

Background

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124 was received almost two years after the Prophet and his associates were allowed to escape from custody in Missouri and join the Saints in Illinois. As a result of the Extermination Order issued by Missouri governor Lilburn Boggs and the resulting attacks on the Saints in Missouri, members of the Church fled to Quincy, Illinois, where they were received with warmth and helped tremendously by the citizens of that city.¹ The leaders of the Church, searching for a permanent gathering place, purchased land in a low-lying area named Commerce on a bend of the Mississippi River. A city was laid out, to which members of the Church from the United States and Great Britain began to gather, and the name was changed to Nauvoo, which is Hebrew for "a beautiful place."²

Doctrine and Covenants 124 was received shortly after the governor of Illinois signed the charter for the city of Nauvoo along with several other charters, including one for the University of Nauvoo. This revelation became something of a blueprint for the development of Nauvoo and the Church for the rest of Joseph Smith's life. The principal items addressed are the proclamation to the kings and rulers of the earth, sending the gospel to all nations (see vv. 1–14), the construction of the Nauvoo House (see vv. 22–25, 56–83), the construction of the Nauvoo Temple (see vv. 26–28), the priesthood ordinances to be performed in the temple (see vv. 29–44), and the organization of the priesthood quorums (see vv. 123–45).³ The Prophet recorded no background information about this revelation.

Commentary

1. For unto this end have I raised you up. The Lord states here again the role of the Prophet Joseph. In this isolated little community, obscure to most of the world, the reminder is given that Joseph Smith as one of the weak things of the earth has been raised up to show forth the wisdom of God. The Lord earlier revealed that Joseph Smith and his associates though "unlearned and despised" would through the restoration of the fulness of the gospel, "break down the mighty and strong ones" of this world and "thrash the nations by the power of [his] Spirit" (D&C 1:17–19; 35:12–14).

2–14. Make a solemn proclamation. The Saints were first commanded to publish a proclamation of peace to the world on 28 March 1835 (see D&C 105:39). A proclamation was published on 15 January 1841 from Nauvoo addressed to the Saints scattered abroad. It is not clear whether this proclamation was in fulfillment of the command given in Doctrine and Covenants 105. Four days later, on 19 January 1841, the Saints were commanded to issue another proclamation (see v. 2). This proclamation was to be addressed to the kings of the world and federal and state leaders in the United States (see v. 3). It was to be written under the direction of the Holy Ghost to warn these leaders that God was in command and they were as grass which would soon fall (see vv. 5–7). The leaders were to be invited to soften their hearts and allow the gospel to be preached in their lands (see vv. 9–11).

Although several assignments were given and some effort expended, because of the pressure of building the temple and various disruptions, this proclamation was not written during the lifetime of Joseph Smith. After his death, the Quorum of the Twelve took responsibility to fulfill the command by issuing a proclamation to the world in 1845. The proclamation reviewed the history of the Church and the problems it faced as a result of the persecution in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. It testified of the future establishment of Zion and the second coming of the Lord, and it invited leaders of the various lands to open their doors to the preaching of the gospel.

That the Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles was published in fulfillment of the revelation is made clear by Wilford Woodruff in the *Millennial Star* of 15 October 1845, and that it was actually composed by Parley P. Pratt is acknowledged by Brigham Young in his letter to Parley of 26 May 1845.⁴ Elder B. H. Roberts indicated that the author was Parley P. Pratt.⁵

On 3 October 1975, Ezra Taft Benson, then president of the Quorum of the Twelve, referred to this proclamation and read portions of it in a general conference address.⁶

5, 7. What shall befall them in a time to come. Throughout biblical history, the prophets of God were told what would happen to the nations that they served. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others prophesied warnings concerning the downfall of the nations if they did not return to the God of Israel. Latter-day prophets have the same authority and mandate. The Lord informed Joseph in verse 7 not to fear the rulers of the world, for they were as grass and flowers before the Lord and therefore, if they did not respond to the proclamation, would soon fall.

6. For the set time has come to favor her. In Doctrine and Covenants 64:32, the Lord declared "all things must come to pass in their time." Elder Dallin H. Oaks declared: "During His lifetime the Lord instructed the Twelve Apostles not to preach to the Gentiles but 'rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 10:5–6; see also 15:22–26). Then, at the appropriate time, this instruction was reversed in a great revelation to the apostle Peter. Only then, at the precise time dictated by the Lord, was the gospel taken to the Gentiles (see Acts 10–11).

"As this example shows, continuing revelation is the means by which the Lord administers His timing. We need that revelatory direction. For example, many of us or our descendants will doubtless participate in the fulfillment of prophecies about the building of the city of New Jerusalem (see D&C 84:2–4). But in this matter the timing is the Lord's, not ours. We will not be approved or blessed in clearing the ground or pouring the footings for that great project until the Lord has said that it is time. In this, as in so many other things, the Lord will proceed in His own time and in His own way."⁷

9. I will visit and soften their hearts, many of them for your good. The Quorum of the Twelve was establishing the Church in the British Isles at the time this revelation was received. The time would soon come when the gospel message would be taken to the nations of Europe and elsewhere. Many from these nations would flow into Nauvoo and later the Utah Territory to strengthen and build up the Church in fulfillment of this promise.

12. Robert B. Thompson. Brother Thompson's death in August 1841 prevented his assisting in preparing the proclamation.

15. Hyrum Smith. Here was a man whom the Lord loved. The Lord declared, "I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me, saith the Lord." Once he came to know that his brother, Joseph, was a prophet of God, he

did not waver in his support. He was with Joseph throughout the trials in Kirtland, Missouri, Illinois, and Carthage Jail. He truly stood as the second witness of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. President Heber J. Grant made this observation of Hyrum's qualities: "No mortal man who ever lived in this Church desired more to do good than did Hyrum Smith, the patriarch. I have it from the lips of my own sainted mother that of all the men she was acquainted with in her girlhood days in Nauvoo, she admired Hyrum Smith most for his absolute integrity and devotion to God, and loyalty to the prophet Joseph."⁸

19. David Patten, Edward Partridge, and Joseph Smith Sr., named in this verse, had all died. David Patten died on 25 October 1838, at Crooked River, Missouri (see D&C 116), Bishop Edward Partridge died in Nauvoo on 27 December 1840, and Father Smith died in Nauvoo on 14 September 1840. This verse was undoubtedly reassuring to the families of these men and the Saints generally, as it indicated that these brethren were accepted before God and enjoying his presence.

20. George Miller. The Lord described George Miller at this time as a man without guile, one who could be trusted because of his integrity. Later, however, George Miller changed. He became an important figure in Nauvoo, serving as trustee-in-trust for the Church and a bishop, "like unto" Bishop Partridge (v. 21). He also supervised the obtaining of timber from Wisconsin for the building of the temple. He served with the Saints after the death of Joseph Smith and traveled with them to Winter Quarters. There he rejected the leadership of Brigham Young in 1847 and was excommunicated from the Church on 3 December 1848. He journeyed to Texas and joined with Lyman Wight and other apostates. He soon became dissatisfied with Wight and moved to Michigan, joining with James J. Strang. He served several missions for the Strangite movement, including a mission to Texas in a failed effort to reclaim Wight. After Strang's death, Wight proceeded toward California but died en route, in Meringo, Illinois, in 1856.

22–24, 60–82. Build a house unto my name. This phrase refers to the building of the Nauvoo House, a boarding house for visitors and travelers. To pay for the cost of the house, plans were made to sell shares of stock to finance the construction of the building. Joseph Smith donated the land on which the house was to be built, and in return he and his descendants were to receive rooms in the hotel for their use (see v. 59). Verses 60–82 command several brethren to purchase stock in this house. With its position on a bend in the Mississippi River, the Nauvoo House would be a place where "strangers" from afar could lodge and where the "weary traveler may find health and safety while he shall contemplate the word of the Lord" (v. 23). Travelers could there receive "counsel from those whom I have set to be as plants of renown, and as watchmen upon her walls" (v. 61). Therefore, the command was given to keep the house "holy" (v. 24).

The Nauvoo House was started in the fall of 1841, but progress was slow, and the house, as originally planned, was never completed. The labors of the Saints focused on the temple, and at first, funding was not available for the house. After the Prophet's death, the deed of the Nauvoo House was transferred to Emma Smith. By 1846 the walls reached the level of the second floor. After Emma married Lewis Bidamon, Bidamon used part of the uncompleted building to build a two-story home, known as the Riverside Mansion, on the southwest corner of the lot. The home built and lived in by Lewis Bidamon and Emma Smith Bidamon still stands and is owned by the Community of Christ Church (formerly Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints).

Joseph Smith put a copy of the manuscript of the Book of Mormon in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House in 1841. It was recovered by Lewis Bidamon, who gave pages of this manuscript to visitors in Nauvoo.⁹ The bodies of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were buried under the Nauvoo House when they were brought from Carthage. They were later removed and buried in what is now the family cemetery across the street.

25. Let all my saints come from afar. This was a command for the Saints to move to Nauvoo. It was the intent of the Lord that the Saints build not only a city but also a temple, and the gathering was critical for that purpose. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared the purpose of the gathering of the Saints of God: "What was the object of gathering the Jews, or 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.

"It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world. Jesus did everything to gather the people, and they would not be gathered, and He therefore poured out curses upon them. Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles."¹⁰

26–48. Build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein. This statement was a command to build a temple in Nauvoo, the fifth of the temples the Lord had commanded to be built. Kirtland, Ohio, and Independence, Far West, and Adam-ondi-Ahman, Missouri, were the sites of the other temples, but only the Kirtland Temple had been completed. In these verses, the Saints were commanded to transport wood and metal to Nauvoo to be used as building materials for the temple (see vv. 26–27). This commandment was fulfilled when the Prophet sent men up the Mississippi River to Wisconsin for timber. Stone was quarried at Nauvoo; many of the workers on the temple were craftsmen who had immigrated to Nauvoo from the East and from Great Britain.

The temple was started in February 1841. On 6 April 1841, the cornerstone was laid. Work continued on the different levels of the temple. After the baptismal font was completed, the first baptisms for the dead were performed on 21 November 1841. As other areas of the temple were completed, initiatory and endowment work was performed. After the Prophet Joseph's death on 27 June 1844, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles continued to direct the work on the temple until it was completed. It was dedicated privately on 30 April 1846 (to avoid possible mob violence) and publicly on 1–3 May 1846. After the Saints fled from Nauvoo, the temple was desecrated by mobs and set on fire on 18 November 1848. All that remained were the walls, three of which fell or were weakened by a tornado on 27 May 1850. It had served its purpose—that of introducing sacred temple work for the dead as well as for the living. A new temple, dedicated in June 2002 on the very spot where the original once stood overlooking the Mississippi River, stands as a monument to the great faith and sacrifice of the early Saints.

28. Not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost. The Lord indicated in this verse that the fulness of the priesthood needed to be restored. Joseph Smith taught that the only way to receive the fulness of the priesthood was to receive it in the same way Jesus Christ did: "And that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord."¹¹ Elijah had restored the keys of sealing associated with the priesthood in the Kirtland Temple. The time had come for those keys to be used in behalf of all worthy Saints and their ancestors. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught some of the brethren in the upper story of his

Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, "instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood . . . and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds."¹² The Prophet at another time taught: "The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth."¹³ The fullness of the Priesthood can only be obtained in the temple. It can be received in no other place nor no other way.¹⁴

29–36. Baptismal font. President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "So important did the Lord consider baptisms for the dead that he authorized the Saints to be baptized for their dead in the Mississippi River, until a place could be provided in his house for this purpose. He further said he would give them sufficient time to build such a house, and while they were doing so, their baptisms for their dead would be acceptable to him if performed in the river, but after a place was prepared, then all baptisms for the dead in the river must cease, for this ordinance as well as other ordinances for the dead properly belongs to the house of the Lord. This revelation was given January 19, 1841, and from that time until the October conference of the Church in 1841, the baptisms in the river were accepted. At the conference in October, the Prophet announced that the time had come to discontinue that practice, and from that time forth baptisms for the dead must be performed in the temple. Though the temple was not finished at that time, it had in the six months progressed far enough so that the basement could be enclosed, and in the basement a font had been built and dedicated, so that early in November, 1841, under the direction of the Prophet Joseph, baptisms for the dead commenced in the house of the Lord."¹⁵

34. Therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained. The Lord indicated that one of the reasons for building the temple was to have a place where he could restore the fullness of the priesthood (see v. 28). He promised that he would show Joseph Smith all things pertaining to the priesthood (see v. 42). In the temple are used the keys of the holy priesthood, which bring honor and glory to the Saints in the Father's kingdom (see also D&C 84:19–22).

36. In Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem. The wording of this verse is very intriguing. First, it informs the Saints that the Nauvoo Temple would not be the only one built. Others would be built in the stakes of Zion. Today, that prophecy is being fulfilled as temples are being built throughout the world. Second, Jerusalem is identified as a place where there will be built, eventually, a temple of the Lord.¹⁶

38. Moses that he should build a tabernacle. We do not fully understand the extent of the ordinances practiced by the Israelites during the time of Moses. Moses initially taught the children of Israel what was needed to prepare them to behold the face of God, which would have included the higher ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood and the temple. Nevertheless, the Israelites "hardened their hearts. . . . Therefore, [the Lord] took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued" (D&C 84:24–26). Thus, the ordinances generally available to the Israelites in the tabernacle in the wilderness would have been those pertaining to the lesser, or Aaronic, Priesthood.

39–40. Your anointings, and your washings. On Wednesday, 4 May 1842, in the upper story of his Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, the Prophet Joseph met with seven brethren—Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards (members of the Quorum of the Twelve and the future First Presidency) and James Adams, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and George Miller—"instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments, and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood."¹⁷ This was the first time the temple endowment, as we know it, was administered in this dispensation.

39. Which my people are always commanded to build. The command to build temples is not new to this dispensation, and the effect of the temples on society is immeasurable. Elder John A. Widtsoe observed: "When the history of human thought shall be written from the point of view of temple worship, it may well be found that temples and the work done in them have been the dominating influence in shaping human thought from the beginning of the race. Even today," he continued, "political controversies are as nothing in determining the temper of a people, as compared with religious sentiments and convictions, especially as practiced in the temples of the people."¹⁸

41–42. I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world. The Lord was willing to show the Prophet and the Saints all things that pertain to the temple and the priesthood. "It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world. . . . Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles."¹⁹ All of these things will be made known during the dispensation headed by Joseph Smith, the dispensation of the fullness of times.

45–48. If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants. The key to real success in this mortal life is to follow the counsel of God. Whether it comes through revealed word, the Spirit, or authorized servants of the Lord, it is the same (see D&C 1:38). If individuals think they know more than God does, they will lose and in the process pollute the ground upon which they stand and violate the ordinances and covenants into which they have entered (see v. 46). As in the case of the parable of the Lord and the choice piece of land (see D&C 101:44–62), if the Saints in Nauvoo would not take seriously the command to build a temple, they would lose the spiritual blessings in store for them and would bring upon themselves the cursings and judgments of God. We, too, are faced with the choice to follow the counsels of living prophets and apostles. There are always others we can follow and give heed to. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. taught: "Some of the greatest heresies that have crept into the Christian religion came in through a very few men who held no real official position, mostly, but who spent their time and their talents, and they were great, in trying to rationalize the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is some evidence—these were called 'schoolmen,' and the results of their work 'scholasticism,'—and I am persuaded that we have some tendency in that direction as among ourselves, and I hope that the people will not listen to the rationalizing of men who undertake to make God's plan conform to what they think it should be in their weak and ineffective reasonings."²⁰

49–54. Their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work. The Lord gave a command to build a temple in Zion (see D&C 97:10–15), but the members of the Church were driven out of Jackson County before they were able to fulfill that command. The Saints were commanded to build a temple in Far West but were driven out of the state by servants of the evil one before they could carry out that command. The Lord informed them in these verses that he accepted their sacrifice and would not hold them accountable for the unfulfilled commandments. Instead, the iniquity and transgression of those commands would be placed upon those who prevented the work from being performed. We gain from these verses the assurance that the Lord expects us to do the best we can. Our best is what he expects of us. If we do all we can to fulfill his commandments, he will accept our sacrifice. If others interfere and prevent us from performing, he will

hold our enemies guilty unto the third and fourth generations, unless they repent. God will not hold us accountable for that which is beyond our control.

56–59. Let my servant Joseph and his house have place therein, from generation to generation. The Prophet Joseph Smith and his children were to have stock in the Nauvoo House and were to have rights to the rooms for their housing from generation to generation. This applies only to the boarding house and has no application to the succession of the Presidency of the Church, as it is supposed by some. The anointing mentioned in verse 57 must be taken in context with verses 55 and 56, which refer to the building of the temple and the Nauvoo House.

60–85. The Lord sets the parameters within which the building of the Nauvoo House was to be accomplished. Individuals were instructed to buy stock in the house and would, if possible, receive dividends in return. This would give the stockholders and their descendants rights to the stock through generations. For a discussion of the lives of the individuals mentioned in these verses, see Susan Easton Black, *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*.

83. I the Lord have a scourge prepared for the inhabitants thereof. The people, both nonmembers and apostates, drove the Saints from the land of Kirtland. Therefore, a scourge was placed upon that land. It is difficult to tell exactly what the scourge was, but when the body of the Saints fled from Kirtland, the gospel, along with the prophets, priesthood keys, and their attendant blessings went with them. Hyrum Smith, writing from Nauvoo as the Patriarch of the Church, told the Saints that while they had been driven out of their houses and lands at Kirtland, "Yet your children may possess them, but not until many years shall pass away."²¹Kirtland declined in population and wealth until by 1890 only 909 individuals lived there. In 1979, Ezra Taft Benson, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, presided over the groundbreaking for a new chapel in Kirtland. During his address, he removed the scourge that had been placed on Kirtland. Since that time a stake has been organized, and the Church has returned to the area in greater force.²²

84–86. With my servant Almon Babbitt, there are many things with which I am not pleased. Almon Babbitt was a member of Zion's Camp and a member of the original Quorum of Seventy organized in February 1835. At the time Doctrine and Covenants 124 was received, he was serving as president of the Kirtland Stake. It appears that the problems he was having at that time centered on his desire to build Kirtland again. He advised the emigrating Saints to stay in Kirtland instead of moving to Nauvoo as the Lord commanded. He also attempted to persuade members living in Nauvoo to move to Kirtland. Part of his motivation was to rebuild Kirtland, but part of his motivation was to gain financially from the influx of Saints back into the Kirtland area. He was disfellowshipped from the Church for this action but moved to Nauvoo in 1842, where he was returned to full fellowship. He remained a member of the Church and served in various capacities in it until his death. He was killed by Indians at Ash Hollow, Nebraska, in September 1856 as he was returning from Washington, D.C. He had been buying supplies for a new statehouse in Salt Lake City.²³

84. Seteth up a golden calf for the worship of my people. Just as the children of Israel began to worship the golden calf that Aaron built, so members of the Church worship false gods when they stray from the God of Israel and his servants. In this case, following the counsel of Almon Babbitt instead of Joseph Smith was worshiping a golden calf. In our lives, the golden calf could be education, social life, political life, sports, or material wealth—in short, anything that takes us away from our covenants and obedience to God. Elder Spencer W. Kimball stated: "It would include both tangible and less tangible things, and everything which entices a person away from duty, loyalty, and love for and service to God."²⁴

86–88. William. This passage refers to William Law (see vv. 82–83). He was concerned for his children, who were exposed to the diseases from which the Saints were suffering and from which many had died. The Lord reassured him that if he kept the commandments, his family would be well.²⁵ He is commanded to preach the gospel in Warsaw and Carthage, areas of strong anti-Mormon sentiment. Burlington and Madison were across the river from Nauvoo in Iowa.

89–91. New translation of my holy word. This phrase has reference to the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, which the Prophet and his scribes had been working on since 1830. It was their desire, along with the Lord's, that the work be finished and published as soon as possible. That goal was not achieved in the Prophet's lifetime, however. The inspired translation was eventually published in 1867 by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ). William Law was to use his talents and interest, or material goods, to care for the poor and to assist in the publishing of Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible. He was to be appointed as a counselor in the First Presidency, replacing Hyrum Smith.

91–94. Hyrum. On 14 September 1840, the Patriarch to the Church, Joseph Smith Sr., died in Nauvoo. By the command of the Lord, Hyrum was released as a counselor in the First Presidency and called as patriarch to the Church to replace his father. The office of patriarch came to Hyrum by blessing but also by right, meaning that as the oldest son, he had inherited rights to this office. Throughout the history of the Church, the office of Patriarch to the Church has been held by descendants of the Smith family. Today, however, because of the growth of the stakes of Zion in all parts of the world, the need for a Church patriarch has diminished, and no one has been called to serve in that office since 1979. As Assistant President of the Church, Hyrum held all the keys of the priesthood and was appointed "a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator" unto the Church, "as well as my servant Joseph" (v. 94).

95–96. Oliver Cowdery. Oliver Cowdery was excommunicated on 12 April 1838, in Far West, Missouri, for apostasy. Hyrum was called to serve as the Assistant President of the Church in place of Oliver. In that position, he stood as a second witness of the events and doctrines of the Restoration. Thus Hyrum was to bear record of the things which the Lord would show him, and his name would be remembered in generations to come. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith made this observation: "I am firmly of the opinion that had Oliver Cowdery remained true to his covenants and obligations as a witness with Joseph Smith, and retained his authority and place, he, and not Hyrum Smith, would have gone with Joseph Smith as a prisoner and to martyrdom at Carthage."²⁶ As assistant president, Oliver had held all the keys of the priesthood and had been sustained as a prophet, seer, and revelator.

97–101. Let my servant William Law also receive the keys. As a member of the First Presidency, he has been granted the keys of the kingdom and the authority to use them under the direction of the Prophet (see D&C 90). Thus he will be able to go forth with power to heal and preach. William Law did not remain faithful to this calling and turned against Joseph Smith, becoming one of his bitter enemies in the days leading up to Joseph's murder in Carthage. Law was excommunicated from the Church in April of 1844.

103–10. Sidney. This passage refers to Sidney Rigdon, the first counselor in the First Presidency. The Nauvoo period was very difficult for Rigdon. He held various public and political positions as well as serving in the First Presidency. He was sickly, however, and the record is fairly quiet concerning his involvement in the work of the Church. At times he was accused of being in league with the enemies of Joseph Smith, especially John C. Bennett, although he denied those charges. Joseph Smith requested that he be removed from the First Presidency, but Hyrum spoke in Rigdon's behalf and no action was taken. Rigdon moved his family from Nauvoo in the spring of 1844 and was living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at the time of the Prophet's death.²⁷

111–22. The Lord calls on others to buy stock in the Nauvoo house. See Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 124:22–24.

123–45. The remaining verses in Doctrine and Covenants 124 give instruction to the priesthood leaders of the Church, including the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve (vv. 126–30), elders quorum presidencies, bishoprics, stake presidencies, and high councils in Nauvoo. It also called for a general conference to sustain these men to their new positions (vv. 143–45).

124. Patriarch unto you, to hold the sealing blessings of my church. In verse 93, the Lord indicated that the patriarch had the power to bless and to curse and whatsoever he bound on earth would be bound in heaven. This passage clarifies that he had this power under the keys held by the President of the Church, for Doctrine and Covenants 132:7 states that only one person at a time holds the keys to this power. It must also be remembered that this verse was given to Hyrum Smith, who was also serving as the Assistant President of the Church.

125–26. To receive the oracles for the whole church. See Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 90. The First Presidency of the Church will receive revelations and commandments of God for the entire Church. No others have the keys or authority to do so.

127. Brigham Young. Thomas B. Marsh apostatized and was excommunicated from the Church in March 1839. He was replaced as the president of the Quorum of the Twelve by Brigham Young.

128. Open up the authority of my kingdom upon the four corners of the earth. One of the principal responsibilities of the Quorum of the Twelve is to supervise the taking of the gospel to the whole world. All of the missionary efforts of the Church are carried out under the direction of the Twelve. See Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 107 for further discussion of the responsibilities of this Quorum.

131–42. Listed here are the members of the high council, presidencies of the high priests, seventies, elders, bishoprics, priests, teachers, and deacons, along with the duties and responsibilities of their office and calling.²⁸

130, 132. No man taketh from him. David Patten and Seymour Brunson had both died faithful in their callings. These verses indicate that the priesthood that they held on earth was not removed from them by death but rather continued with them into the spirit world. President Harold B. Lee commented on this idea when he declared: "I believe that every President of this church, every apostle of this church, every bishop, every stake president, every presiding position will have a bearing on what one is called to do when he leaves this earth."²⁹

144. Approve of those names which I have mentioned, or else disapprove of them at my general conference. Even though the Lord had called these individuals to serve in the offices of the priesthood, he would not impose his will upon the members of the Church. He gave them an opportunity through common consent (sustaining vote) to accept or reject the individuals called. It is important to note that the members cannot nominate or select the person to serve, for the Lord does that through his servants. The members may only accept or reject.³⁰