

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.
PRESIDENT PATRIARCH OF THE CHURCH

By the Honorable Joseph Smith

(As recorded in the History of the Church, Vol. 1, p. 212, and in the History of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 107)



Kirtland Temple

KIRTLAND TEMPLE — TODAY

THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE AND TEMPLE WORSHIP

by Truman G. Madsen

(Based on a talk given at the Smith Family Reunion in Kirtland, August 1977)

Often the question has been raised, how early in the Prophet's consciousness, the idea that God would require the building and dedicating of temples and would reveal ordinances to be performed therein, occurred. One way of reading our history is that the first and last revelations he received had to do really with the temple though he may not fully have understood it at first. Remember that when he is given the blessing which is part of Section 2 of our *Doctrine and Covenants* of receiving the priesthood through John the Baptist he told, among other things, that this will never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. Oliver Cowdery's wording, by the way, of that express statement is "that the sons of Levi may offer an offering in righteousness." It later became clear to the Prophet that that offering does have to do with the temple.

Elijah is a character whose life and promises are reviewed when Moroni teaches the Prophet over the successive years. The passages about Elijah from the Book of Malachi were quoted to the Prophet repeatedly that somehow the hearts of the fathers would turn to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers and that this was a key or a power which Elijah would reconfer. One of the dramatic facts from the point of view of the Jewish people is that in their legends down through the centuries during passover week they on the second evening, by tradition, leave symbolically, the door open into their homes, leave an unfilled seat at the head of the table and a goblet of wine. This to remind them that the last promise of the Torah, the Old Testament, has to do with the eventual coming of Elijah. It happens and I don't think it just happens, that the night of April 3, 1836 was the second night of passover that year. Elijah came, exactly in the time that the Jewish people expected he would, though yet they still don't know that. So there was early an awareness in the Prophet's mind that something had to be done involving the building, dedicating, and utilizing of temples.

Now, Kirtland became the preparatory location for the full restoration of those keys and ordinances. It was a revelatory moment when the Prophet was told that a house must be built. The exact dimensions were spelled out and he was told it must be built by the sacrifice of the people, meaning among other things, it would not be easy. And that great blessings depended upon the completion of that work. Our condition at the time as a Church was feeble, struggling, difficult. The Prophet had come to Kirtland from New York only to find many divisions and there was a meeting he attended where they had already been influenced by the peepings and mutterings, as it were, of false spirits. Now, they weren't quite sure they were that and his initial statement was the Devil must leave here or I will. There were administrations, there was a reunion of faith and understanding. The Saints were given a revelation on how to discern between the Spirit of the Lord and other spirits. And the core questions the Prophet asked then and later are still applicable today. One, was any intelligence communicated? You see, just babbling or

speaking in an unknown tongue is not a communication of truth. Only when it is interpreted by a proper spirit is it so. So was any intelligence communicated, he oftentimes asked. And the other, was there anything indecorous in the experience? The bouncing, the violence, the hysteria that sometimes attended what people thought were religious experiences, were condemned by the Prophet as not of God. God's spirit is a refining and glorifying spirit, not a demeaning one.

Well, having faced that, we were not fully secure and having begun to establish as he had been taught the orders and patterns of Church organization, this commandment comes like a bolt from the blue. The Prophet was hesitant. Our people were financially in severe straits. Sickness was not uncommon. Just to have the rudiments of survival is difficult. But as we have earlier observed, in less than 30 days another revelation comes and the Prophet is told, "You have sinned a grievous sin." And what was that? Well, the Lord said, "I have given you a commandment and if you have faith and go forward you shall have power to build the temple. If you do not, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore you shall walk in darkness."

In passing, I observe that it is interesting, love is in that passage made a synonym for light. And darkness follows the absence of love. I think a careful reading of the scriptures will show that there is such a close kinship, if not identity, between light and love in the divine equation that it is impossible to have the one without the other. In any case, he repented and laid the burden upon the people. Many of our enemies had become active and said, when they learned of our intent, that we would never finish it and that they would see to that. As it progressed, there were several attempts to prevent the building and George A. Smith records that on some occasions they had as many as three men guarding while only one man was working, some of them armed with pistols. But nevertheless, difficult though it was, they went forward. The Prophet himself not a skilled laborer could contribute at least his energy and muscle. He, with his old toe frock, went into the stone quarry and with his bare hands helped to quarry the stone. By careful organization it was arranged that every seventh day, (in this case every Saturday) every wagon in the Kirtland area was summoned to haul stone to the location of the temple. Artemus Millet, a convert from Canada (spoken of before) came and supervised. Truman O. Angell, a brilliant and inspired architect, came and had to do with the planning and the organizing of every element of the building.

The late Elder John A. Widstoe, who was one blessed to love the temple (he was in fact promised by a patriarch, "Thou shalt have great faith in the ordinances of the Lord's House) estimates that this building, if you use the measuring rod of the widow's mite, that is if you estimate cost in terms of what the Saints actually had, this building, the Kirtland Temple, cost more per capita than any religious building in American History. It was in that sense, an unprecedented sacrifice. Several of our

historians, Wilford Woodruff included, feel that though the Nauvoo Temple cost much more, it did not constitute the same level of sacrificial effort. It was an unprecedented sacrifice and it was met with an unprecedented divine outpouring. Thereby hangs a tale. But let me for a while talk about the preparatory events.

The Prophet Joseph had difficulty, personally, in making it clear to the Saints why a building should be built at all. We had need, of course, of meeting places. Most of Church gatherings in that period were held in private homes, Isaac Morleys, the Prophet's own front room, and else where. Sometimes they met on the flat, in the open down below Kirtland. And in some cases they simply gathered where they could with a log and a box. So there wasn't a feeling that we didn't need a place. But why this large costly structure? He would say to them over and over, "great blessings depend upon it." I can't make it clear now but you will know in due time." They were acting, therefore, out of trust and love for him more than they were out of knowledge. Had they known then what many of us know now about the temple, it might have been a more meaningful enterprise. But as it was, they had to go on faith. Joseph asked them to give one seventh of their time without pay. Those who worked more than a seventh of their time per week were to be paid in corn meal. The commandment was strong. And women worked just as hard as the men sewing and sealing sweaters and stockings and jackets and pantaloons. They were asked, which is not really a minor matter, to give up all of their precious glass and dishware. This, when Artemus Millet conceived the idea that a special mortar could be made for the outside of the temple and if ground into the mortar were bits and pieces of glass, it would shimmer in the sunlight. That was agreed upon and heirlooms and antiques and precious glass were given not grudgingly, broken into bits and mixed up with the mortar.

Both Heber C. Kimball and the Prophet Joseph comment on the faith of the women and Joseph said over his shoulder one day when he found them inside bustling and working in a systematic, patient way, "Yes, the sisters were the first anciently and they are the first now." Heber C. Kimball's phrase was, "They have born the burden and heat of the day" and that is true. I am informed from some other sources that there were more than 3,500 panes of glass that had to be installed and that was difficult. And the most elaborate window (which by the way has often attracted the attention of architects and there have been many offers of considerable amount of money for it) was the one near the east tower (which, by the way, was there when John Garfield who later became President of the United States used to go to school in an upstairs room in that building long after the Saints had moved).

Just to get the cornerstone laid under the crisis conditions was a major problem. There was hardly anyone in the Kirtland area with the priesthood when they laid the cornerstone. There were a few boys of 15 and 16. They hastened their ordination and made them elders specifically for the purpose and a few other older men somehow infirm served as officers in the ceremonies. We learn of this from President Brigham Young. The Prophet Joseph had received a revelation as to the order even of laying cornerstones. If you think the Lord's house is not a house of order you might observe that Brigham Young later, in connection with the dedication of the cornerstone at the Manti Temple,

arranged that it be done and he said this was according to instruction. At the southeast corner, the point of greatest light; at high noon, the time of the greatest sunlight; on the day of the summer or spring equinox, that season of maximum extent of sunlight; all that to remind us, I take it, that the Temple is indeed a house of light where the heavenly and earthly combine.

Well, there were many other details of labor and involvement on which I cannot now dwell. But we know a little of the period through the eyes of other witnesses and I am going to mention just two.

There was a convert girl named Elizabeth Rollins Lightner. She and her mother came to Kirtland, "gathered" as they said in those days, and the young lady asked to borrow one of the rare copies of the *Book of Mormon* in Kirtland. The man who loaned it to her said, "This belongs to the Prophet himself, and he will be back tomorrow for it. Can you bring it back?" She did, but he learned that she had spend the entire night awake reading it. He was so touched by that he said, "Well, when the Prophet comes, I'll tell him you still have it."

The Prophet came and he told him. "I would like to meet this young lady," said the Prophet. They were introduced at his home, her mother and herself. This was on occasion when they had a few boxes with logs across and the Prophet said there were enough here to hold a meeting. They held a meeting. The Prophet spoke. Present were his brother Hyrum, his father, mother, two of the three witnesses, one of them Martin Harris and others. The testimony of this woman, and she lived to a ripe old age past 90, the testimony of this 14 year old is that as the Prophet spoke that night in his own home, it seemed as if the light that emanated from his face was brighter than the candles on the mantle piece. It was as if, she said, a light had been turned on within him. He bore his testimony in power and then asked that all present kneel in prayer. He himself lead them in prayer. His prayer was so long on that occasion, she records, that several of the younger ones arose and rubbed their knees and then knelt back down to endure to the end.

"Such a prayer," she said, "I have never heard." Then he arose and said in effect, "Brothers and sisters, do you know who has been in your midst tonight?" Someone said, "Was it an angel, Joseph?" "No." Then Martin Harris said, "It was the Savior." And the Prophet put his hand on his head and said, "You were inspired to say that Brother Harris. Yes, the Savior has been in our midst and he has told me something of you. He has commanded me to say certain things to you," which the Prophet then did. And later he gave a blessing to this dear sister. She became one of the faithful who endured incredible struggles for the faith. I mention that of many other prayer meetings, John Murdock records several, Eliza R. Snow, still others. One of many to show that the outpouring and the spirit which sometimes attended the Prophets words were but a foretaste of what was to come through the sacrificial building of the temple.

We also have the testimony of Zera Pulsipher who was a convert in the Church at this time. And he talks of old Father Smith and says of him that when he came into that building (I suppose this would have been after its completion but perhaps also before) that he looked just like an angel. We have spoken often of the Prophet's likenesses but the venerable, aged, seasoned and through much affliction, mellowed father of the Prophet was a man who commanded the respect of the Saints. And the Prophet often put him in charge of fast meetings

which they held. And in those days they held them quite often on Thursdays. People putting away their implements and leaving their work where it was and gathering in the spirit of fasting for testimony meetings. In such meetings prayers were often offered, both in private and public for the completion of the temple. And one of Father Smith's frequent petitions was that it would be fulfilled upon that temple as upon the day of Pentecost, that is, that the Spirit of God would descend upon it as a rushing mighty wind, and that there might be tongues of fire. In due time, as you will see, that prayer was heard.

One other witness to all that went on in this period was a man names Daniel Tyler. And it was Daniel Tyler who became one of the leading patriarchs of the Church and who understood from the earliest Kirtland days that the priesthood, which was given to give efficacy and authority to ordinances, had several branches and ramifications, and that the patriarchal priesthood in the end was the most inclusive and important priesthood, that all men and through all men, all mothers, wives, should receive in a sacred place and that exaltation as it became clarified in subsequent revelations, was in effect, the extending, magnifying and intensifying of the patriarchal and matriarchal priesthood, if you will call it that, throughout the expanding of eternal lives. And that God Himself is the sovereign patriarch. Hints of that understanding came at Kirtland but not until Nauvoo did the full scope of the patriarchal priesthood and the temple and temple marriage become common knowledge to the Saints.

I turn next to an account in outline form of the actual dedicatory services themselves. This is sacred ground and I must go over it only summarily.

This much as background. You would guess knowing human nature, that everyone who had done anything to help with the temple would want to be there in the dedication and that many others who might have been slow or critical or distant would still out of curiosity want to be present. Your guess is correct. The actual capacity of the room is variously estimated but one account of those who came that morning is that there were over 930. The Prophet had said that if children who would be orderly and who were willing to sit on their parents' laps wanted to come they could come. That suggestion was expanded upon and when the Prophet came for the opening session there were two persons in each seat. It gives you a bit of a glimpse of their feeling.

Now the Prophet had had meeting after meeting to prepare them and especially the priesthood bretheren for what was to come. He told them that they must come in purity, come having studied and pondered prayerfully the revelations given on the subject. You might reread sometime with that in mind Section 88 of the *Doctrine and Covenants* where the Lord outlines that this will be a house of, and then several words, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of God. And you will note three specific commandments -- they were to be solemn, they were to cast away all lightmindedness. We are speaking here of that form of lightmindedness that betrays or makes light of, in the sense of ridicules, sacred things. Nowhere in the scriptures is lightheartedness condemned. Nor again, anywhere in scriptures is there a forbidding of genuine humor and appreciation for the foibles of ourselves and others. But lightmindedness in that context means ridicule of the sacred. And many, in spite of the admonition, found themselves upset not

thinking for example, that it could be appropriate that men should wash one anothers feet in the name of the Lord. They thought it was mischievous and that no good could result. They were warned to be solemn, and to avoid lightmindedness.

Secondly, as I have already said, they were warned to become as far as possible purified, to sanctify their hearts and hands, to cleanse their lives, to be clean in preparation for bearing the vessels of the Lord and, as the Prophet later taught, becoming the very vessels of the Lord.

And then third, there was an admonition to study, to read the revelations and to ponder and pray over them. On one occasion, as the climateric promise of all that, the Prophet said to the Bretheren, "Bretheren, all of you who are sufficiently pure shall see the Savior in the solemn assembly." What a promise!

So we have 930 people assembled early in the morning. The Prophet and others of the authorities of the Church on the stand and dedication begins. I think you are all aware of the date -- 27 March, 1836 and you should know they began assembling before 7 a.m. One witness claims that there were over 1,000 persons in attendance. He may have been counting the priesthood on the stand. Joseph the Prophet presided as we now say and Sidney Rigdon conducted. President Rigdon first read two of the Psalms. They are worth reading even now. The 96th and the 24th. Then a hymn written by Parley P. Pratt was sung called "Ere the Veil Rent in Twain." And then President Rigdon offered an opening prayer. The congregation and a small choir then sang William Phelp's hymn called "Waymouth" and then President Rigdon gave a sermon based on Matthew 8. That's where the Master says the foxes have holes, etc., but the Master has not a place to lay his head. He expanded on that, gave it a modern interpretation saying, "This house, today to be dedicated, will become the house of the Lord. For anciently the house had been left desolate, the priesthood had become apostate and Jesus Himself had to drive out of the temple money changers, abusers, and blasphemers, saying it is written, 'My house should be a house of prayer and ye have made it a den of thieves.'" There was a sobriety in what he said. He spoke at length. Then the sustaining of the leaders of the Church occurred in a more detailed fashion than we sometimes do it, Brother Rigdon conducting. And then they sang, "Now Let Us Rejoice," and that ended the morning service.

There was a brief intermission, 15 minutes, long enough for a few of the sisters to take care of their children, but hardly anyone left. Then came the moment for which they had all waited. The Prophet arose and gave the dedicatory prayer. Gave is the word I chose but in fact, he read it; for that prayer, which now constitutes Section 109 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, was given the Prophet by direct revelation and it has been the pattern of all subsequent dedicatory prayers down to the present moment. That was a puzzlement to some of the saints. It seemed strange to them that God to whom we pray should give a revelation telling that person who was to pray, telling him what to say. But so crucial was that prayer and so important that it was one of the revealed word-by-word revelations. And it was magnificent!

I know students of Hebrew who know little of us and less of temples who comment that that prayer seems to them to partake of the Hebraic dualism, the balancing of phraseology and the insights of ancient Israel -- that it

seems to have echoes and kinship with the prayer fragments we have in the Old Testament having to do with the Temple of Solomon. So it does. But that is to be accounted for on the ground that the source ultimately of temple worship is not man, but God. "Oh hear, oh hear, oh hear us Lord," he finished, "That we may mingle our voices with the bright shining seraphs who surround thy throne."

Having given the prayer with the three Amens, all present arose and sang, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning." And then in due time, they did then partake of the sacrament and they did then have some testimonies from the Prophet himself, from Don Carlos Smith, from Oliver Cowdery, from Frederick G. Williams, from David Whitmer and from Hyrum Smith. Then came the Hosanna shout. The first time, so far as I know in this generation that it was introduced, the Prophet taught them how to do it and then they did it. A shout! How can we believe that God wants us to shout? Well, the hymn itself written with light was, "We'll sing and we'll shout with the armies of heaven, hosanna, hosanna, to God and the Lamb," meaning what anciently hosanna with palm branches raised up was, in effect, a two-way reaching. It was on the one hand a plea, "Oh save us," a plea for redemption. But at the same time it was a plea, as it was in the hearts of those who welcomed Jesus triumphantly into Jerusalem, a plea that he enter, that he come; an invitation, in other words, that Christ accept and visit this holy house. To put it still another way, out of their depths, they expressed totally their need for Christ and from the same depths, a prayer for Him to come. And that was done in a shout with the raising of their arms in prayer.

Eliza Snow records (and this is a sweet and to some of you, no doubt, incredible detail) that one mother had come and had been turned away at the door because her child was so small, only two months, that no one felt that he could endure through the entire day. But Father Smith welcomed the woman and said, "You come and I promise you all will be well." Psychologists today tell us that children have two instinctive fears. All others they learn. One, the fear of loud noises and two, the fear of falling. When this mother rose to join in the hosanna shout, the two month old child pushed back his coverlet and joined in the shout.

After that Brigham Young arose to speak and immediately the Spirit of the Lord descended upon him and he spoke in tongues. And David W. Patten was called upon to arise and interpret the tongues which he did. They were in essence, though there is hardly a note about the context, a message both of admonition and a message of divine approval. The Prophet then arose and left his own personal blessing upon the congregation and the service ended at just a little past 4 p.m.

The aftermath of this and subsequent sessions they held was something like a jubilee, for as everyone who could, participated either in person or in second-hand awareness, it drew the Church together into oneness. So intense was that feeling for days and even weeks that many thought the millennium had come, that all tribulation and temptation was past. Such peace was in their hearts that they had no will to do evil. None of the standard battlements were in their lives. And so the Prophet had to warn them more than once that all they were experiencing was of God, but that soon enough opposite experiences would come, the struggles with the adversary and darkness and that they would know again all the trials that are at the core of saintliness.

They couldn't believe that. They went house to house, for example, men, women, children, and would meet together almost as we do on a beautiful Christmas morning and would share their impressions, their experiences, each one having his own to report. And then would say often, "I have a blessing for you brother." And they would bless each other. And the person receiving would say, "I now have a blessing for you." And he would bless.

Outside the temple, even on the day of its dedication there were both members and non-members who sensed what was happening. Even little children, for example, in one case playing on the porch of a nearby home, ran to their mother and said, "Mother, there are men on the temple." She came out and squinted. They were not men...white personages. When her husband came home to report the Prophet had said that angels were present in the temple she understood. Some said that there was a light, some used the word fire, that tangibly emanated from that building and that at night, though in that generation there was no electricity, it still seemed to be illumined. Others feeling this outpouring of this pentecost were interested enough that they inquired and some even helped in the processes of the work of the Church not because they were members but because they were simply caught in the ways of love and light.

It seems almost bitter contrast that Joseph should have to say to the Twelve in one of their meetings, "Bretheren, God will feel after you and he will wrench your very heart strings and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for the kingdom of God." How prophetic that 10 of the 12 were embittered by that wrenching that eventually came. But in the meantime and before that darkness there was more light. I have, for example, the journals of eight who were living in Kirtland at the time who describe their homes and their activities in this period. They record things like this, that occasionally the Prophet would ask them to come after fasting and meet late in the day in the temple and then would say we are going to be here in worship all night and he would arise at the beginning of the meeting after appropriate prayer and it was an orderly prayer that he said received by revelation and then he would say, "Now, as any of you are impressed by the Spirit, do what you are impressed to do." And such things as this occurred: Speaking prophetically and in tongues, arising to say that heavenly music had been heard and others rising and saying "I too heard it." Celestial choirs literally. And this remarkable touch; a father and a mother, (but not if I understand the record related) arose spontaneously on the impression of the Spirit, sang in beautiful harmony in language they did not understand to a tune they had never heard, and then sat down. And then another arose with the gift of interpretation and explained what they had revealed in that song.

Think for just a moment of the harmony of soul that is presupposed in such an experience. Think of that as one way that the promise of the Lord that we shall one day "see as we are seen and know as we are known" could be fulfilled. They speak of remaining through the night, no one tiring, no one falling asleep, feasting on what the Prophet called "the fat things of the Spirit." The effect produced by these was, in many of the Saints, overwhelmingly faith-promoting. There were some, who instead of being lifted and instead of being inspired, felt that this was not somehow what was to be expected. I don't know whether it was more or less that they anticipated and some shortly after this left the Church.

I have from Brother Phelps who wrote four of the hymns that were made classical in this dedication, the testimony that Brother Kimball as well as Brother Williams both while on the stand became aware of personalities, glorified persons present. In one instance, the person was identified as John the Revelator. In another, as Peter. From Eliza R. Snow I have this comment, as this was to be a day of sacrifice as well as of fasting there was a man placed at each door to receive the voluntary donations. On counting the collection it amounts to \$963. They didn't have that to give and yet they gave it. "No mortal language," says Eliza, who was herself something of a master of language, "No mortal language can describe the sweet spirit of love and union. No language can describe the heavenly manifestations. A sense of divine presence was realized by all. Each heart was filled with joy inexpressible."

And then the testimony of George A. Smith in fulfillment of the prayer of Joseph Smith Sr. He arose in a particular meeting, he, George A., and began to prophecy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind. It filled the temple and all the congregation simultaneously arose being move 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." We learned elsewhere that Father Smith, not quite aware of what was happening suddenly stood up and said, "What, is the house on fire?" And the Prophet Joseph replied, "Yes, (in effect) but not the way you think. It is filled with the light and power of God." There is more and yet more but we will leave it at that.

Now we turn to the Kirtland aftermath. You are aware that among the programs established there in the midst of the Saints was what was known as the Kirtland safety society which ironically turned out to be unsafe. It was established on sound principles. But one of its leading officers, (I will not mention his name) fraudulently issued notes contrary to instruction of the Prophet Joseph before he left for a trip to Canada and by the issuing of those notes and by a panic which took over 150 other banks down in the same period, the Kirtland Bank failed. It has been said that no part of man's anatomy is more sensitive than his pocketbook.

The spirit of speculation had become rampant at this time. Land speculation and other kinds. Many of the Saints, perhaps with a glimmer of inspiration but the rest I am afraid something else, really thought that it was intended now that they become in the temporal sense wealthy. They took risks, they made decisions that were foolish. Many of them had paper from the Kirtland Bank which, when it failed, left them without whatever savings they had had. The result, as you could expect, was terrible bitterness. And blame, of course, placed not where it belonged, but upon the head of the Prophet. I have somewhere an article on the entire period we are describing here, describing the banks that went along with this one and expressing conviction that no one could have prevented that bank going under. The national conditions being what they were, it would be a little bit like blaming President Kimball for the recent drought that we had. But in fact, the trial that came as had been prophesied, had its effect in purging. It purged the Church, in a way, of many who had been fair weather members; and it purged many of the faithful of their more greedy and selfish impulses. Another instance of where the Lord overturned a catastrophe to good.

For many years critical scholars of the Mormon historical past have assumed since the ledger book of the Kirtland Bank was not available that it somehow had been a record of illicit transactions and had been destroyed. I am happy to report that some five years ago, one of our students at the University of Chicago found in their library the Kirtland Ledger Book. It is now in our archives. It has been studied carefully by economists and historians. There is no illicit transaction in it. Sooner or later we will acknowledge that Joseph Smith was an honest well-intentioned and good man. No bank in the United States was ever established upon a better foundation, I submit, than the Kirtland Society Bank. And had those who were in charge followed counsel it might have, I do not say it would, have survived the panic.

Without the awful details of the sequence, the end of what happened with the Kirtland Temple is that it was turned by it's enemies, some of them under the direction of John Boynton who had become a bitter apostate, into a barn. A kind of platform was built so that cattle and swine could be herded into it. The very pulpits including that special pulpit which Truman O. Engel built with such care were filled with hay and straw. Contrast. It was to that pulpit, you remember, that the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery repaired with the curtains let down at each of the sequential pulpits and with all of the Saints still present in the temple and prayed as they knelt that they could receive a testimony that the Lord had accepted of the dedicatory prayer. I believe as a personal insight that what then occurred was one of the three highest moments in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. If you ask what three moments was he most exultant and filled with joy? This was one.

I will back up long enough to say the earlier one occurred the day the Church was organized in 1830 after he had already gone through a decade of buffeting and now at last with a sixsome he organizes the Church, receives a revelation. But what is even more to his heart, performs the baptism of his own parents in Seneca Lake. And as if that weren't enough, then goes with the three witnesses and after some difficulty with Martin, they are blessed and also burdened by a manifestation of Moroni. You know what happened. But what you may not know is what it meant to the Prophet. For his mother records that he went home in tears and said, "Now, at last, I am not alone. Now three more have been commanded of God that they must bear witness or be damned." So they were. The power of their testimony is not in any way diminished but is in fact enhanced by the fact (and it is a fact) that though they became embittered for various reasons against Joseph Smith, they did not to their death, we can say this confidently (Richard Anderson has spent 20 years tracing every utterance of those three men to their death). In all their kickings and floundering, they never once denied that they saw an angel, heard the commandment and were commanded to bear testimony that this man, Joseph Smith, had translated by the gift and power of God these plates. The world will learn that that is a binding testimony -- legally and theologically. But the Prophet said, I am no longer alone because they had been given this commandment. Joseph Knight said of that day that the Prophet could not stop weeping. All afternoon. "I never saw a man so wrought upon," he says. It was the gratitude of a soul that had come through his teen years and at last had seen the fruit of what he had done.

Now, back to the pulpit. As they knelt, the record says, the veil was taken from their minds and they saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit before them. Not exactly on it for under his feet, says the record, was "a paved work of pure gold." Strange, but is it the case that a glorified and resurrected Christ will not again touch directly this inferior planet until he descends on the Mount of Olives, touches with his glorified, celestial foot that mount and thus elicits the transformation and earthquake that prepare the earth for the millennium? Perhaps. In any case, the Prophet records, "His eyes were as a flame of fire. His countenance shone above the brightness of the sun. His hair was white as the pure snow. His voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters even the voice of Jehovah saying..." What did he say? He said who he was. "I am the first and the last. I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain. I am your advocate with the Father." And now the phrase that I think meant more to young Joseph than any phrase up until that day. "Behold, your sins are forgiven you. You are clean before me. Therefore, lift up your head and rejoice." He did. "All who are sufficiently pure," he said, "shall see the Savior." He had now been declared sufficiently pure. Then came that series of manifestations accepting the temple by Christ Himself. "My name shall be here. I will manifest myself to my servants in this house. This is the beginning of the blessing that shall be poured about my saints through the world." That promise was made and then having prepared the way for those who had brought keys with them from former dispensations, Joseph and Oliver successively and as joint witnesses saw Moses who conferred the keys of the gathering of Israel and the restoration of the Ten Tribes. I stress this and because those are two, I believe, not one set of keys. And then they saw Elias whose identity remains somewhat mysterious since there have been many who bore that title. But who came with what is recorded as "the gospel of Abraham" promising both Joseph and Oliver that through them all generations afterward

would be blessed, the same promise made to Abraham, and then to culminate it all, Elijah. And with all that the warning which was at the core of the Prophets first vision, also the promise, "By this may you know, now that this happened in effect, now that Malachi's prophecy is literally fulfilled, you may know that the coming of the Lord is nigh, even at the very doors." The most sublime experience of the entire Kirtland days and within weeks they had turned that place into a barn.

We have too, the testimony of some who watched, declare that the way the Prophet Joseph Smith personally had to leave Kirtland is that he was put in a box, nailed in as if he were a corpse, put on a sled and taken out of town. Father Smith had to be let down through a window, a second story window, placed on a horse and he rode out. It was a bitter cold night in every sense of the word cold. I have not mentioned two other phases of the Kirtland experience in which the Prophet was intimately involved and these are not after thoughts but they fit through the entire warp and woof of the narrative. He established there, you will recall, a school, a school of instruction, and a school called the School of the Prophets. Section 88 has specific admonitions about who should come to that school. Other revelations say who should teach it and how and there is even a direction as to the blessings that would attend. Our time being far gone, let me just say that Parley P. Pratt expounded the scriptures including that set of lectures we call "The Lectures on Faith," in a manner so powerful that he was willing at all costs, including walking barefoot until his feet bled, to come periodically to do it. The other glimpse is that out of the same period came Joseph Smith's insight into the promises of family life as a result of the fact that he had to bury two of his own children.

Well, our time is gone, Thus far we then have a glimpse both of the high and low watermarks of the Kirtland Era and the next era we will move to Nauvoo.

