



# The Gospel Doctrine Class



Doctrine & Covenants - Lesson 33

President Brigham Young Leads the Saints

Brigham Young: *"How often has Joseph said to the Twelve, 'I have laid the foundation and you must build thereon, for upon your shoulders the kingdom rests'."* (HC, 7:30)

D&C 107:22–24

*A study of this lesson will help us understand the process of succession in Church leadership and to show how Brigham Young began preparing the Saints for their journey west.*

Brigham Young: "I do not care who leads the church, even though it were Ann Lee; but one thing I must know, and that is what God says about it. I have the keys and the means of obtaining the mind of God on the subject...."

"Joseph conferred upon our heads all the keys and powers belonging to the Apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away, and no man or set of men can get between Joseph and the Twelve in this world or in the world to come.

"How often has Joseph said to the Twelve, 'I have laid the foundation and you must build thereon, for upon your shoulders the kingdom rests'...."

"My private feelings would be to let the affairs of men and women alone, only go and preach and baptize them into the kingdom of God; yet, whatever duty God places upon me, in his strength I intend to fulfill it." (History of the Church, 7:230)

Eliza R. Snow wrote of the early days after leaving Nauvoo: "As we journeyed onward, mothers gave birth to offspring under almost every variety of circum-stances imaginable except those to which they had been accustomed; some in tents, others in wagons--in rainstorms and snowstorms. I heard of one birth which occurred under the rude shelter of a hut, the sides of which were formed of blankets fastened to poles stuck in the ground, with a bark roof through which the rain was dripping. Kind sisters stood holding dishes to catch the water as it fell, thus protecting the newcomer and its mother from a showerbath as the little innocent first entered on the stage of human life; and through faith in the Great Ruler of events, no harm resulted to either." (Comprehensive History of the Church, 3:45)

Historian Bernard DeVoto wrote that Brigham Young's leadership "marks a decisive change in Mormonism." He continued: "Whatever else Smith was, he was primarily a prophet, a religious leader.... Young was primarily an organizer of the kingdom on this earth.... Under Young [Mormonism] became a religio-economic social system, based on cooperative enterprise, subordinating religious ecstasy to practical achievement.... 'Live your religion,' was his unvarying counsel to the Saints. And by

'live your religion' he meant: take up more land, get your ditches in, make the roof of your barn tight, improve your livestock, and in so doing glorify God and advance the Kingdom."

Robert B. Day: "Dynamic was the word for Brigham Young. For thirty-three tumultuous years, by force of personality, character, ability, and organizing genius, he led The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Brigham Young who ascended to leadership of the Latter-day Saints in the crisis of 1844 was relatively unschooled in formal institutions. But he brought to his task rare native abilities. In him idealism and pragmatism were blended to an exceptionally fine degree...."

"A mind that never tired of detail, that left nothing to chance, was one of the greatest of his gifts. Coupled to all these capacities was an iron will that had been beaten on many anvils of adversity from Kirtland to Missouri to England to Illinois, shaped by the hammer blows of mobs and apostates to a cleaving edge. Tempered in faith, it was the driving power of the man through the fire and storm of one crisis after another through which he led the Church for a third of a century." (They Made Mormon History, p44)

George Q. Cannon wrote of his thoughts near the time of Brigham's death: "As I sat near his bed and thought of his death, if it should occur, I recoiled from the contemplation of the view. It seemed to me that he was indispensable. What could we do without him? He has been the brain, the eye, the ear, the mouth, and hand for the entire people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From the greatest details connected with the organization of this church down to the smallest minutae connected with the work, he has left upon it the impress of his great mind." (quoted in They Made Mormon History, p91)

In November 1832, Joseph Young, Heber Kimball, and Brigham Young go to Kirtland and meet the Prophet Joseph Smith. Brigham wrote of this event: "We immediately repaired to the woods, where we found the Prophet, and two or three of his brothers, chopping and hauling wood. Here my joy was full at the privilege of shaking the hand of the Prophet of God, and receiving the sure testimony, by the spirit of prophecy, that he was all that any man could believe him to be as a true prophet." (HC, 1: footnote to Chapter 21)

Next Week's Reading Assignment  
D&C 136; Our Heritage, pages 71–77

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