



Type: Book Chapter

Brigham Young Succeeds Joseph/"Mantle of the Prophet"

Author(s): Sharon Price Anderson

Source: *Praising the Prophet: Joseph Smith and the Restoration in History and Verse*

Published: Orem, UT; Time-Lines Etc., 2005

Pages: 85-88

Brigham Young Succeeds Joseph

During the seven months preceding the martyrdom, Joseph had finished everything necessary to lay the foundation of the Church and to prepare the Twelve to carry on the affairs of the kingdom in his absence. Upon Joseph's death the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles became the composite leader of the Church, but at the time most of them were in the eastern states on missions. As they received word of the martyrdom, they made their way back to Nauvoo.

On 3 August Sydney Rigdon, who had moved to Pennsylvania against revealed counsel, arrived in Nauvoo. For the next few days, he met with many of the Saints and told them it was the Lord's will that he be appointed guardian over the Church. By 6 August the Twelve had returned to Nauvoo and, on the morning of 8 August, a prayer meeting was held. Following a long speech delivered by Rigdon, Brigham Young stood to address those present. George Q. Cannon said that, as Brigham spoke, "it seemed in the eyes of the people as though it was the very person of Joseph which stood before them."⁶¹ That which they saw and heard was accompanied by

... the convincing power of God, to their hearts, and they were filled with the Spirit and with great joy The people said one to another, "the spirit of Joseph rests upon Brigham;" they knew that he was the man chosen to lead them, and they honored him accordingly.⁶²

Benjamin F. Johnson reported that “the spirit and mantle of Joseph was upon him.”⁶³ It was clear to those assembled that Brigham Young was the one chosen by the Lord to lead the Church. On 24 July 1901, Ezra T. Clark wrote his testimony of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and the divinity of the Lord’s work.

I heard Joseph preach many times, I knew him to be a prophet of God. I heard him prophesy many times and had seen his prophecies fulfilled, had also shook hands with him and he had blessed me and I have felt the influence and power of the Lord upon him and upon me, [W]hen the Saints held a conference [following the Martyrdom] and Brigham Young arose as leader of the Church, I want to bear record that he spoke as Joseph used to speak, and to all appearances, the same voice, the same gesture, the same stature, and I bear this record to all the world and to my children, and to my children’s children, and also bear record that this work is God’s work, and that it will roll on as it has done from that day to this.⁶⁴

A solemn assembly was held on the afternoon of 8 August 1844, and the Saints unanimously sustained the Twelve as the First Presidency. Brigham Young, as the president of the Quorum, would lead the Church until the First Presidency was reorganized on 27 December 1847, with Brigham Young as President.

Mantle of the Prophet

In tumultuous times
questions tumble
in troubled minds.
*Who will lead us
from persecution
and the jaws of hell?
Will a guardian fill
the void of martyrdom?
What of the Twelve?
Who will harvest
whitening fields?
Will the stone
still roll forth?*

In Nauvoo
Saints assemble, and
brethren prepared
to bear the kingdom
look to Brigham.
Spirit-magnified,
he speaks with Joseph's
prophetic presence,
voice, gesture, stature.

Witnesses testify:
*He wears the mantle
of the Seer.*

The covenant continues.
Deserts will yet blossom,
knowledge cover the earth.
This people, prophet-led,
hearkening to the Lord,
will prosper in the power
of His word.

And Elisha ... took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and ... smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither and Elisha went over (2 Kings 2:12–14).