apostles and pouring out of His Spirit on “all flesh” (**D&C 95:3-4**)
- Endowment of His chosen servants with power from on high (**D&C 95:8-9**)
- Offering of the sacrament, preaching, fasting, prayer; and a school for the apostles (**D&C 95:16-17**)
- A place for the personal appearance of the Savior (**D&C 109:5**)
- Establishment of a house of prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, order, and of God. (109:8)

**D&C 95:13-17** gave instructions to the Prophet about how the temple should be built:

- It should not be after the manner of the world (**13**)
- It should measure 55’ x 65’ in the inner court (**15**)
- The lower part of the inner court was to be dedicated to the sacrament offering, preaching, fasting, prayer, and the offering of holy desires unto the Lord. (**16**)
- The higher part of the inner court was to be the school of the prophets. (**17**)

In addition, when some workers suggested a log or board construction, the Prophet replied: “*Shall we...build a house for our God, of logs? No...I have a plan of the house of the Lord, given by himself; and you will soon see by this, the difference between our calculations and his idea of things.*” (*History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 230).



#### Next Week

#19-*The Plan of Salvation*, Moses 4:2, D&C 19:16-19, and 76:40-42

#### Lesson

#### Highlights

- The Lord commanded the Saints to build the Kirtland Temple.
- The Saints were blessed for their great sacrifices in building the temple.
- Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple.
- The Lord accepted the Kirtland Temple, and ancient prophets restored priesthood keys.
- Temple building and temple work accelerate in our day.

**A study of this lesson will help us understand the significance of temples and encourage us to seek the blessings of the temple in our lives.**



A vision given to the First Presidency revealed the plan for the temple.

**President Fredrick G. Williams** said that a model of the building "*appeared within viewing distance....After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us.*" He later reported that the finished building looked exactly as it had been seen in vision. (In *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Lyndon W. Cook [1981], 198)

### The Saints were blessed for their great sacrifices in building the temple.

**D&C 109:5** indicates that the Kirtland Temple was built in a time of tribulation and poverty. The property was obtained after a new convert, John Tanner, was prompted by the Lord to move to Kirtland from New York. Upon arrival, he provided the \$2000 that purchased the farm on which the temple was built.

The Saints consecrated their time, talents, and means for three years as they labored on the temple. While the brethren provided labor and skill and guarded the temple site at night, the sisters spun and knit to clothe the workers. (*Our Heritage*, 33-34)

### Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple.

The Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple during a 7-hour service on March 27, 1836. **D&C 109** is the dedicatory prayer as received in revelation from the Lord. That prayer was pronounced along with the singing of hymns, the bearing of testimonies, the administration of the sacrament, the delivery of sermons, and the observance of a solemn assembly in which the Prophet and other Church leaders were sustained by those in attendance. The conclusion of the dedication came as the Saints participated in the Hosanna Shout, an event that is part of the dedication of each new house of the Lord.

Responsibilities of members with regard to temples include:

- **D&C 109:7, 14** – We should seek learning diligently by study and by faith
- **D&C 109:17-19** – Our incomings, outgoings, and salutations should be in the name of the Lord
- **D&C 109:20-21** – We must be worthy (as verified by a recommend) and clean to enter
- **D&C 109:23** – When we depart the temple, we should bear gospel tidings to the ends of the earth

Today, the First Presidency receives revelation that determines when and where temples are built.



Kirtland Temple Plan

Blessings attendant to the completion of the temple included visions and the ministering of angels; it was a time of rejoicing according to the Prophet. The greatest blessings came with the dedication of the temple on 27 March 1836 as approximately 1,000 people gathered at the site. "*The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning*" was written for the dedication and the Prophet, Sidney Rigdon, and others delivered sermons. **Eliza R. Snow** recorded that "*Angels appeared to some, while a sense of divine presence was realized by all present, and each heart was filled with 'joy inexpressible and full of glory.'*"

In the dedicatory prayer, the Prophet petitioned the Lord for numerous blessings:

- **D&C 109:15** – The Saints would receive of the fullness of the Holy Ghost
- **D&C 109:22** – The Saints would leave the temple armed with power and watched over by angels
- **D&C 109:25-26** – No weapon or wickedness would prevail against the Saints
- **D&C 109:32-33** – The Lord would break off the yoke of affliction from the Saints
- **D&C 109:36-37** – Spiritual manifestations, like on the Day on Pentecost, would be poured out
- **D&C 109:54-58** – The Lord would prepare the hearts of people across the world for His gospel
- **D&C 109:61-64, 67** – The gathering of the House of Israel would begin
- **D&C 109:72-74** – The Church would fill the whole earth



Kirtland Temple Dedication

Angels appeared as 416 members of the priesthood worshipped evening after the official dedication on March 26, 1836.

### 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."*

(History of the Church, 5:423.)



## The Lord accepted the Kirtland Temple, and ancient prophets.

In **D&C 95:8**, the Lord had promised to endow his servants with power from on high after the completion of the Kirtland Temple. The promised endowment consisted of the Savior's visit, an outpouring of the Spirit, numerous revelations, and the restoration of priesthood keys. The result was increased power and ability being enjoyed by His faithful servants.

In **D&C 110:1-3**, the Prophet described the appearance of the Savior as He accepted the Kirtland Temple. His remarks about the temple are contained in **D&C 110:6-10**.

Keys were restored by Moses, Elias, and Elijah as recorded in **D&C 110:11-16**.



Person	Keys Restored	Blessings and Responsibilities Today
Moses	Gathering of Israel	The authority to preach the gospel to gather Israel (missionary work).
Elias	The dispensation of the gospel of Abraham	The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant and the responsibilities associated with that covenant (see Abraham 2:9-11 for a review of these blessings and responsibilities).
Elijah	Sealing power	The power that makes priesthood ordinances valid in heaven. The sealing power makes possible temple marriage, sealings to children and ancestors, eternal families, and temple ordinance work for the dead.

### Temple building and temple work accelerate in our day.

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### Conclusion

We are encouraged to prayerfully examine our lives and determine how we can participate in temple work. Just as the Saints made sacrifices to build the Kirtland Temple, we should make sacrifices to assist with temple work. Make time to regularly attend the temple. The Lord will bless us as we participate in this great work.

If you don't already, consider displaying pictures of temples in your home. **President Howard W. Hunter** said: *"Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 8).

### Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What sacrifices have you seen members of the Church make to receive temple blessings or to participate in temple work?
- How has temple attendance helped you overcome or bear affliction?
- How can you help accelerate temple work?

