**DC 95                                                 Historical Background**

“On 23 March 1833, a conference of high priests and elders met in the schoolroom above the Whitney store in Kirtland to discuss purchasing land for the proposed temple and other Church buildings. It was decided that Ezra Thayre and Joseph Coe should be appointed agents for the Church in purchasing the farms of Peter French, Elijah Smith, and Isaac Morley. These purchases, together with the property belonging to F.G. Williams, eventually provided land for the Kirtland temple and associated Church holdings. Then, on 4 May 1833, another conference of high priests met at Kirtland to take ‘into consideration the necessity of building a school house,’ as the Saints had been commanded the previous December (see D&C 88:119) and again in March (see D&C 90:7-9). At this conference Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon were appointed to act as a building committee for the Church. They were to raise funds and also to supervise construction of the temple and other Church buildings. It should be remembered that in all these proceedings and in the associated revelations, the term *schoolhouse* or *school*actually referred to the temple, or at least to that part of the temple that would be used for the School of the Prophets.

“Still, the Saints did not seem to catch the vision of the Kirtland Temple. At a conference held in early June 1833 to consider constructing the temple, Lucy Mack Smith reported: ‘Some thought that it would be better to build a frame house. Others said that a frame house was too costly, and the majority concluded upon putting up a log house and made their calculations about what they could do towards building it.’ To these suggestions Joseph responded, ‘And shall we, brethren, build a house for our God of logs? No, I have a better plan than that. I have the plan of the house of the Lord, given by himself. You will see by this the difference between our calculations and his idea of things.’ Joseph’s mother then wrote that Joseph ‘then gave them the full plan of the house of the Lord at Kirtland.’” (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 3:204-205)

**Joseph Smith**

*June 1*. Great preparations were making to commence a house of the Lord; and notwithstanding the Church was poor, yet our unity, harmony and charity abounded to strengthen us to do the commandments of God. The building of the house of the Lord in Kirtland was a matter that continued to increase in its interest in the hearts of the brethren, and the building committee issued the following circular to the different branches of the Church:

*To the Church of Christ in*—                                            Kirtland, June 1, 1833.

We feel under obligations to write to you as well as to all the brethren of the different branches; and we do this, that you, with us, may exert yourselves to bring about the fulfilment of the command of the Lord concerning the establishing, or preparing a house, wherein the Elders who have been commanded of the Lord so to do, may gather themselves together, and prepare all things, and call a solemn assembly, and treasure up words of wisdom, that they may go forth to the Gentiles for the last time; and now, in order to accomplish this, we are directed, yea, we are under the necessity, to call upon the whole Church as a body, that they make every possible exertion to aid temporally, as well as spiritually, in this great work that the Lord is beginning, and is about to accomplish. And unless we fulfil this command, viz: establish an house, and prepare all things necessary whereby the elders may gather into a school, called the School of the Prophets, and receive that instruction which the Lord designs they should receive, we may all despair of obtaining the great blessing that God has promised to the faithful of the Church of Christ; therefore it is as important, as our salvation, that we obey this above-mentioned command, as well as all the commandments of the Lord.

Therefore, brethren, we write this epistle to you, to stir up your minds to make that exertion which the Lord requires of you, to lend a temporal aid in these things above written; and in order that you may know how to conduct the business, we will relate what we have done and are doing here.

We have met in conference, and agreed to form a subscription, and circulate it through the churches. The conference also appointed Hyrum Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, and Jared Carter, a committee to superintend this business, viz: that of circulating subscriptions to establish a fund to build a house, and to aid the Elders to attend this school. The subscriptions are now in circulation among us, and our Heavenly Father is opening the hearts of our brethren beyond the expectation of many; and not one brother among us, as yet, refuses to exert himself to do something in a temporal way to bring about the establishing of this house and school; and we say, may our Heavenly Father open your hearts also, that you, with us, may gather together something to aid as a temporal benefit.

Probably you had better call the officers of the Church immediately together, and appoint someone to circulate a subscription that each individual, after signing, may have a sufficient time to make preparations to pay what he subscribes; for it will be necessary, wherever the brethren are at a distance from Kirtland, that they exert themselves to send on their gift or assistance as soon as they can to Kirtland; though they can, if they believe best, wait on those that sign until the first of September, and then collect and send it to Kirtland.

These considerations we have written to you, knowing it to be our duty thus to do, and may the Lord help you to exert yourselves with us, in raising the means to bring about the glorious work of the Lord; and may we all be kept by the grace of God unto eternal life. Amen.

Hyrum Smith,

Reynolds Cahoon,

Jared Carter,

*Committee.*

The same day [June 1st] I received [D&C 95]. (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1:349-350.)

**DC 95:1 whom I love I also chasten**

**Henry B. Eyring**

Although it may sometimes feel like chastisement when life gets difficult, remember that the scriptures tell us, “Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you whom I love, and whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation, and I have loved you—wherefore, ye must needs be chastened and stand rebuked before my face.” (D&C 95:1-2.) That doesn't sound so strange after you've thought about it. Our Father in Heaven loves us; he wants us to be guided, and he knows we can't be guided in arrogance. So when you're enduring what seems to be a trial or a test, when things don't seem to be going well, you can know that you have a loving Father who is allowing you to have experiences that can bless you.

When you're experiencing a severe trial, ask yourself this question: “Am I trying to do what the Lord would have me do?” If you're not, then adjust your course. But if you are, remember the boy outside the walls of Jerusalem who turned to his brothers and said, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.” (1 Nephi 3:7.)

I bear you my testimony that the Lord will always prepare a way for you to escape from the trials you will be given if you understand two things. One is that you need to be on the Lord's errand. The second thing you need to understand is that the escape will almost never be *out* of the trial; it will usually be *through* it. If you pray to have the experience removed altogether, you may not find the way prepared for you. Instead, you need to pray to find the way of deliverance through it. (*To Draw Closer to God: A Collection of Discourses* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 86.)

**DC 95:1 with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance**

**F. Enzio Busche**

The bad times in our lives—when we experience illness, when we lose opportunities, when we have misfortunes and unexpected disasters, when we are filled with unhappy feelings of emptiness and guilt—any of these can become the turning point of our lives, for these experiences can destroy the results of our personal pride. They can become the catalysts to help us become meek and lowly in heart, for only the meek and lowly in heart fulfill the prerequisites necessary to be accepted into the presence of God: “None is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart.” (Moro. 7:44.)

Many people seem not to be able to reach out to the Father, and they do not look for help from the Savior to find the Father, until they find themselves humbled and chastised and brought down to the torment of despair.

Let us reach out and understand that God in his love for us will not take away from us the dignity of the individual—our free agency. But he can, in his great wisdom and love, chastise us to bitterness and smite us down unless we come to him and wash ourselves clean through repentance, to become ready for his presence.

“Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.” (D&C 19:15.) (“This Is Life Eternal,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1982, 51-52)

**DC 95:3 the great commandment…concerning the building of mine house**

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

It was Dec. 27, 1832, that the Lord gave the command to the Church that his house should be built, in which he said: “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.” (Sec. 88:119.) The elders of the Church it would appear, had not taken this command seriously, presumably it had been overlooked in the consideration of so many wonderful things in that particular revelation. The month of May, in the following year, had arrived; the officers of the Church had met in solemn council to consider other matters, the building of other houses for which there was sore need, and the building of the more weighty and important building had been neglected. While the Lord approved the plan for the building of these other houses, and commended the brethren for their enthusiasm and energy in taking steps to erect them, yet he called attention to the grievous sins of the brethren in their neglect to build the more important structure. The Kirtland Temple was necessary before the apostles (who had not yet been called), and other elders of the Church could receive the endowment which the Lord had in store for them. The elders had been out preaching the Gospel and crying repentance ever since the Church was organized and many great men had heard and embraced the truth, nevertheless the elders could not go forth in the power and authority which the Lord intended them to possess until this Temple was built where he could restore keys and powers essential to the more complete preaching of the Gospel and the administering in its ordinances. (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 2: 166 - 167.)

**DC 95:4 For the preparation wherewith I design to prepare mine apostles to prune my vineyard**

Can you imagine sending missionaries into the mission field before they had received the endowment? Would they be able to preach the gospel with as much power and authority? Would they enjoy the same protection from the powers of Satan?

The Lord knows that his servants need the power that comes from receiving this holy ordinance. In 1833, even before the apostles had been called, the Lord was anticipating their missions and ministry. They were to receive at least a portion of the endowment before they were to travel to Great Britain for the great harvest that awaited them. Otherwise they would not have been so successful.

“When the Twelve Apostles were called and ordained, in the early months of 1835, they were told that they must cross ‘the mighty deep’ and preach the gospel to other nations. But, said **Oliver Cowdery** in the apostolic charge, ‘You are not to go to other nations till you receive your endowments. . . . You need a fountain of wisdom, knowledge and intelligence such as you never had.’

“From that time forward the Prophet worked industriously to prepare the Saints for the endowment. In March, 1835, the school in Kirtland closed, ‘to give the Elders an opportunity to go forth and proclaim the Gospel, preparatory to the endowment.’ Labor in the ministry would assist them to develop the needed humility for that blessing. Heretofore the Prophet had been able to bring but one or two, or at the most but few, to the point of faith and humility necessary to behold with him the visions and powers of God. Now the Church was to be offered this blessing; but it would take preparation. In October, 1835, he admonished the Twelve ‘to prepare their hearts in all humility for an endowment with power from on high.’ The following month a revelation reproved that quorum for their weaknesses and declared, ‘Verily I say unto you, they must all humble themselves before me, before they will be accounted worthy to receive an endowment.’” (*Hyrum Andrus, Joseph Smith, the Man and the Seer* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960], 88)

**DC 95:6 they are walking in darkness at noon-day**

**LeGrand Richards**

Now, as I love the Saints for their faithfulness, I also feel remorse and sorrow for those who fail to have that kind of faith, for those who are not willing to do their part, for those who have discontinued attending their meetings. Brigham Young said that when we fail to attend our sacrament meetings and observe our prayers, the Spirit of the Lord will withdraw himself, and a spirit of darkness will come over us. Now there are a great many people in our midst who have ceased attending their meetings, and who do not observe their prayers. Some of them are near to us, some of them are dear to us, but the Lord does withdraw his Spirit. Just within the last week I had a woman in my office who told me how her husband had quit doing his duty and how the Lord had withdrawn his Spirit. She said, "Sometimes I think he is almost possessed of the devil." Well, the Lord knew that we could not be disobedient to his commandments and still enjoy his Spirit. I want to read the twelfth verse of the ninety fifth section of the Doctrine and Covenants.

If you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore, you shall walk in darkness.

And when people walk in darkness, they cannot love the brethren; they cannot love the Lord; they cannot love the people; they cannot love this great Latter-day cause, the greatest movement the world has ever known, aside from the great atonement of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. At least that is my appraisal of it. I think that is what the Lord had in mind when he said in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

But behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called but few of them are chosen.

   They who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day. (D. & C. 95:5-6.)

The noonday is the brightest period of the day, and with all this glorious truth about us, some walk in darkness. (*Conference Report, October 1950*, Afternoon Meeting 152.)

**Theodore M. Burton**

That is just exactly what many of us do, when the gospel is so light and so bright around us that a child could see. Many times we close our eyes and close our ears and will not see or listen. (*Conference Report, April 1961*, Afternoon Meeting 128.)

**DC 95:7 you should call your solemn assembly**

“In Doctrine and Covenants 95:7 [D&C 95:7], the Lord explained the purpose of that solemn assembly—‘that your fastings and your mourning might come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.’

“From these revelations, we can see that solemn assemblies are held to enhance the Saints’ spirituality and to give added emphasis to the importance of the assembly’s purpose. The **Prophet Joseph Smith**said, ‘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.’ (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, p. 91.)

“**Heber C. Kimball** recorded the Prophet’s instructions to the elders before that solemn assembly: ‘We had been commanded to prepare ourselves for a solemn assembly. At length the time arrived for this assembly to meet; previous to which the Prophet Joseph exhorted the elders to solemnize their minds, by casting away every evil from them, in thought, word and deed, and to let their hearts become sanctified, because they need not expect a blessing from God without being duly prepared for it, for the Holy Ghost would not dwell in unholy temples.’ (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball,* 3d ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967, p. 91.)

“This long-awaited solemn assembly was held in the Kirtland Temple on 30 March 1836, three days after its dedication. In the assembly, three hundred brethren met and received some of the ordinances of the gospel, and the Prophet Joseph Smith set in order the Church’s different quorums. (See *History of the Church*, 2:430–33; D&C 88:139–141; D&C 109:35.)” (Robert J. Norman, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1988, 53)

**DC 95:8 endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high**

The endowment can be defined as a gift of spiritual power. It is the power to overcome Satan and his armies. Through covenants, the endowment harnesses the power of the Lord so that we may be shielded from all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Without the endowment and the power of the atonement, we cannot overcome the world. How important is it that we overcome? The Lord answers that question for us:

        To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev. 2:7)

        He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death (Rev. 2:11)

        To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (Rev. 2:17)

        He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. (Rev. 2:26-28)

        He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels (Rev. 3:5)

        Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name(Rev. 3:12)

        To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (Rev. 3:21)

**Brigham Young**

Your *endowment* is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 2: 31 - 32.)

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

When **President Gordon B. Hinckley** announced an unprecedented number of new temples last April, he declared that “temple ordinances become the crowning blessings the Church has to offer.” He is extending these crowning blessings to more Latter-day Saints than ever before. In the house of the Lord, faithful Church members can be endowed “with power from on high,” power that will enable us to resist temptation, honor covenants, obey the Lord’s commandments, and bear fervent, fearless testimony of the gospel to family, friends, and neighbors. (“Cultivating Divine Attributes,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 27)

**Boyd K. Packer**

The blessing of the endowment is required for full exaltation. Every Latter-day Saint should seek to be worthy of this blessing and to obtain it. (*The Holy Temple*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980], 154.)

**DC 95:9 I command you to tarry, even as mine apostles at Jerusalem**

The resurrected Lord, after having eaten fish and honeycomb in the presence of the disciples, declared, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (Lu 24:49) Most people understand this to mean that the Holy Ghost would be poured out upon them at the day of Pentecost. Such an interpretation is correct.

However, the context of section 95 has to do with the endowment. We can conclude, therefore, that the faithful were also endowed as part of “the promise of the Father.” For forty days, the resurrected Lord ministered among the faithful. What did he say? What did he do? What would he have taught them? If his words in mortality were important enough to meticulously record, how much more important would they be to record after his resurrection? Were the apostles just negligent and forgetful on such an important matter? The mystery is not so mysterious to the latter-day saints. It is apparent that during the famous forty days, the Master instructed them on ordinances so holy, so sacred, so heavenly, that they were not to be recorded.

Perhaps in the lives of Peter and the other apostles, we can appreciate the great difference in their spirituality and testimony *after* they were endowed with power from on high compared to *before* they were endowed. For the ancient apostles and for the latter-day ones as well, true spiritual greatness and priesthood power came only *after*they had been endowed.

**DC 95:12 if you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you**

**Neal A. Maxwell**

It is possible, noted the Lord, for such individuals to be “walking in darkness at noon-day.” (D&C 95:6.) How does this condition arise? Quite simply: “If you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore you shall walk in darkness.” (D&C 95:12.) It is not that God ceases to love the sinner (though despising his deeds); it is that the sinner ceases to love God—and the darkness deepens.

“There are still other scriptural references to individuals who “love darkness rather than light.” (See D&C 10:21; 29:45.) When, however, we reach a certain point—when our eye is single to God's glory we will be “filled with light, and there shall be no darkness” in us, “and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.” (D&C 88:67.) Note, however, that the continued presence in us of light and truth clearly depends upon our keeping that first great commandment. (*Notwithstanding My Weakness* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 81 - 82.)

**DC 95:14 let it be in the manner which I shall show unto three of you**

Only two days after D&C 95 was received, a conference of High Priests was convened in the translating room in Kirtland. “The conference appointed Joseph Smith, Jun., Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams to obtain a draft or construction of the inner court of the house.” (*History of the Church*, 1:352)

“Much is said in early Latter-day Saint sources concerning God's instructions for the building of the Kirtland Temple. According to **Brigham Young**: ‘Joseph not only received revelation and commandment to build a Temple, but he received a pattern also, . . . for without a pattern he could not know what was wanting, having never seen one, and not having experienced its use.’  **Orson Pratt** stated: ‘When the Lord commanded this people to build a house in the land of Kirtland, he gave them the pattern by vision from heaven, and commanded them to build that house according to that pattern and order; to have architecture, not in accordance with architecture devised by men, but to have everything in that house according to the heavenly pattern that he by his voice had inspired to his servants.’

“Truman Angell, who was intimately involved with the construction, [quoted **Frederick G. Williams** as follows]:

Joseph received the word of the Lord for him to take his two counsellors Williams and Rigdon and come before the Lord and he would show them the plan or model of the House to be built: We went upon our knees, called on the Lord, and the Building appeared within viewing distance: I being the first to discover it. Then all of us view it together. After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seem to come right over us, and the Makeup of this Hall seems to coincide with what I there saw to a minutia.

“Once, while Truman Angell was working on the finishing touches on the first floor of the temple, Frederick G. Williams entered it. When he was asked how it looked to him, ‘he answered that it looked like the model he had seen. He said President Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and himself were called to come before the Lord and the model was shown them. He said the vision of the Temple was thus shown them and he could not see the difference between it and the House as built.’” (Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*[Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994], 160.)

**DC 95:16-17 let the lower part…be…for your sacrament offering…And let the higher part…be…for the school of mine apostles**

“[The Lord] specified that the temple was not to be built ‘after the manner of the world,’ but according to a plan that he promised to reveal. (D&C 95:13-14.) The chapel on the main floor was to be used ‘for your sacrament offering, and for your preaching, and your fasting, and your praying.’ A similar hall on the second floor was to house ‘the school of mine apostles.’ (D&C 95:16-17.) Five small rooms in the attic were used as offices or classrooms.

“Thus, ‘the design and construction of the Kirtland Temple,’ **Elder Boyd K. Packer** explained, ‘was different from that of all other latter-day temples because its purpose was different. While already in 1836 certain ordinances had been introduced in a limited way which later would form part of the regular temple ordinances, the sacred ordinances and ceremonies performed in today's temples were not done in this first temple.’ Specifically, **President Brigham Young** pointed out, the Kirtland Temple ‘had no basement in it, nor a font, nor preparations to give endowments for the living or the dead.’ The temple was more of a multipurpose building intended for general functions rather than only for sacred ordinances.” (Susan Easton Black et al., *Doctrines for Exaltation: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 18.)