

**There Revealing Verdicts:
The Kirtland Temple Suit, The Temple Lot Case
& the Destruction of the Nauvoo Temple**

*from Chapter 4 of the book, The Secret Chamber: Spiritual Wifery & the Doctrine of Christ
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The question of who should lead the church after the murder of the three Smith brothers, and why, has unique and informative ties to the Kirtland Temple, the Nauvoo Temple, and the temple lot for the future New Jerusalem Temple. All three historically important properties (at Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Independence) have unique association to the right of **succession to lead** the church, and which church was seen as **the legal successor church** to the one founded by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1830. Both of the final verdicts for “The Kirtland Temple Suit” and “The Temple Lot Case” involved Joseph’s firstborn son, Joseph Smith III, the latter President of the RLDS church. And both court cases were decided by evidence tied to the early secret practice of **spiritual wifery** at Nauvoo, and the latter open practice of **polygamy** by the Utah Brighamite church. The Utah church lost both court cases **because** of this practice, spoken against in the Book of Mormon by Jacob, and implemented by Brigham Young, not Joseph.

Both court cases provide verdicts stating that Joseph Smith III had legal right to **succeed** his father Joseph, and that he then led what was determined to be “the legal **successor** church”, the one he was then President of (the RLDS church at the time), because it practiced the original “tenets” or doctrines taught by Joseph Smith. Polygamy was not part not of these original “tenets”. Both court decisions were determined by judges which evaluating the **tenets** currently lived by three churches involved in the latter “Temple Lot Case”. They were; (1) The RLDS church, which brought the suit to obtain the Temple Lot for the future New Jerusalem Temple; (2) The Church of Christ Temple Lot (or Hedrickites), current owner of this lot in Independence Missouri; And (3) The Utah LDS church, which sided with the Hedrickites in order to again do battle with the RLDS church over right to important church property (the Utah LDS church provided lawyers, money, and witnesses, including supposed wives of Joseph Smith, to aid the Hedrickite church in battling the RLDS church for the Temple lot in Missouri). The Utah LDS church had earlier lost in the 1880 Kirtland Temple Suit (they didn’t show up), thus, the House of the LORD at Kirtland was awarded to the RLDS church – deemed “**the legal successor church**” to the one founded by the Prophet Joseph Smith – because they stayed true to the doctrines of the original founder of the faith, the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Pres. Joseph Smith III of the RLDS church brought suit in both court cases to claim ownership of; (1) the House of the LORD at Kirtland Ohio (in “the Kirtland Temple Suit”, 1880), and (2) the lot (land) for the future New Jerusalem temple in Independence Missouri (“the Temple Lot Case”, 1894). Ownership of both properties (and latter the Nauvoo Temple) was tied to **who** held **clear title** to them, and most importantly - **why**. The judges involved in both cases had to determine who merited ownership of these titles based on the current doctrines or “**tenets**” embraced by the churches involved at the time of the court cases, versus the original tenets embraced by its founder, the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1830. Since the Utah church had **changed its “tenets”** by embracing **polygamy**, and other new doctrines like Young’s “blood atonement” and his “Adam-God theory,” and because the Utah church implemented these changes in ways **not** consistent with original methods and doctrines laid out in their own scripture (by various votes by priesthood quoroms and the general body of the membership), **the Utah church lost both cases** and the opportunity to own both of the properties.

The judges verdicts in both cases are very revealing hereafter. They clearly address **succession** of both (1) **who** should lead the church following the murder of the three Smith brothers, based on the **tenets** currently embraced (those taught and lived), and (2) which church maintained the **tenets** of the original church founded by the Prophet Joseph Smith – thus becoming **the legal successor church**. In both court cases independent judges ruled that the RLDS church was “**the legal successor church**” because they maintained the original **tenets of the founder**. The Utah LDS church was denied ownership of the properties involved because of changed doctrines, including (A. polygamy, B. blood atonement, C. the twelve taking the leadership role of the church, etc.). In “The Temple Lot Suit” Joseph Smith III was also determined to be the **legal successor** to the Prophet Joseph, his father, also because of the original “**tenets**” of the church founded by his father tied to this doctrine (see chap. 4 of the book The Secret Chamber). Judge Philips stated in his verdict that, “**Brigham Young's assumed presidency was a bold and bald usurpation.**”

Both properties - the Kirtland Temple or “House of the LORD” in Ohio and the “Temple Lot” in Independence Missouri - were thus granted to the RLDS church, then led by Pres. Joseph Smith III (Joseph and Emma’s firstborn son). In making his decision, the judge in “The Temple Lot Case” listened to all witnesses¹ and then consulted the original **lineal succession** doctrine found in the Doctrine and Covenants (canonized scripture) of Joseph Smith’s early church. Brigham Young did not follow this doctrine, making decisions with required votes by priesthood quorums and the general membership of the church).

Lawyers for the Church of Christ Temple Lot (or Hedrickites) appealed this decision in 1895, stating that unlike their partners (the Utah LDS church) in the lower court case, they did **not** embrace polygamy and other new doctrines as the Utah church did under Brigham Young. The higher court thus reversed the lower court’s decision, and the Temple Lot was returned to the Hedrickites in this 1895 appeal. This decision was based on a technicality; the Statute of Limitations had expired (time allowed to bring the suit to court), thus granting ownership of the temple lot back to the Hedrickites. Other parts of the lower court’s verdict remained intact.

Both of the properties at stake were and are significant. The “**House of the LORD**” built at Kirtland Ohio was the first such edifice of the Restoration movement, constructed by Joseph Smith (see his dedication prayer in D&C 109). Very significant events occurred at its dedication in March of 1836 (see chapters 5-7 of *The Secret Chamber*). The LORD accepted this structure in a personal visitation to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery one week later (the day of Christ’s resurrection). In addition, Moses, Abraham, and Elias/Elijah came to these two men there to provide specific keys of power to move the restoration effort forward (see D&C 110 & chap. 5 of *The Secret Chamber*).

The temple lot in the second case is also very significant. It is there (Independence Missouri) that the great temple of the Millennium will be constructed in what will become the city of New Jerusalem. The **verdicts** rendered by the judges in “The Kirtland Temple Suit” and “The Temple Lot Case” are provided below. A third temple, the Nauvoo Temple is also addressed in this paper. It was destroyed after the murder of the Smith brothers and the exodus of the those who followed Brigham Young west. The story tied to its destruction is equally revealing.

I. The Legal Successor Church Question

The final verdicts of the independent judges in both court cases ruled that the RLDS church was “the **legal successor**” to the one originally founded by the Prophet Joseph Smith, primarily because it was then following the “**tenets**” of the original or “primitive” church brought forth by Joseph Smith.

***Verdict #1 - 1880 Kirtland Temple Suit** In this case Judge Sherman ruled, “The...Plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is a Religious Society, founded and organized upon the **same doctrines and tenets**, and having the same church organization, as the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized in 1830, by Joseph Smith...That the church in Utah, the Defendant of which John Taylor is president, **has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances and usages** of said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrines of **celestial marriage** and a **plurality of wives**, and the **doctrine of Adam-god worship**, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original Church. And the Court do further find that the Plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, **is the True and Lawful continuation of, and successor** to the said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized in 1830, and is **entitled in law to all its rights and property.**”

***Verdict #2 - 1894 Temple Lot Case** In this important case Judge Phillips (representing a three-person panel of judges) ruled, “There can be no question of the fact that Brigham Young’s assumed presidency was a **bold and bald usurpation**...The book [LDS Doctrine and Covenants] clearly taught that the **succession** should descend **lineally** and go to the **first-born**. Joseph Smith so taught, and . . . publicly proclaimed his son Joseph, the present head of Complainant Church, **his successor**, and he was so **anointed** . . . The Book of Mormon itself inveighed against the **sin of polygamy** . . . Conformably to the Book of Mormon, the Book of Doctrine and Covenants expressly declared ‘that we believe that one man should have but one wife, and one woman but one husband.’ And this declaration . . . reappeared in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, editions of 1846 and 1856. **Its first appearance as a dogma of the church (the dogma of polygamy) was in the Utah Church in 1852** . . . Claim is made by the Utah Church that this doctrine is predicated of a revelation made to Joseph Smith in July, 1843. **No such revelation was ever made public during the life of Joseph Smith, and under the law of the church it could not become an article of faith**

and belief until submitted to and adopted [via a vote of appropriate parties] by the church. This was never done . . . The Utah Church further departed from the principles and doctrines of the original church by changing in their teaching the first statement in the Article of Faith, which was, 'We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost,' and in lieu thereof taught the doctrine of **'Adam-god worship'** . . . It has introduced societies of a **secret order**, and established **secret oaths and covenants**, contrary to the book of teachings of the old church. It has **changed the duties of the President, and of the Twelve, and established the doctrine to 'Obey Counsel,'** and has **changed the order of the 'Seventy, or Evangelists'** . . .

A considerable number of the officers and members of the church at Nauvoo did not ally themselves with any of the factions, and wherever they were they held onto the faith, refused to follow Brigham Young to Utah, and ever repudiated the doctrine of polygamy, which was **the great rock of offense on which the church split after the death of Joseph Smith** . . . In 1852 the scattered fragments of the church, the remnants of those who held to the fortunes of the present Joseph Smith, son of the so-called 'Martyr,' gathered together sufficiently for a nucleus of organization. They took the name of 'The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,' and avowed their allegiance **to the teachings of the ancient church;** and their epitome of faith adopted, while containing differences in phraseology, in its essentials is but a **reproduction of that of the church as it existed from 1830 to 1844** . . .

It is charged by the Respondents, as an echo of the Utah Church, that Joseph Smith, 'the Martyr,' secretly taught and practiced polygamy; and the Utah contingent furnishes the evidence, and two of the women, to prove this fact"... "It perhaps would be uncharitable to say of these women that **they have borne false testimony** as to their connection with Joseph Smith; but, in view of all the evidence and circumstances surrounding the alleged intercourse, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that at most they were but sports in 'nest hiding.' In view of the contention of the Salt Lake party, that polygamy obtained at Nauvoo as early as 1841, **it must be a little embarrassing to President Woodruff** of that organization when he is confronted, as he was in the evidence in this case, with a published card **in the church organ at Nauvoo in October, 1843, certifying that he knew of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and that the 'secret wife system,'** charged against the church, was a creature of invention by one Doctor Bennett, and that they knew of no such society. **That certificate was signed by the leading members of the church, including John Taylor the former President of the Utah Church.**

And a similar certificate was published by the Ladies' Relief Society of the same place, signed by Emma Smith, the wife of Joseph Smith, and Phoebe Woodruff, wife of the present President Woodruff. No such marriage ever occurred under the rules of the church, and no offspring came from the imputed illicit intercourse, although Joseph Smith was in the full vigor of young manhood, and his wife Emma, was giving birth to healthy children in regular order, and was *enciente* at the time of Joseph's death. But if it were conceded that Joseph Smith, and Hyrum, his brother, did secretly practice concubinage, is the church to be charged with those liaisons, and the doctrine of polygamy to be predicated thereon of the church? If so, I suspect the doctrine of polygamy might be imputed to many of the Gentile churches. Certainly **it was never promulgated, taught, nor recognized, as a doctrine of the church prior to the assumption of Brigham Young**" (see endnote 23).

It should be noted that the **credibility of witnesses** in the Temple Lot Case was the single most important factor in determining the outcome of the case. Joseph Smith III developed credibility with the Court, especially when testifying at length on how purported revelations became law in the primitive church under his father (Abstract 50). *Lying* and *deception* (the first two sins addressed by the LORD in 3 Ne. 16:10 & 30:2) were part of the witness testimony supplied by the Utah church. Lyman O. Littlefield, President of the Quorum of Seventy (Utah church), openly evaded questions. Joseph C. Kingsbury (with ties to Section 132), refused to take the ordinary oath to '*tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth*' of his knowledge of polygamy, and was thus *sworn* by '*affirmation*' only. He said, "I generally *affirm*, and I suppose it is because my understanding is that a man cannot be convicted of *perjury* on an *affirmation*, and he can if he is *sworn*" (Abstract 339). Mary Rachael Thompson (a witness presented as a supposed wife of the Prophet Joseph) was constantly prompted by Joseph Fielding Smith during her testimony.

II. The Legal Successor to Joseph Smith in Leading the Church

Eleven-year old Joseph Smith III was anointed and blessed to be the **successor** of the Prophet Joseph Smith, consistent with God's word and will in the eight scriptures previously cited. Judge Phillips noted this to be consistent with the doctrine of the original church as read in his verdict. Joseph Smith III became President of the RLDS church in 1860 (the legal **successor** church in terms of "**tenets**" or doctrine at that time).

A. The James Whitehead Testimony Additional testimony by James Whitehead revealed the following facts:

1. *D&C 132 Problems* The purported polygamy “revelation” that Brigham brought forth in 1852 in Utah, as presented to Whitehead by Bishop Newell K. Whitney at Winter Quarters in 1848, was **not** about polygamy, but instead about the **sealing of one man to one woman**. He testified that it was handwritten (perhaps by William Clayton) and was only **three pages** in length (much shorter than the current **eight** typewritten pages of D&C 132). He added that the handwritten document he saw at Winter Quarters was latter modified by the Brighamites to become pro-polygamy Section 132 of the Utah LDS Doctrine and Covenants (put there in 1876 without the vote of any priesthood body or the general membership of the **church**), **where it was much longer in length**.

2. *Apostasy* Whitehead also testified that the reason he left the church (joining the RLDS Church 17 years later in 1865) was because he saw the “corruption” of the “apostate” church, including polygamy and other changing doctrines brought in by Brigham Young. At Winter Quarters, he said he witnessed “drinking, wickedness, and carousing” by some of the Twelve. “That was not what Joseph Smith had taught, and so I left them, disgusted.” He added that four of the Apostles left the church about this time, including John E. Page, Lyman Wight, William B. Smith, and Amasa Lyman. “They refused to follow his [Brigham Young’s] leadership.” Addressing polygamy, Whitehead said, “I have heard the doctrine of polygamy taught, and I hate and despise it. It is a doctrine of the Devil; there is no question about that. I do not believe in it, or countenance it in any way. I heard Brigham Young preach it at Nauvoo, after Joseph Smith was killed; that was one reason why I left the church. I saw enough to convince me that it was time for me to leave the church. They were preaching the doctrine of polygamy when they left Nauvoo in 1846. I do not know whether all that believed in the doctrine left or not. I expect they all did.”

3. *Replacing William Clayton* Whitehead’s testimony also revealed that he had replaced William Clayton as Joseph Smith’s private secretary on June 11 of 1842. He then served Joseph in this capacity the last two year’s of the Prophet’s life. Whitehead stated that Joseph found Clayton was using church tithing funds inappropriately and had him then do other work. Historian D. Michael Quinn has verified that some of James Whitehead’s stories are inconsistent, while others were outright lies. They are documented in D. Michael Quinn, *Joseph Smith III’s 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah*, Dialogue, Vol. 15, #2, pps. 71-73). Even with the lies (most likely to protect his standing in the RLDS church), Quinn believes his testimony about the anointing and blessing of Joseph Smith III is real. Quinn said, “I feel that we can safely accept Whitehead’s testimony that the blessing did in fact occur during a private meeting in the council room of Joseph Smith’s red brick store...” (see https://dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V15N02_71.pdf p. 79). Like many Brighamites, Whitehead’s version of the facts were modified by him in places to appease those he chose to associate with. He was a Josephite.

B. Joseph Did Not Teach Polygamy The defendants (the Utah LDS church), through their chief witness Pres. Wilford Woodruff, alleged that Joseph Smith Jr. taught polygamy as early as 1842 [Abstract 302]. Woodruff’s testimony was given to justify the practice. Pres. Joseph Smith III refuted this testimony in three ways:

Refutation #1 Pres. Joseph Smith III testified that in October of that same year (1842), John Bennett was excommunicated from the church because of spiritual wifery (later called “polygamy”). In addition, Smith cited the official church newspaper, the Time and Seasons (John Taylor editor), which ran an article, dated **1 Oct. 1842**, which stated, “We, the undersigned members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and residents of the city of Nauvoo, person and families, do hereby certify and declare that we know of no other rule or system of marriage then the one published from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants [of 1835 specifically Section 101, which provided for monogamous marriage], and we give this certificate to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett’s “secret wife system” is a creation of his own make as we know of no such society in this place nor ever did. **This proclamation was signed by the entire Quorum of Twelve, including then Apostle Wilford Woodruff** [Abstract 303].

Refutation #2 The testimony of Joseph Smith III revealed that Brigham Young put forth the supposed revelation on polygamy to Joseph Smith at the General Conference of the LDS Church in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1852 [Abstract 322]. Young stated that the revelation was given to Joseph Smith Jr. on July 12th of 1843, some eleven months before his death. Joseph Smith III revealed that the “revelation” had **not been brought before any priesthood quorum of the church, nor its regular membership** for approval via a **vote**, during Joseph Smith Jr.’s lifetime or thereafter in Utah (Abstract 322, see also the LORD’s directives in D&C 107, and D&C 26:2). Smith stated that the first presentation of the so-called “revelation” to the public was at an LDS conference held in **1852**. Thus, this action was

done by Young alone, and did not follow the law of common consent of the primitive church [in the LORD's directives in D&C 26:2, Mosiah 29:26, Alma 29:4, or 1 Sam. 8:7].

Refutation #3 Joseph Smith III also testified that there was no proper vote by priesthood quorums nor the general church membership for **the deletion of Section 101** in 1876. This Section featured an anti-polygamy statement and was part of the original 1835 Book of Commandments (which later became the Doctrine and Covenants). Smith testified that it was replaced with the pro-polygamy "revelation" on polygamy which later became D&C 132 in the canon of scripture of the Utah church. When questioned about this action by Brigham Young, Pres. Wilford Woodruff stated, "I do not know why it was done. It was done by the authority of whoever presided over the Church, I suppose. Brigham Young was the President then" (Abstract 309, this action went against God's directives in D&C 26:2; Mosiah 29:26; Alma 29:4; 1 Sam. 8:7).

C. Usurped Power The testimonies of Apostle Lorenzo Snow and Pres. Wilford Woodruff of the Utah LDS church revealed that Brigham Young and the Twelve had usurped leadership of the church from the First Presidency and three other priesthood quorums. The Quorum of the Twelve then held this power alone later in Utah Territory. Brigham Young led them as quorum President. The Utah church was judged as not following the original "tenets" of the faith in this matter (see D&C 107 for the LORD's instructions for four equal quorums to lead the church).

III. The Destruction of the Nauvoo Temple – *A Third Verdict*

There is one final temple property tied to Joseph Smith III and the **succession** crisis of 1844. It too was about obtaining a **clear title** to the building involved, and who would own it, thus revealing **who is or is not** a legal successor to lead the church. Stepping back in time some 50 years from the two court cases above, we go to 1846 and Brigham Young's great difficulty in selling the Nauvoo Temple. It cost a lot to build and Young was hoping to capitalize on its value. This property was originally in the hands of Joseph Smith as "**Trustee in Trust**" for the church.

When he and his brothers were murdered, its care should have been passed down to Joseph Smith III as his legal successor, or to the First Presidency (which was dissolved upon the death of the Prophet). Instead, Brigham Young usurped control over the church and its physical assets. Young tried to sell the Nauvoo Temple **thirteen times** in three years after the Brighamite faction of the Saints left the city of Joseph for the mountain west. He hoped it would bring in many thousands of dollars, perhaps a half million dollars or more. All attempts failed because the important **title** to the building was in serious question, like those of The Kirtland House of the LORD and the Temple Lot at Independence. James Strang, perhaps Young's primary rival to lead the church at this time in 1846-48 (and a lawyer by trade), wrote a piece that was published in the Nauvoo area. In it he warned of the future **title** difficulties, stating that Young had no right to sell the temple, as he was **not the legal successor** for the church.

Strang not only protested Young's proposed sale of the Nauvoo Temple, but also the House of the LORD at Kirtland too (on two different occasions Strang possessed the title to this earlier structure). According to Hajicek, "Strang published...documents from the Hancock County 'Book of Mortgages and Bonds.' Those documents deeded the Nauvoo temple to Joseph Smith as the sole trustee for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—and further required that **his successor as trustee would be the First Presidency of the church**. Young had not yet duplicated Strang's claim of the formal office of First President, instead claiming the right to lead by virtue of being president of a **lower body**, the quorum of twelve apostles."

Strang's articles and other efforts severely hampered Young's ability to acquire both the Kirtland structure and sell the Nauvoo Temple. These things followed a run-in that one of Strang's representatives, a Mr. Moses Smith, had with Brigham Young supporters inside the Nauvoo Temple on Feb. 1 of 1846. It occurred as Moses Smith stood to address support for Strang to lead the church. A scuffle involving fighting with clubs ensued, apparently planned in advance by Brighamite supporters led by Hosea Stout (bodyguard for Brigham Young and Nauvoo's Chief of Police).

The competition with Strang was one of seven things motivating Young to destroy the Nauvoo Temple by fire on October 9 of 1848, that it might **not** fall into the hands of Strang or other "enemies." Hajicek quoted Young making nine statements tied to "arson" or "burning property" during his later years (these statements were made both before *and* after the Nauvoo Temple was burned by an arsonist). Six of these statements specifically reference **the burning of**

the Nauvoo Temple! History shows that Young ordered various properties of the Saints burned on four different occasions, rather than leaving them to others. These included;

- (1) Dwellings at Winter Quarters, where the Tabernacle and 600 homes of the Saints were torched
- (2) Fort Bridger in Wyoming
- (3) Fort Supply, also in Wyoming
- (4) Young was also preparing to burn down Salt lake City, had Johnston's Army kept advancing in 1858.

Young latter stated, "This year has made me think of the season that we were obliged to leave Nauvoo . . . Should we ever be obliged to leave our houses, the decree of my heart is that **there shall naught be left for our enemies** [Strang] **but the ashes of all that will burn**", the congregation responded, 'Amen'" (see JD 5:337; for all nine arson statements by Young and more on the burning of the Nauvoo Temple, see John Hajicek, *The Sale and Burning of the Nauvoo Temple*, a paper presented at the 25th annual meeting of the John Whitmer Historical Association, Kirtland Ohio). See also <http://www.strangite.org/Temple.htm>

Fulfilling Prophecy

Reviewing the life of Joseph Smith III, we see that a significant part of his mission as Joseph and Emma's firstborn son was fulfilled in completing portions of his father's undone work. He did so by (1) Publishing the JST version of the King James Bible in 1867 (as President of the RLDS church); And (2) And by helping to cleanse the Brighamite faction of the church in Utah who had been practicing polygamy under the leadership of Brigham Young (see farther below). Joseph Smith III helped to remove the stain of polygamy from them at the time of the transition from the 19th to the 20th century. I believe this fulfilled three prophecies given to young Joseph Smith III when he was blessed by his grandfather, Joseph Smith senior, and two times by his father Joseph Smith junior. In all three blessings there are hints that young Joseph would grow up to one day help complete at least some portions of his father's mission of restoration (see chap. 4 of *The Secret Chamber*).

A portion of his mission may have been revealed to him in the first of three events that caused him to finally accept an invitation to lead the RLDS church in 1860. It occurred at Nauvoo in the fall of 1853, when an English convert to Mormonism sought him out, telling young Joseph that, "God had given him a duty to *unify* and **purify the church**," adding that Joseph was "possibly doing a great wrong in allowing the years to go by unimproved." He suggested that Smith prepare himself through study and prayer for the work of the LORD². This caused Joseph III to turn to the LORD more intensely, to study the work of his father and determine if he was a polygamist, as the Brighamites claimed. Instead, his research confirmed that his father was innocent, as all the Smith family had so testified. Notable contributions by Joseph Smith III, fulfilling the three prophecies, include:

1. *Published the JST Version of the Bible* God told the Prophet Joseph that the JST version of the Bible was to go to all the world bound together with the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith III published his father's re-translation in 1867. Emma had kept the manuscript for this "re-translation" in safe keeping, hidden away from Brigham Young and others. Young wanted to take it west with all the other church documents he had gathered up in 1846, many of which were modified later in Utah. Emma transferred ownership of the JST to the RLDS Church in 1866. Both Emma and Joseph Smith III had previously joined the RLDS church (both did so without re-baptism).

2. *Helped to Eliminate Polygamy in Utah* Early efforts by Joseph Smith III to **cleanse** the Utah church of polygamy included an 1849 petition to Congress opposing the admission of the State of Deseret to the Federal Union, in the Mormon-controlled territory of the Great Basin. It then included the areas of Utah, Nevada, southern California, Idaho, western Colorado, northern Arizona, and New Mexico. Later he worked with Government officials to pass two new laws, the 1882 Edmunds Act, and the 1887 Edmunds – Tucker Act. Enforcement of both laws helped to end polygamy, resulting in the two Manifestos of 1890 and 1904. Both were official statements by church presidents, expressing that polygamy was ended in the church (they were **not** "thus saith the LORD" revelations).

Like the Utah Brighamite church, the RLDS church in Missouri (now called the Community of Christ) later departed from the original "**tenets**" of the Prophet Joseph's early church. This is revealed in four primary changes; (1) Women and gay members latter were able to hold priesthood officies; (2) The Book of Mormon eventually became a lesser in the minds of many; (3) Church Presidents were later selected outside the Joseph Smith bloodline; And (4) Leadership was eventually assumed by administrators over the church in Twelve Apostles, not the Smith bloodline,

just like the Utah Brighamite church. Both diminished the “traveling missionary” requirement of Twelve as described in D&C 107 (and the by LORD in the New Testament), along with the duty of “apostles” to come to **know** the LORD personally (see Assumption #2, chap. 6, *The Secret Chamber*). Both churches continue to evolve and change, moving towards LGBTQ acceptance and the ways of the world.

God’s Destructive Verdict on the Nauvoo Masonic Temple

Joseph Smith Junior and the Saints sacrificed much at Kirtland Ohio. They were rewarded with a great outpouring of the LORD’s Spirit at the dedication of the house of the LORD there in 1836. God accepted this “House”. It was built to **His Name**. He visited Joseph and Oliver inside this “House” a week after its dedication, doing so on Sunday April 3rd, the day of the LORD’s resurrection 2,000 years earlier. The House at Kirtland remains standing, a monument to a dedicated people and their **love** for God. I believe the building at Nauvoo was **cursed**, however, as were the Saints for four generations following Joseph’s murder and the changes that came with Brigham Young’s leadership.

We are at the end of this cursing, the one addressed in D&C 124, verses 32, 46-48, and D&C 84:49-58. My relatives endured many trials at Nauvoo and later on as a result of decisions made by those leading the church at that time. I believe the Nauvoo (*Masonic*) Temple was **destroyed** in this curse! Early on its roof caught on *fire* (Feb. 1846). Later its tower was struck by *lightning* (Sept. 1848). One month later an *arsonist* (most likely under Brigham Young’s orders, see pps. 131-32 of *The Secret Chamber*) then *torched* the structure (Oct. 1848). Two years later a *tornado* cast down down three of its walls (1850). And then finally in 1865, the last wall standing was *torn down* by Nauvoo residents. Its stones were then used for other purposes, just like those of Solomon’s Temple and Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem. All three of these structures were **destroyed** because of the **idolatry** and other **sins** among the people (this is documented by the LORD in 3 Ne. 16:10, 21:19, and 30:2). It was a sad ending to the “House” Joseph had envisioned at Nauvoo, one uniquely decorated with the moon, sun, and stars to symbolize “**the bride of the Lamb**” as addressed in JST Revelation 12 by John the Revelator. Its destruction is perhaps better illustrated by “the *unfaithful* bride” of Isaiah 54.

Joseph’s Vision for the House of the LORD at Nauvoo Joseph had a vision of the new House of the LORD at Nauvoo. Its exterior architecture was centered on **the Bride of the Lamb**. It was covered with Suns, moons, and stars and would eventually have 432 stars on it, and in five varieties (4 types outside and a 5th inside). Collectively they illustrated those who would become part of “the church of the Firstborn,” **the Bride of the Lamb**. Inside the structure the Saints were to be taught how to become **the bride of Christ** (see D&C 76:54, 71 & 94). Nauvoo resident Wandle Mace explained its eventual appearance, stating:

“The order of the architecture was unlike anything else. It was a representation of the Church, **the Bride, the Lamb’s wife**” (Wandle Mace autobiography, p. 207).

Two thousand years earlier, John the Revelator also saw this same Latter-day church in vision. He described it in JST Revelation 12. John compared it to, “a **great sign** in heaven, in the likeness of things on the earth; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” This describes well the symbolic architecture of the Nauvoo Temple - **the Bride of the Lamb**. John’s “great sign” in heaven is believed to have appeared over Jerusalem at sundown on Sept. 22nd - 23rd of 2017. It was a harbinger of what is about to occur in our day; the coming forth of the Bride of the Lamb, true believers cleansed and prepared for her **husband** - **the Bridegroom Jesus Christ**. He is our Savior and Redeemer, our Rock and High Tower, our source of living waters.

The church of the firstborn requires each saved soul in it to develop a loving, trusting **relationship** with our Redeemer, much like a good marriage. This **marriage symbolism** is found throughout scripture, pointing us to God’s desire for a personal **relationship** with us. In the Bible, however, Israel is frequently pictured as an **unfaithful Bride** because of sin, especially idolatry. **Sanctified** believers are to separate themselves from spiritual Babylon in a second, needed reformation prior to the Millennium (chap. 8). Isaiah 54 and portions of the Book of Mormon address the **unfaithful bride**. She must be cleansed and prepared for her husband’s return.

The **fullness** portion of the doctrine and gospel of Christ has been rejected by the Gentile Saints today. It is the second fiery or spiritual baptism, that of fire and the gift or **endowment** of the Holy Ghost (see chap. 7). Too few today know and seek this fiery baptism. It is to be **sanctified** by the LORD Himself, after which we can receive the Holy Ghost – the true endowment (chap. 7). God addressed this rejection in a prophecy of our day in 3 Nephi 16:10.

He later provided a description of what this **fullness** is 3 Nephi 30:2. Joseph Smith's grand vision of the Nauvoo Temple exterior symbolized this new reformed, light-filled church, one that will rise up in our day among those who focus on **the LORD** and the **fullness** of His gospel, not men and their polluted churches (Mormon 8:38).

As the Saints began departing Nauvoo, Brigham Young made thirteen attempts to sell this structure, which he did **not** have clear legal title to as "the Trustee in Trust." He was **not** a legitimate successor via bloodline to the Prophet Joseph. This was clear in the judge's final verdict in the Temple Lot Case. His statements reveal more doctrinal knowledge of the early church than most Saints have today. Because Young couldn't have the money tied to its sale, he didn't want anyone else to have it. And of course James Strang was one of these, as his primary opponent to lead the church from 1846-48. Evidence clearly shows that Young *torched* the building.

The building was apparently *defiled* long before he *burned* it down (see 1 Cor. 3:17; D&C 93:35, 97:17). We know fighting broke out inside the temple when James Strang sent his representative to Nauvoo to raise supporters for him as a possible successor to Joseph. Young sent his supporters to stop the speech, using Chief of Police Hosea Stout (Young's body guard and enforcer) to do it. Earlier Stout struck a man with a rock inside the temple, nearly killing him, as He was a suspected spy - a supporter for someone *other than* Young (perhaps Strang). U.S. Marshalls also entered the temple (including its top floor where the endowment rituals were conducted) to arrest Young and others of the Twelve. They were suspected of *counterfeiting* coins. Perhaps most offensive to the LORD were the many **polygamous** marriages inside it, in rites *falsely* associated with Elijah's sealing power. Elijah used his God-given power to **destroy** Baal worshippers by *fire from heaven* in 1 Kings 18. Baal worship involved *sexual perversion* and child sacrifice. Elijah's "sealing power" was ultimately tied to **salvation** in Christ, not the abomination of polygamy. *Fire* is coming again in our day to cleanse the earth. The bride of the Lamb will also be cleansed and prepared for her husband Jesus Christ.

When designing the LORD's house at Nauvoo, the Prophet Joseph is said to have first rejected a lightning rod that was to sit atop it. He said, "if God, who now holds the *lightnings* in his hands chooses to direct a thunderbolt against those solid walls and demolish the building, it is his affair" (*Nauvoo Rustler*, 10 March 1891; see Colvin, "Mormon Temple at Nauvoo," p. 2). This was a *prophecy* from Joseph. A unique weathervane did sit atop the Nauvoo Masonic Temple, featuring an angel in long robes flying horizontally, with a trumpet to his mouth. Above it was a traditional **Masonic** compass and square motif. It was a capstone for the whole structure, marking its focus and the false lord it later came to represent under Young. Again God decreed, "...whatsoever temple is defiled, **God shall destroy that temple**" (1 Cor. 3:17; D&C 93:35, see also 97:15). The LORD made sure that the Nauvoo (Masonic) Temple was destroyed, and to every stone, just like the temples of Jerusalem, once they had been defiled by *idolatry* and other sins.

William Week's Untold Story

This paper is concluded with the untold story of William Weeks, architect for this structure. William Weeks and his family were among the 1847 pioneers, entering the Salt Lake Valley in the Jediah M. Grant Company. Weeks and his family later left Utah Territory. He could no longer endure Young's version of Mormonism. History shows that he left because he didn't support polygamy. Young was also exerting too much control over him and the Saints generally, including pushing Weeks into the practice. By 1848, he left Utah Territory with many other disillusioned families. A party of nine men (Brigham's "enforcers") was sent to bring them all back. Young wanted Weeks to build the first Utah temple, but history shows that he became openly disaffected with Young. Week's nephew said Weeks left the church because, "he did not believe in polygamy," adding also that he "did not like so much *bondage*" under Young's leadership.

The **control** and **conformity expected** under Young's leadership is visible in a report sent to Young. Those leaving had to have Young's *approval* first. "We take this opportunity to inform you [Pres. Young] that Brother William Weeks and three other men . . . with their families and teams started for Goodyear's *without* your **knowledge** or **consent**. As soon as we learned this fact we wrote them a brief letter, requesting them to return to this place **immediately** and dispatched it by Brother John Van Cott, our **marshal**, who delivered the same... Their minds are somewhat embittered and we shall do all we can to save them." A ten-day wait brought no results, so on 24 October, "John Van Cott was instructed to take nine men and **bring in** Weeks and company." It failed.

On 21 June, John Smith wrote to President Young stating, “William Weeks, William Fields, Brother Sears and families have left the valley **without consent** to return to the [Eastern] states.” In the conversation that ensued, President Young told Field to tell Weeks, when he saw him, “that he should have no peace of mind until he came to the valley and **made restitution for the wickedness** he had committed.” Later, on July 8, Brigham Young sent a message to William, “that the Saints could build a temple without his assistance, although he [Weeks] said they could not.”

At the October general conference of the church that year, William and his wife Caroline were **excommunicated** by Young from **his** church. Week’s daughter Caroline said that the Weeks family eventually went to San Bernardino in 1857. She said her father remained a great admirer of Joseph Smith. “Father always believed in Joseph Smith’s church.” RLDS records show that a William Weeks, “joined the [Josephite] reorganization in its early days,” but “was not prominent in church history” (see J. Earl Arrington, William Weeks, Architect of the Nauvoo Temple, BYU Studies, 1979).

Summary

The unique “House of the LORD” seen by the Prophet Joseph Smith in vision eventually became a Nauvoo Masonic Temple under Brigham Young. Satan, with the help of Young had corrupted portions of the church and the temple endowment in Young’s take over the church via the Secret Chamber, through the spiritual wifery he brought in among the Saints, and through the secretive, oath-bound practices of Freemasonry. The church that both John the Revelator and Joseph saw did not rise up at Nauvoo. Instead, Joseph and two of his brothers were murdered, that a different path might ensue. The higher, fuller ways Joseph taught were then corrupted and diminished both those in the Secret Chamber. It is part of “the awful situation” we have inherited today, the one addressed in the Book of Mormon, where secret combinations surround us in governments, media, schools, and churches.

Hope is not lost, however. God saw it all coming in D&C 38, where we read of His use of the words “secret chamber”, and the solution to it. It is the real “endowment of power from on high” addressed well in the Book of Mormon and portions of the New Testament, the **born again** cleansing event experienced by many at the dedication of the still-standing Kirtland House of the LORD. There the Holy Ghost – the true “gift” or “endowment of power” was experienced and given by God. Many of the “wise virgins” there were blessed with this “oil” in their lamps. We can be too.

Though the last-days harvest is nearly upon us, and many souls not yet saved (by this cleansing event), all is not lost. The wise who **love the LORD** still have opportunity to **repent and turn their hearts wholly to the LORD**, receiving salvation at His hands. A building is not necessary for this, but a changed, purified heart is. Such become the “bride of the Lamb” in a loving relationship with **Him**. Alma made this necessary change in his day, leaving the court of King Noah and his wicked priests. They lived in luxury in the chief seats, with their many wives and concubines (see Mosiah 11). Alma then humbly turned to the LORD in complete submission, becoming part of the church symbolized by the suns, moons, and stars seen in Joseph Smith’s vision of the Nauvoo **House of the LORD**, the church of the Lamb addressed by John in JST Revelation 12. He is the answer!

For more on this subject, including the “Masonic nature” of the Nauvoo Masonic Temple, see *The Secret Chamber: Spiritual Wifery and the Doctrine of Christ*, Amazon.

End Notes

¹ *Witnesses in the Temple Lot Case* The credibility of witnesses was the single most important factor in the outcome of the case. There was 597 pages of evidence in this court case. Some of it is testimony of those physically present at the trial. Some of the evidence was also in the form of Affidavits (witness testimony in writing, not physically present). The RLDS church utilized Pres. Joseph Smith III, Presiding Bishop E. L. Kelley, W. W. Blair (Editor of Saints Herald), and James Whitehead (Joseph Smith’s private secretary). The Utah LDS church utilized Pres. Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow (Pres. of the Twelve), Lyman O. Littlefield, James Noble, Joseph C. Kingsbury (scribe of the copy of the supposed “revelation” now known as D&C 132), and three supposed wives of Joseph Smith, one being Mary Rachael Thompson.

Useful Sources for the Temple Lot Case Include:

Verdict, Judge Phillips, Temple Lot Case: <https://archive.org/details/decisionofjohnfp00philrich>

Credibility of Witnesses – a Mormon History Association Paper, *The Temple Lot Case: Fraud in God's Vineyard*
<http://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/JS1018.pdf>
Testimonies of Joseph Smith III, James Whitehead & William Smith
http://www.olivercowdery.com/smithhome/1880s-1890s/1893_TLot.htm
Two simple summaries of the case: <http://www.centerplace.org/library/study/court.htm>
<http://restorationbookstore.org/articles/heritage/articles/churchincourt.htm#start>
Full Text: <https://archive.org/details/TempleLotCase>

² *Joseph Smith III* James Whitehead was the private secretary of the Prophet Joseph the last two years of his life and was present in the Red Brick Store in Nauvoo in 1844, when young Joseph was ordained by his father to lead. In the Temple Lot Case of 1894, He stated, "I became a member [of the RLDS Church]...because I knew that Joseph Smith [III] was the right man to lead that church; I knew that he had been **ordained and set apart by his father as his successor in office**, and he came out and made that proclamation to the conference of the Saints, and they received it. The ceremony of the ordination of young Joseph Smith [III] by his father was performed at Nauvoo. Young Joseph [III] was called into the meeting, anointed with oil by his Uncle Hyrum Smith, Patriarch of the church. Newell K. Whitney, the Bishop of the church, held the oil [in another statement Whitehead said, Whitney poured the oil on the boy's head], and Joseph Smith, his father, laid his hands upon him, and blessed him and ordained him **to be his successor** in office...The church did take action as a body on the question of the ordination of young Joseph [III] as his father's successor; **the church consented to it**. That was **done first by the endorsement of the High Council, and then it was brought up before the whole body of the congregation, the whole people** . . . That was done at the meeting held in the grove at the east end of the temple. I should think there were three thousand (3,000) there. There **was a record** kept of it, but the record was taken to Salt Lake. I was present on that occasion . . . A negative vote was taken, but nobody voted in the negative; Joseph Smith had been preaching that day, and at the close of the sermon made the announcement to the congregation, that his young son Joseph [III] had been appointed as his successor. The question was submitted to the congregation for approval or rejection . . . The time that elapsed between the selection of Joseph Smith as his father's successor and the time of the public announcement, was four or five days. The selection and confirmation was on **Wednesday** evening, and on the **Sunday** following, after the sermon was delivered . . . **It was the regular preaching service** every Sunday afternoon, there was no calling about it. They gathered to hear the preaching and at that meeting it was declared by Joseph Smith himself that the selection and ordination of his son Joseph as his successor in office had been made, and the people agreed to it, **by a vote in the usual way**, voting by the uplifted hand" (James Whitehead testimony, the Temple Lot Case, pps. 31-44).

President of the RLDS Church Three events in the life of Joseph Smith III led him to finally accept the leadership position of the RLDS Church. The first was in the fall of 1853 when an English convert to Mormonism in Nauvoo told Joseph Smith III that God had given him a duty to unify and purify the Church, adding that he was, "possibly doing a great wrong in allowing the years to go by unimproved." He suggested that Smith prepare himself through study and prayer for the work of the LORD. This caused him to turn to the LORD, study the work of his father, determine if he was a polygamist, etc.

The second event was a vision he had, where a choice was presented him between two opposite lifestyles; one of honor and renown among a busy people in cities and towns, or one in a quieter place, among a "country of happy people." A number of factions from Joseph's Restoration wanted Joseph III to lead them, including some from the Brighamite movement. They knew of the blessing from his father, and wanted young Joseph to lead them. Brigham welcomed Joseph to join the Saints in Utah, but only if he would submit to the authority of he and the Twelve (and potentially live polygamy).

The third event was an answer to his solemn prayer of what direction to go in. He stated, "I heard a slight noise like the rush of the breeze...I turned my gaze slightly upward and saw descending towards me a sort of cloud; funnel-shaped with widest part upwards. It was luminous and of such color and brightness that it was clearly seen, though the sun shone in its summer strength. It descended rapidly and settling upon and over me enveloped me completely so that I stood within its radiance." In this light, Smith said he was told to have nothing to do with the Utah Mormonism, because "the light in which you stand is greater than theirs." Though Emma would not let Joseph III have anything to do with Mormonism early on, in time both of them felt the time to lead the RLDS Church had arrived. This was after two representatives from this faction invited Joseph to consider leading them. He did not become part of the RLDS church until he was brought low in the dust with the death of his new daughter Eva. In prayer he was told, "the Saints reorganizing at Zerahemla and other places, is the only organized portion of the Church accepted by me. **I have given them my Spirit and will continue to do so while they remain humble and faithful.**" Joseph then accepted the invitation to lead the RLDS people. For more on Joseph Smith III, see Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet*, Univ. of Illinois Press, pps, 66, 99-100, 109, 111, 117). So began the 54 years of leadership of Joseph Smith III. William Marks became a counselor to Joseph Smith III in the RLDS First Presidency.