



The Melchizedek Priesthood pulpits in August of 1907,  
photo taken by George Edward Anderson

© by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Used by permission.

---

## Doctrine and Covenants 110 and the Mission of the Church

*Ted M. Bair*

**Ted M. Bair** is associate institute director at the Ogden Utah Institute of Religion.

The Kirtland Temple was dedicated on 27 March 1836. During the preceding two months and the subsequent month after, “probably more Latter-day Saints beheld visions and witnessed other unusual spiritual manifestations than during any other era in the history of the Church.”<sup>clxxvii</sup><sup>1</sup>

This was a marvelous time during which “members of the Church saw heavenly messengers in at least ten different meetings, and at five of these gatherings different individuals testified that they had beheld the Savior himself. Many experienced visions, some prophesied, and others spoke in tongues.”<sup>clxxviii</sup><sup>2</sup>

Two days after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote that “it was a Pentecost and an endowment indeed, long to be remembered, for the sound shall go forth from this place into the world, and the occurrences of this day shall be handed down upon the pages of sacred history, to all generations; as the day of Pentecost, so shall this day be numbered and celebrated as a year of jubilee, and the time of rejoicing to be Saints of the Most High God.”<sup>clxxix</sup><sup>3</sup>

This prophecy by Joseph Smith has come to pass in several ways. One fulfillment may be the published *sacred history* of this time period by the Church and faithful historians, which has been *handed down* and is now readily available throughout the *world*, although perhaps not enough Saints are as familiar with it as could be. The prayer offered at the dedication of the temple is certainly *remembered* as the only such prayer canonized in the latter days (D&C 109).

Written beforehand and read at the dedication, this prayer continues to be the pattern for all temple dedicatory prayers.

A song may be an additional fulfillment of the Prophet Joseph's prophecy. The first Church hymnal was published just four months earlier in response to the revelation given to Emma Smith in Doctrine and Covenants 25. The last hymn in this hymnal was "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning." This song continues to be remembered since it has been sung at the dedication of every new temple. With the recent surge of new temples around the world, as each one is dedicated, *rejoicing* and *celebration* certainly are found among faithful Saints around the world. President Gordon B. Hinckley talked of these feelings when he said, "It has been my opportunity in the last twenty-eight months to participate in the dedication of seventeen new temples. . . . The choir has sung the 'Hosanna Anthem' and the congregation, in each of these dedicatory services, has then joined in singing 'The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning.' In each of these situations I have sat with the choir immediately behind me, and the members of the choir have always had difficulty singing because of the tears that choke their voices as they try to express themselves in a newly dedicated House of God."<sup>clxxx4</sup>

In Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–10, we read of the visit of Jesus Christ to the Kirtland Temple, where He declared that there He would manifest Himself to His Saints. I believe this account reveals a pattern of how to come unto the Savior. Verses 11–16 recount the appearances of three ancient prophets and the restoration of keys and of a dispensation. Significantly, these four visits may have been the foundation for the official mission of the Church with its threefold emphasis as it was introduced 145 years later by President Spencer W. Kimball.

#### **Appearance of the Lord Jehovah**

Verses 1–10 of section 110 contain important information about the ways in which each of us can come to Christ, which is the centerpiece of the mission of the Church. Verse 1 states, "The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened." Verses 1–4 contain perhaps the most wonderful description of the Lord Jesus Christ to be found anywhere in scripture (see similar descriptions in Daniel 10:5–9 and Revelation 1:10–17). The description of Christ in verses 3–4 was chosen by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve for the document "The Living Christ."

In the next part of section 110, the Lord extends some tender mercies to His faithful Saints. In verse 5, the Lord states that Joseph and Oliver are forgiven for their sins and are pronounced clean before Him. In verse 6, the Lord proclaims rejoicing in the hearts of all who helped with the building of the temple. This must have provided great comfort for those Saints who sacrificed amid poverty and worked under very difficult circumstances to build this marvelous structure. Verses 7 and 8 contain the only canonized account of the Lord's acceptance of one of His temples in the latter days. In verse 7, the Savior declares, "I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house."

Symbolically, this account outlines what is necessary for us to come unto Christ, which is the mission of the Church. First, to come to Christ, we must have true knowledge of Christ. In verse 1, the *veil* could be the separation between God and man, and the *eyes* could be the personal insights to an understanding of God for Joseph and Oliver on this occasion. The temple can mean this for each of us. The *veil* could also be symbolic of the curtain of apostasy that had hidden knowledge of the nature of God from the world before the First Vision, and the *eyes* could symbolize this understanding the Prophet Joseph's vision restored to the world. President Spencer W. Kimball, referring to the First Vision, exclaimed: "That new day dawned when another soul with passionate yearning prayed for divine guidance. A spot of hidden solitude was

found, knees were bent, a heart was humbled, pleadings were voiced, and a light brighter than the noonday sun illuminated the world—the curtain never to be closed again. . . . Joseph Smith, of incomparable faith, broke the spell, shattered the ‘heavens of iron’ and reestablished communication. Heaven kissed the earth, light dissipated the darkness, and God again spoke to man.”<sup>clxxxi</sup>5

In this vision, after Joseph was told not to join any church, the Savior told him “that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof’” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19). The most abominable doctrine spawned in the construction of the creeds was the concept of Trinity. This doctrine of the creeds attempted to extinguish the flame illuminating the true nature of God and darken the earth with a concept of a false god more closely resembling Satan.

Speaking of this doctrine and the Nicean Creed, President Kimball stated, “Men with keen intelligence got together . . . [at] Nicea and created a God. They did not pray for wisdom or revelation. They claimed no revelation from the Lord. They made it just about like a political party would do, and out of their own mortal minds created a God which is still worshipped by the great majority of Christians. They took away all his physical properties, they took the Father and the Son and made them into one undefinable spirit.”<sup>clxxxii</sup>6

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “My first object is to find out the character of the only wise and true God, and what kind of a being he is.”<sup>clxxxiii</sup>7 As stated in the wonderful Intercessory Prayer, eternal life is closely connected to knowledge of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (see John 17:3). The marvelous description of the Savior recorded in section 110 represents a portion of this true and necessary knowledge of the Father and the Son that was restored through the Prophet.

Second, to come to the Savior, we must be forgiven of our sins and become clean. This is possible through the second principle of the gospel, repentance. Following the horrible destruction before the Savior’s appearance on the American continent, the Book of Mormon records that in the midst of the terrifying darkness, Jesus Christ spoke. His first words were of repentance (see 3 Nephi 9:2). The Savior’s last words on this same occasion twice emphasized the connection between repentance and coming unto Him: “Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved” (9:22). In the Savior’s sacred sermons that followed during His visit to His American sheep, the concept of “repent and come unto me” was repeated five times (see 12:19; 18:32; 21:6, 20; 27:20). Obviously, we cannot come unto Christ without repentance.

Third, as we are involved in temple building, we will rejoice. This process includes making and keeping our own baptismal and temple covenants, sharing the gospel with others that they may make temple covenants, and searching out and performing proxy temple covenants for our kindred dead.

Interesting discussions have occurred when students have been asked to determine the most important word in a favorite scriptural verse about the joy of missionary work: “And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:10). One of the most important words in this verse is *bring* because the joy spoken of by the

Lord is contingent on *both* the laborer and the *one soul* going to the kingdom together. The joy cannot be the same when the laborer falls short while the *one soul* goes to the kingdom. In a discourse on the joy of missionary work, President Wilford Woodruff said, “Concerning the work of the dead, the Prophet Joseph Smith said that in the resurrection those who had been worked for would fall at the feet of those who had done their work, kiss their feet, embrace their knees and manifest the most exquisite gratitude.”<sup>clxxxiv</sup>8 The outcome of active, worthy involvement in temple work will certainly be rejoicing.

Fourth, when we go worthily to the house of the Lord, the Savior will manifest Himself unto us. On 27 December 1832, the Lord commanded the Saints to build the Kirtland Temple.<sup>clxxxv</sup>9 Four months later, on 6 May 1833, the Lord declared, “Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am” (D&C 93:1). Then, on 2 August 1833, the Lord revealed: “And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God” (D&C 97:15–16). The promises in these verses that refer to our ability to see God seem to have a connection to temples. Elder David B. Haight, referring to Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–16, taught, “It is true that some have actually seen the Savior, but when one consults the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word *see*, such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him. Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us.”<sup>clxxxvi</sup>10 In several different ways, the Lord will reveal Himself to us when we worthily go to the temple.

Verses 9 and 10 of section 110 seem to pronounce blessings that, like Joseph Smith’s prophecy, will also be for future generations: “Yea the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands *shall greatly rejoice* in consequence of the blessings which *shall be poured out*, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house. And the fame of this house *shall spread to foreign lands*; and this is the beginning of the blessing which *shall be poured out* upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen” (emphasis added).

The endowments performed in the Kirtland Temple are now designated *initiatory ordinances*. These endowments, which blessed the few Saints who gathered in that small Ohio town, now bless many *thousands and tens of thousands* throughout *foreign lands* along with the expanded endowments that came later through the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo.

In the Lord’s preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, we are told to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). This concept has developed in our day to what is referred to as the mission of the Church. Important elements of this invitation seem to be well outlined in section 110, verses 1–10, and have indeed spread throughout the world. **Appearance of Moses, Elias, and Elijah**

Verses 11–16 may be the foundation of what prophets have emphasized in our day as the threefold emphasis of the mission of the Church, the three ways we come unto Christ. Verse 11 describes the appearance of Moses, who brought the “keys of the gathering of Israel.” Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote: “Moses held the keys of the gathering of Israel. He led Israel out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. It was his appointment in this dispensation to come and restore those keys for the modern gathering.”<sup>clxxxvii</sup>11 It is appropriate that the prophet Moses, who was called by the Lord to gather the children of Israel

out of the bondage of Egypt, was also sent to deliver the keys in these last days to gather scattered Israel out of the bondage of the world.

Israel, scattered both before and after the Savior's mortal ministry, must be gathered before the Savior returns. The last commission given by Jesus Christ before His ascension to His disciples in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts was to go into all the world and gather this people (see Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:15–16; Luke 24:45–47; John 21:15–17; Acts 1:8). The Lord has commanded that every member of His restored Church be a missionary and invite others to gather and come unto Christ (see D&C 88:81). In our time, the first emphasis of the threefold mission of the Church is to proclaim the gospel.

Verse 12 tells of the appearance of an Elias who “committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham.” There is uncertainty as to the identity of Elias. Milton V. Backman Jr. and Robert L. Millet wrote: “The identity of Elias—whether he be Noah [Luke 1:19; D&C 27:7; *History of the Church*, 3:386; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157; Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, April 1960, 72; *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 3:138–41, fn 26] Abraham himself, or a prophet named Elias from the days of Abraham [Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah*, 103, 268]—is not clearly known.”<sup>clxxxviii</sup>12 While President of the Quorum of the Twelve, Joseph Fielding Smith also acknowledged, “What prophet this Elias is that was sent to restore these keys is not definitely known.”<sup>clxxxix</sup>13 Obviously, what was restored is more important than who restored it.

The Lord promised Abraham that all nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed and that “as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed” (Abraham 2:10). Paul also taught: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:27–29).

The Lord declared: “For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God” (D&C 84:33–34).

Concerning the gospel of Abraham, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “Thus the gospel of Abraham was one of celestial marriage; . . . it was a gospel or commission to provide a lineage for the elect portion of the pre-existent spirits, a gospel to provide a household in eternity for those who live the fulness of the celestial law.”<sup>cxc</sup>14 The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* states, “The gospel dispensation of Abraham includes the patriarchal order of the priesthood and the eternal marriage covenant . . . by which the Abrahamic Covenant is perpetuated from generation to generation among the faithful.”<sup>cxc</sup>15

The dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, in a broad sense, has to do with any who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. In a narrow sense, it has to do with the creation on earth of a patriarchal, eternal marriage, the foundation of the postmortal unit of eternity, the family. The Lord has stated: “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase” (D&C 131:1–4).

Those who desire exaltation and increase must enter into the Abrahamic covenant. Binding ourselves to God by being worthily sealed in holy temples is the only way we can receive exaltation and enjoy the life our Heavenly Father has in store for us. The second emphasis of the

threefold mission of the Church, perfecting the Saints, is a blessing partially made possible in these latter days by the visit of Elias.

Verses 13–15 recount the visit of the final heavenly messenger, Elijah, who was sent “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.” This was the visit prophesied in the last book of the Old Testament as necessary before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament ends with the declaration that if Elijah did not come, God would “smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5–6). Moroni quoted this statement differently to Joseph Smith as “utterly wasted” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39).

The timing of Elijah’s visit was significant: “This great day of visions and revelation occurred on Easter Sunday, 3 April 1836. What better day in the dispensation of the fulness of times to reconfirm the reality of the Resurrection? That weekend was also the Jewish Passover. For centuries Jewish families have left an empty chair at their Passover feasts, anticipating Elijah’s return. Elijah has returned—not to a Passover feast, but to the Lord’s temple in Kirtland.”<sup>cxcii</sup>16 The Lord restored sealing power so that covenants could be made not only by the living but also by those dead who did not have the opportunity in mortality. Without doing the temple work for the dead, we or they cannot be exalted (see D&C 128:15, 18). The visit of Elijah and the keys he restored provide foundation for the last emphasis of the threefold mission of the Church, redeeming the dead.

### **Kirtland and the Mission of the Church**

Today, the mission of the Church is to invite all to come to Christ and receive the saving ordinances with a threefold emphasis to accomplish this goal: proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead. One author has suggested that Paul taught the concepts of the mission statement of the Church, stating, “By epistle and by example he taught the threefold mission of the Church of Christ: to proclaim the gospel (Romans 10:13–15), to perfect the Saints (Ephesians 4:11–14), and to redeem the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29).”<sup>cxci</sup>17 Although these concepts may have been around since Adam, the foundation for this mission statement of the Church in our time could have been laid in the wonderful appearances recorded in section 110. At least one other author, Victor Ludlow, has connected the mission of the Church and section 110: “Until the 1970s, if members were asked to define the purpose of the Church, they would have given a myriad of good responses and correct answers, but an outsider would have had a hard time determining a single, comprehensive, clear statement of purpose. Today, most active members would express the mission of the Church something like the following: ‘The threefold mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is. . . .’”<sup>cxci</sup>18 After discussing the introduction of the mission statement of the Church by President Spencer W. Kimball and before discussing the visits of the three messengers in Section 110, Brother Ludlow wrote, “Essential elements of the Church’s mission statement are found in the revelations and angelic manifestations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple April 1836.”<sup>cxci</sup>19 There was more to the historical development of this mission statement.

Section 110 was first recorded in 1836 and first published 6 November 1852 in the *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City. The section was first included in the Doctrine and Covenants in the 1876 edition.<sup>cxci</sup>20 Previous to and for many years following its publication, no significant discussion of the restorations by the three heavenly messengers as they impacted the purpose of the Church can be found.

The beginnings of what has become known as the threefold emphasis of the mission of the Church probably occurred in the April 1945 conference when a young Apostle named Ezra Taft Benson stated: “I have often felt that there are three great and important obligations, possibly

over-shadowing all others, which rest upon this people and upon this great Church. . . . The first . . . is that of missionary work. . . . Secondly, we have the responsibility of building up the stakes and wards and branches of Zion. . . . [And] third . . . [we must perform] sacred ordinances in the temples.”<sup>cxvii</sup>21

In 1964, a new Melchizedek Priesthood handbook was published in which we were reminded that the Church had three major objectives: (1) perfect the Saints, (2) do missionary work, and (3) perform temple work.<sup>cxviii</sup>22 In the April 1978 conference, as President of the Quorum of the Twelve, Ezra Taft Benson again declared in conference, “The Church’s mission is to declare the gospel of the kingdom to all the world, to redeem our kindred dead, and to perfect the Saints of the Church.”<sup>cxix</sup>23

April 1981 would be the last time in general conference the Saints would hear their beloved prophet, Spencer Woolley Kimball, in person. In the next four years before his death in November of 1985, President Kimball missed four general conferences because of illness, and he attended five general conferences but did not speak (a video was played with excerpts of his talks in one priesthood session). President Kimball began the opening session in April 1981 with an announcement of great importance: “My brothers and sisters, as the Brethren of the First Presidency and the Twelve have meditated upon and prayed about the great latter-day work the Lord has given us to do, we are impressed that the mission of the Church is threefold.” He then listed the threefold mission as that of proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead. “All three are part of one work—to assist our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, in their grand and glorious mission ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’” (Moses 1:39).<sup>cc</sup>24 The *Ensign* reported, “President Kimball encouraged leaders and members to hereafter measure their priorities and labors against these ‘sacred principles.’”<sup>cci</sup>25 One year later, during the opening session of the April 1982 conference, President Kimball’s words were delivered to the Saints but were read by his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock. President Kimball was quoted:

It was exactly one year ago that I last attended conference here in the Tabernacle. As you may know, I was in the hospital at the time of the October 1981 conference. Last April I stated that the mission of the Church is threefold: First, to proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; Secondly, to perfect the Saints by preparing them to receive the ordinances of the gospel and by instruction and discipline to gain exaltation; Thirdly, to redeem the dead by performing vicarious ordinances of the gospel for those who have lived on the earth. . . . All three are part of one work—to assist our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, in their grand and glorious mission “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). I renew that declaration today. Let us keep these sacred principles in mind and make them an integral part of our lives: that is, to *proclaim the gospel*, to *perfect the Saints*, and to *redeem the dead*.<sup>ccii</sup>26

Following the death of Spencer W. Kimball, Ezra Taft Benson was sustained as President of the Church. In the first statement released to the media he said: “Some have expectantly inquired about the direction the Church will take in the future. May we suggest that the Lord, through President Kimball, has sharply focused on the threefold mission of the Church: to preach the

gospel, to perfect the saints, and to redeem the dead. We shall continue every effort to carry out this mission.”<sup>cciii</sup>27

In the April 1988 general conference, President Benson reiterated this mission. In a talk read by his first counselor, Gordon B. Hinckley, President Benson completed what has become the official mission statement of the Church: “May we all go to our homes rededicated to the sacred mission of the Church as so beautifully set forth in these conference sessions—to ‘invite all to come unto Christ’ (D&C 20:59), ‘yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him’ (Moroni 10:32). Then later, “This grand mission of the Church is accomplished by proclaiming the gospel, perfecting our lives, and redeeming our dead.”<sup>cciv</sup>28

In a talk given at a regional representatives seminar, President Benson used the terms “Come unto Christ through Proclaiming the Gospel,” “Come unto Christ through Perfecting the Saints,” and “Come unto Christ through Redeeming the Dead.”<sup>ccv</sup>29 Following the April 1988 conference, because of illness, President Benson would speak in only two more general conferences before his death in 1994.

Since 1981 and continuing today, bishops and stake presidents have been counseled to organize their agendas for every meeting consisting of the three items of the threefold emphasis of the mission of the Church. In 1990, following “The First Presidency Message” in the January *Ensign*, is an article by Hoyt W. Brewster Jr. entitled “The ’80s—Looking Back; The ’90s—Looking Ahead.” He said: “The mission of the Church, with its threefold emphasis, has been a consistent theme of leadership training during the 1980s and will likely remain so throughout the 1990s. Priesthood and auxiliary leaders have been urged to emphasize and facilitate accomplishing this mission.”<sup>ccvi</sup>30 It is clear that one of the lasting contributions of President Kimball and President Benson, the mission of the Church along with the threefold emphasis, has become a vital focus of the Church in these last days and is now basic to the operation of the Church.

The connection between section 110 and the mission of the Church as the mission unfolded under the direction of President Kimball and President Benson may be similar to other revelations that were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and further developed when necessary by later prophets as the kingdom expanded. One example is in the October 1976 conference when President Kimball announced the restructuring of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Four new members were called, and all Assistants to the Twelve were included. This provided a total quorum membership of thirty-nine, a majority for quorum business. He then said: “With this move, the three governing quorums of the Church defined by the revelations—the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the First Quorum of Seventy—have been set in their places as revealed by the Lord. This will make it possible to handle efficiently the present heavy workload and prepare for the increasing expansion and acceleration of the work, anticipating the day when the Lord will return to take direct charge of His Church and kingdom.”<sup>ccvii</sup>31

Another example is in the April 1995 conference when President Hinckley stated: “Now in the ongoing of this work, administrative changes sometimes occur. The doctrine remains constant. But from time to time there are organizational and administrative changes made under provisions set forth in the revelations.” He then announced the release of all regional representatives and the call of area authorities and read D&C 107:98, which describes the current situation for Area Authority Seventies. In both instances, concepts revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith were implemented by later prophets, when necessary, because of growth in the kingdom.



In 1955, President Hugh B. Brown spoke to the Brigham Young University student body and said, “I call attention to the fact that no constitution effected by human agency has survived one hundred years without modification or amendment, even the Constitution of the United States. The basic law or constitution of the Church has never been altered.”<sup>ccviii</sup>32 The Prophet Joseph Smith was the instrument for the restoration of the fulness of the gospel. Very little has been added since. This is drastically different from most current manmade religions, which have shifted and evolved to bear little resemblance to initial dogmas and structure. An omniscient God who knew in the early 1800s what would be necessary in our day to prepare for the Millennium is truly at the head of this Church.

### Summary

God called the Prophet Joseph Smith to stand at the head of this, the last terrestrial dispensation, which will end with the second coming of the Savior. The last verse of section 110 proclaims, “Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.” The mission of the Church with its threefold emphasis, which may have been built upon the sacred visits recorded in section 110, is a testimony to God’s foreknowledge and is of significant importance in preparation for the Second Coming.

### Notes

1. Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 285; see also *Church History in the Fulness of Times* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000), 164.
2. *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 164.
3. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1968), 2:432–33.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Blessed by the Hymns* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 69.
5. Spencer W. Kimball, “Revelation: The Word of the Lord to His Prophets,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 77.
6. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 426.
7. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 344.
8. Vaughn J. Featherstone, “A Champion of Youth,” *Ensign*, November 1987, 28.
9. Robert Woodford, “The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants” (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1974), 2:1127–28; also *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 162.
10. David B. Haight, “Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, November 1990, 61. 11. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953), 2:48.
12. Milton V. Backman Jr. and Robert L. Millet, “Heavenly Manifestations in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 109, 110),” in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 425.
13. *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2:49.
14. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 219–20.
15. Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:555, s.v. “Gospel of Abraham.”

16. *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 167.
17. Michael W. Middleton, "Paul Among the Prophets: Obtaining a Crown," in *The Apostle Paul, His Life and His Testimony: The 23d Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 121.
18. Victor L. Ludlow, *Principles and Practices of the Restored Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 558.
19. Ludlow, *Principles and Practices*, 561.
20. Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981), 220.
21. Ezra Taft Benson, "The Importance of Missionary Work," *Improvement Era*, May 1945, 254.
22. *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 564.
23. Ezra Taft Benson, "May the Kingdom of God Go Forth," *Ensign*, May 1978, 33.
24. Spencer W. Kimball, "A Report of My Stewardship," *Ensign*, May 1981, 5.
25. "Report of the 151st Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Ensign*, May 1981, 1.
26. Spencer W. Kimball, "Remember the Mission of the Church," *Ensign*, May 1982, 4.
27. Don L. Searle, "President Ezra Taft Benson Ordained Thirteenth President of the Church," *Ensign*, December 1985, 5.
28. Ezra Taft Benson, "Come unto Christ, and Be Perfected in Him," *Ensign*, May 1988, 84.
29. Bruce A. Van Orden, "Redeeming the Dead as Taught in the Old Testament," in *A Witness of Jesus Christ: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Old Testament*, ed. Richard D. Draper (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 261.
30. Hoyt W. Brewster Jr., "The '80s—Looking Back; The '90s—Looking Ahead," *Ensign*, January 1990, 10.
31. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Reconstitution of the First Quorum of the Seventy," *Ensign*, November 1976, 9.
32. Hugh B. Brown, "The Profile of a Prophet" (address to the Brigham Young University student body, 4 October 1955), 7.