
DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 127-128

CHRONOLOGY

Note that the Record of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo was digitized and made available on March 25, 2011 on the Joseph Smith Papers Project website. I encourage everyone to check it out.

- **July 12, 1841** – JS appointed recorder for Baptisms for the Dead in Iowa.
- **August 15, 1841** – JS and Emma's son died at 14 months old.
- **October 2, 1841** – JS lays cornerstone of Nauvoo House at General Conference.
- **October 3, 1841** – JS sermon declaring: "There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinances can be attended to in the Lord's House....For thus saith the Lord."
- **November 8, 1841** – Wooden baptismal font dedicated in the basement of the Nauvoo Temple. First Temple baptisms performed.
- **November 21, 1841** – First official day of Baptisms in the Temple.
- **March 4, 1842** – JS approves publication of the Book of Abraham. It is published in the March and May editions of the *Times and Seasons*.
- **March 15-16, 1842** – Nauvoo Lodge established and JS made a master mason.
- **March 17, 1842** – Female Relief Society of Nauvoo organized.
- **March 30, 1842** – JS Sermon to the RS. "Kingdom of Priests."
- **April 7, 1842** – Revelation, Unpublished; Council of Fifty.
- **April 7, 1842** – JS, General Conference Sermon on Temple Baptism.
- **April 28, 1842** – JS Sermon to the RS on Spiritual Gifts. "Keys of the Kingdom."
- **May 1, 1842** – JS Sermon on the Temple. "Keys of the Kingdom"
- **May 4, 1842** – JS administer the Nauvoo Temple Rituals to a group of men in the upper room of the Red Brick Store. Rigdon and Bennett not included.
- **May 6, 1842** – Assassination attempt on former MO Governor Boggs.
- **May 19, 1842** – JS becomes Mayor of Nauvoo.
- **May 25, 1842** – John C. Bennett disfellowshipped.
- **July 27, 1842** – Revelation, Unpublished; polygamy.
- **August 8, 1842** – JS arrested for Boggs murder attempt. Nauvoo Court releases him.
- **August, 1842** – JS goes into hiding to avoid arrest.
- **September 1, 1842** – Letter, [D&C 127](#); Baptism for the Dead.
- **September 7, 1842** – Letter, [D&C 128](#); Baptism for the Dead.
- **October 2, 1842** – Governors offer \$500 bounty on JS.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 127 AND 128
LETTER, SEPTEMBER 1, 1842 AND SEPTEMBER 6, 1842

SETTING

After a Nauvoo court released JS from his arrest for charges relating to an assassination attempt on former MO governor Boggs, the Illinois governor issued an arrest warrant for JS. In order to evade arrest, JS, and often body guards spent several months on the lam. Wilford Woodruff described the context of these letters:

President Joseph Smith has been much persecuted of late by being hunted & sought for by Sheriffs & officers from Missouri & Illinoise by the orders of Governors Reynolds & Carlin under pretence of taking him to Missouri to try him for being accessory to the shooting of ex Gov Bogg. But it is no more or less than the spirit of persecution.

But though Joseph has been deprived of the privilege of appearing openly & deprived of the society of his own family Because Sheriffs are hunting him to destroy him without cause Yet the LORD is with him as he was upon the Isle of Patmos with John. Joseph has presented the Church of late with some glorious principles from the Lord Concerning Baptism for the dead & other interesting Subjects. He has appeared occasionally in the midst of the Saints which has been a great comfort to the Saints.¹

PUBLICATION HISTORY

The first letter was published in the *Times and Seasons* (September 15, 1842) in Nauvoo and the second was published in the October 1, 1842 edition. They were both added to the Doctrine and Covenants in the 1844 edition.

COMMENTS

SECTION 127

1. JS explains where he is, why he is not there, and that his business is being handled.
2. This seems like a fairly humble, even chipper, attitude. Seems like Bro. Joseph has grown up a bit.
4. Let's get this temple done, and take courage in the face of persecution.
6. Why is a recorder necessary?
7. Remember those earlier sections on keeping a sacred record?
8. This is the good stuff. What hasn't God revealed yet?
10. Look for another letter on Baptism for the Dead (hint: look at the bottom of the page).

¹ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:187, September, 1842.

SECTION 128

1. Remember how I said I would write again? Also, the spirit is pressing for more Baptism for the Dead discussion.
2. We've discussed recorders before.
3. More recorders...and witnesses!
4. A general recorder. Anyone know who that is in the Church right now? Also this is an interesting democratization of sacred record keeping.
6. As a side note, non-Mormons would view this interpretation as very idiosyncratic.
7. Records in earth and in heaven. People are going to be judged by books on earth? Now you can see why we take this so seriously.
8. This is language we typically associate with marriage and child-to-parent sealings. Does it change our perspectives to associate it with baptism for the dead?
9. So what do you think of this?
12. Symbolism of baptism.
13. This is why we put the temple fonts in the basements. Traditionally (and there have been some exceptions in our history) other fonts are also traditionally bellow ground.
14. "Keys of the kingdom" For those interested, track down the original texts of JS's April 28, 1842 and May 1, 1842 sermons. Also, is this different than how we talk about the sealing or binding power today? Does that matter? What about the sermons referenced below for vs. 18?
15. How can we not be perfect without our dead (and vice versa)?
18. Regarding the translation, on the 21 January, 1844, JS preached:

The Bible says "I will send you Elijah before the great & dredful day of the Lord Come that he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the Children & the hearts of the Children to their fathers lest I Come & smite the whole earth with a Curse," Now the word turn here should be translated (bind or seal)

On March 10th, 1844, he preached in public his most important sermon on the topic:

Now for Elijah, the spirit power & calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the keys of the revelations ordinances, oricles powers & endowments of the fulness of the Melchezedek Priesthood & of the Kingdom of God on the Earth & to receive, obtain & perform all the ordinances belonging to the Kingdom of God even unto the sealing of the hearts of the ~~hearts~~ fathers unto the children & the hearts of the children unto the fathers even those who are in heaven.

...This spirit of Elijah was manifest in the days of the Apostles in delivering certain ones to the buffitings of Satan that they may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, they were sealed by the spirit of Elijah unto the damnaton of Hell untill the day of the Lord or revelation of Jesus Christ²

However, again, the "welding link" described here between generations is baptism not sealings. Why is that? Do we view it that way today? Why or why not?

19. These are glad tidings. What an expansive salvation. In the history of the world, what percentage will hear and accept the gospel in the flesh?

20. Can you name the angelic events described in this verse?

21. Raphael! There is one you don't hear every day. What is JS teaching us about his experience in this and the previous verse?

22. Again, this is a pretty bullish verse consider it is written by a fugitive. What a gift.

24. This is some impressive context on the records being created. It is not just the baptism for the dead record, though. It is also "The Book of the Law of the Lord."

² Both Sermons from Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*.