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# “Build a House unto Me”

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D&C 115:8–16

On July 7, 1837, W. W. Phelps wrote from Far West to the brethren in Kirtland:

Monday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, was a great and glorious day in Far West, more than fifteen hundred Saints assembled at this place, and at half past eight in the morning, after prayer, singing, and an address, they proceeded to break the ground for the Lord’s House. The day was beautiful; the Spirit of the Lord was with us. An excavation for this great edifice, one hundred and ten feet long by eighty feet broad was nearly finished.<sup>1</sup>

Phelps went on to say, “Tuesday, the 4<sup>th</sup>, we had a large meeting and several of the Missourians were baptized; our meetings, held in the open prairie, were larger than they were in Kirtland, when I was there.” He concluded his letter, “All the brethren abroad that are wise and will come on with means and help enter the land and populate the county and build the Lord’s House, we shall soon have one of the most precious spots on the globe.”<sup>2</sup>

What Phelps failed to note was that Missouri Church leaders directed the ceremony, the breaking of ground, and planned dimensions for the temple without the Prophet Joseph Smith receiving a revelation to build a temple at Far West. The Missouri leaders acted without the approbation of God.

The Saints were slow to build the temple as directed by Church leaders in Missouri. On August 5, 1837,

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<sup>1</sup> W. W. Phelps, July 7, 1837, to the brethren in Kirtland, Ohio, in Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:496.

<sup>2</sup> Phelps, July 7, 1837, *History of the Church*, 2:496.

The Presidency, High Council, and all the authorities of the Church in Missouri, assembled in council at Far West, and unanimously resolved to go on Moderately and build a house unto the name of the Lord in Far West, as they had means, and appointed Edward Partridge treasurer, to receive all the donations and subscriptions for the erection of the House of the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith arrived in Far West in fall of 1837. At a meeting of the high council and some of the elders, the issue of building a House of the Lord was discussed. It was voted “that the building of the house of the Lord be postponed until the Lord shall reveal it to be His will to have it commenced.”<sup>4</sup>

It was not until April 26, 1838, that the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation from the Lord regarding a temple in Far West: “I command you to build a house unto me” (D&C 115:8). The building of the house was to commence on Independence Day—July 4, 1837. The Lord said, “From that time forth let my people labor diligently to build a house unto my name ... until it shall be finished, from the corner stone thereof unto the top thereof” (v. 12).

On Independence Day in 1838 the cornerstones of the House of the Lord were laid.

The southeast cornerstone of the Lord’s House in Far West, Missouri, was then laid by the presidents of the stake, assisted by twelve men. The southwest corner, by the presidents of the Elders, assisted by twelve men. The northwest corner by the Bishop, assisted by twelve men. The northeast corner by the president of the Teachers, assisted by twelve men.<sup>5</sup>

Following a speech by Sidney Rigdon, the congregation shouted Hosanna.

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<sup>3</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:505.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes, 6 November 1837, 81. Joseph Smith Papers.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:42.