

Moving from Kirtland to Nauvoo

Welcome everyone to our next lesson. This week we are tracing the collapse of Kirtland into Missouri and then toward Nauvoo while following the evolution of revelation, sacred motion, and ritual order. We will study why Kirtland fractured under financial pressure, dissent, violence, and competing expectations of prophetic leadership. Then we will examine Hiram Page, Mrs. Hubble, and the question of how a revelatory people learn the difference between personal spiritual gifts and commandments for the whole Church. Finally, we will study the Masonic world surrounding Joseph before his formal initiation, the ritual grammar already present in the School of the Prophets, and the later Far West tradition concerning a Masonic distress call. As you read, watch Joseph learning to preserve spiritual experimentation while creating enough order for the covenant community to remain together.

THE END OF KIRTLAND

Collapse, Temple Development, and the Order of Revelation

WHY KIRTLAND ENDED	WHAT KIRTLAND TAUGHT	ORDER IN REVELATION
Several forces came together at once. Financial collapse Kirtland Safety Society collapsed during the panic of 1837. Apostasy and division Prominent leaders fell away. Expectations of a king, not a prophet. Lawsuits and opposition Legal battles multiplied. Opposition grew inside and out. Violence and expulsion Threats on Joseph and Sidney. They fled Kirtland in Jan. 1838. They gathered with the Saints in Far West, Missouri. (April 1838)	<i>Not a failure—preparation. Lessons shaping Nauvoo.</i> Preparing the People A micro version of Zion from Jackson County. Temple as a School Washings, anointings, solemn assemblies, visions, instruction, veils, sacred clothing, ritual movement. Collective Revelation Tongues, prophecy, visions, and shared sacred experiences. Cultivating Revelation Through sacred motions and symbols of the way of life that transform. <i>The Saints were expected to sanctify themselves so they could enter God's presence together.</i>	<i>Powerful manifestations required clear boundaries.</i> TONGUES PROPHECY VISIONS REVELATION Joseph encouraged gifts, but learned that our faith was not like his. A growing religious movement needed order balanced with inspired spiritual freedom. MRS. HUBBLE <i>Doctrine & Covenants 43</i> Claimed to be a prophetess and spoke revelations. Some accepted. Many were concerned. Joseph sought revelation, did not dismiss her. HIRAM PAGE <i>The Counter Example</i> Claimed revelation through a seer stone. Challenge to priesthood authority. Sets the stage for Joseph's response and D&C 28. Revelation for the Church belongs to the prophet called by God. Personal revelation remains central. Next: A deep dive into the Hiram Page experience.

D&C 1:24 — “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.”
Free agency, expectation, and fear can fracture Zion. Revelation plus order build Zion.

The end of Kirtland needs to be read and studied as a convergence of economic crisis, legal pressure, internal dissent, and violence. The Kirtland Safety Society collapsed during the national Panic of 1837, property values fell, lawsuits multiplied, and several prominent Saints interpreted financial disappointment as evidence that Joseph had failed as a prophet. Doctrine and Covenants 1:24 gives us the larger theological framework for this problem because revelation comes through human language and human limitation. Review the Kirtland Temple texts as well, since the community that fractured in 1837 and 1838 had only recently experienced washing, anointing, solemn assembly, visions, and the dedication of the House of the Lord. The final primary source in this section is the revelation received on January 12, 1838, directing Joseph and Sidney Rigdon to leave Kirtland and gather with the Saints in Missouri.

Readings:

[The Kirtland Safety Society](#)

This is the clearest overview of the financial institution, the Panic of 1837, the losses suffered by the Saints, and the dissent that followed.

[Kirtland, Ohio](#)

Use this short historical overview to place the temple dedication, economic collapse, apostasy, threats, and movement to Far West into one chronology.

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Revelation, 12 January 1838 C"](#)

This is the primary revelation associated with Joseph and Sidney leaving Kirtland. Read the historical introduction and identify the pressure surrounding the decision.

[Doctrine and Covenants 1:24](#), [Doctrine and Covenants 109](#), [Doctrine and Covenants 110](#)

Read section 1:24 as the principle of revelation through human language. Review sections 109 and 110 as the sacred experience the Saints carried with them when Kirtland collapsed.

Hiram Page and the Order of Revelation

September 1830 • Fayette, New York • Doctrine and Covenants 28

1. Who Was Hiram Page?	2. The Experience	3. Key Texts	4. What Joseph Was Doing
- Physician - Married Catherine Whitmer - One of the Eight Witnesses - Baptized by Oliver Cowdery • April 11, 1830 - Ordained a teacher • June 1830	- Joseph and Emma arrived in Fayette and found that Hiram had a "certain stone." - Newel Knight remembered "quite a roll of papers." - Several believed the revelations, especially the Whitmers and Oliver Cowdery.	"No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses." D&C 28:2 "Thou shalt not command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church." D&C 28:6 "Those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me." D&C 28:11 "For all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the church." D&C 28:13	- Joseph did not condemn revelation itself. - The issue was appointment and stewardship. - The revelation regulates authority, not the existence of sacred gifts. - No contemporary source says Joseph confiscated the stone. - Revelation remained open. Commandments for the Church belonged to the appointed prophet.

Joseph encouraged revelation, but he placed it within spheres of influence, order, and common consent.

Pattern: many may receive revelation • one is appointed to receive commandments for the Church

Hiram Page gives us the earliest major test of how revelation functions inside a covenant community. Hiram was a physician, Catherine Whitmer's husband, one of the Eight Witnesses, and a teacher in the new Church. In September 1830 he produced a body of revelation through a stone that persuaded members of the Whitmer family and Oliver Cowdery. Read Doctrine and Covenants 28 closely and mark the words appointed, commandments and revelations in this Church, brother, order, and common consent. Then compare the text with the later Mrs. Hubble experience in Doctrine and Covenants 43. Hiram comes first in September 1830, while Mrs. Hubble comes after Joseph reaches Kirtland in February 1831. Read Numbers 12 beside both revelations and watch how the biblical story preserves widespread prophetic experience while defining a particular governing stewardship.

Readings:

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Hiram Page"](#)

This biography establishes Hiram's family connection, medical work, Church office, witness of the plates, and later history.

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Revelation, September 1830 B, Doctrine and Covenants 28"](#)

Read the historical introduction and the early wording of the revelation. Pay special attention to appointment, spheres of authority, and the private correction of Hiram as a brother.

Doctrine and Covenants 28

Underline every phrase that preserves personal revelation and every phrase that defines governing revelation for the Church.

Joseph Smith Papers. "Revelation, February 1831 A, Doctrine and Covenants 43"

This is the primary source connected with Mrs. Hubble. Compare the language of appointment with Doctrine and Covenants 28 and consider how later history remembers the male and female claimants differently.

Doctrine and Covenants 43

Read verses 1 through 7 as a second attempt to preserve spiritual gifts while defining who receives commandments for the whole Church.

Exodus 15:20 through 21, Numbers 12, Micah 6:4

Use these texts to establish Miriam's accepted role as a prophetess and national leader, then examine the question, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses?"

FREEMASONRY IN KIRTLAND

— Masonic Knowledge, Ritual Grammar, and the School of the Prophets —

Before Joseph Smith joined a lodge in March 1842, Masonic knowledge was already present among his closest associates and echoes appear in Kirtland ritual practice.

1. MASONS ALREADY IN JOSEPH'S KIRTLAND CIRCLE



Hyrum Smith – Had prior Masonic experience before Nauvoo.

The Church History Department confirms that Hyrum Smith was a Mason before Joseph Smith joined in 1842.
churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/masonry



Heber C. Kimball – Also had prior Masonic connections.

He was a Mason before Joseph's initiation in Nauvoo (March 1842).
churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/masonry



Newel K. Whitney – Later received the Royal Arch degree.

His store in Kirtland (Whitney & Rigdon) hosted the School of the Prophets.
Exact date of his initiation is unknown.

NOT EVIDENCE OF DIRECT BORROWING: Masonic knowledge was present, and conversations almost certainly happened. Proving that a specific ordinance came from Masonry requires more evidence.



2. DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 88: THE STRONGEST KIRTLAND PARALLEL

D&C 88:128–141

(School of the Prophets Entrance Ceremony)

128 The president of the school shall enter first, and take his seat, and cause those who come in after him to enter in order.

129 And he shall kneel down and offer the prayer by the Spirit.

130 And then shall all rise and give the prayer by the Spirit.

... ..

133 And the teacher shall rise with his uplifted hands, and say, *Art thou a brother or brethren?*

134 And he shall give the salutation of the covenant.

... ..

138 *And your garments shall be clean from the blood of this generation, and ye shall be received by the ordinance of the washing of the feet.*

Connected to John 13:4–17

RITUAL GRAMMAR PARALLEL

 **RESTRICTED ACCESS** – Not everyone may enter.

 **PRESIDING OFFICER** – The president enters first and presides.

 **RECOGNITION REQUIRED** – Formal question asked.

 **"ART THOU A BROTHER OR BRETHREN?"** Establishes brotherhood.

 **BODILY GESTURE** – Uplifted hands accompany the words.

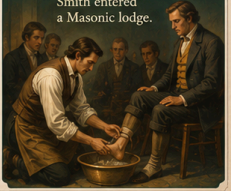
 **TOKEN OF COVENANT** – Actions done "in token or remembrance."

 **RECIPROCAL RESPONSE** – Salutation confirms fellowship.

 **WORTHINESS & ORDINANCE** – Clean from the blood of this generation and received by the washing of the feet.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Kirtland already employed a ritual grammar of guarded entrance, covenantal recognition, bodily salutation, and formal brotherhood—years before Joseph Smith entered a Masonic lodge.





NOTE ON JOSEPH SMITH SR. Claims that Joseph Smith Sr. was a Mason remain disputed due to uncertain lodge records.

Not central to our argument.

"Masonry provides the form and method; Joseph Smith provides the Restoration theology."

— Jared Lambert, *Covenant Through Motion* 99

SOURCES

- Church History Topics Essay, "Masonry" churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/masonry
- Doctrine and Covenants 88:128–141 churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/88
- Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations, Minutes of the School of the Prophets (Jan. 1833)
- Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*
- Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the D&C*
- David J. Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness*
- Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Freemasonry and the Origins of Modern Temple Ordinances*

Freemasonry should first be studied as a system of moral instruction through enacted ritual. The Church History Topics essay identifies Hyrum Smith and Heber C. Kimball as men who belonged to Masonic lodges in the 1820s, which means Masonic knowledge already existed around Joseph before his own initiation in March 1842. Then read the Kirtland sources on their own terms. Doctrine and Covenants 88 creates a guarded ritual community through a presiding teacher, kneeling prayer, uplifted hands, a formal salutation, covenantal recognition, and washing of feet. The January 1833 minutes show Joseph washing the hands, faces, and feet of the elders and pronouncing them clean from the blood of that generation. The Christian source is John 13, while the structural comparison with Masonry appears in guarded entrance, recognized brotherhood, embodied instruction, and progressive preparation. The assignment is to distinguish structural resemblance from documented dependence.

Readings:

[United Grand Lodge of England. "What Is Freemasonry?"](#)

This is the easiest student overview of Freemasonry, its origins, its use of degrees, and its reliance upon grips, words, signs, tools, and symbolic instruction.

[Church History Topics. "Masonry"](#)

This official essay identifies the early Latter Day Saint Masons, explains the three degree system, and gives the Church's current account of the relationship between Masonry and the Nauvoo endowment.

[Steven C. Harper. "Freemasonry and the Latter day Saint Temple Endowment Ceremony"](#)

This article gives a careful historical discussion of similarities, differences, chronology, and Joseph's use of cultural forms as a catalyst for revelation.

[Joseph Smith Papers. "Revelation. 3 January 1833. Doctrine and Covenants 88:127 through 137"](#)

This is the primary text containing "Art thou a brother or brethren," uplifted hands, the covenantal salutation, and the token of the everlasting covenant.

[Joseph Smith Papers. "Minutes. 22 through 23 January 1833"](#)

These minutes record the organization of the School of the Prophets and Joseph's washing of the hands, faces, and feet of the gathered elders.

[Joseph Smith Papers. "Washing of Feet"](#)

This short topic page traces foot washing from the School of the Prophets into the later Kirtland endowment preparations.

[Doctrine and Covenants 88:128 through 141, John 13:4 through 17](#)

Read the two texts together and identify which elements come directly from Christian scripture and which elements create the broader ritual grammar of a guarded sacred community.

THE ALLEGED FAR WEST MASONIC DISTRESS CALL

Separating Established History from Later Tradition

The earliest account connecting Joseph Smith with a Masonic distress signal comes from the events surrounding the surrender at Far West in November 1838. According to an 1880 reminiscence written by Addison Everett, Joseph gave what Everett understood to be part of this Masonic call of distress while being held under military guard. Everett further claimed that Brigadier General Alexander W. Doniphan, himself a Mason, recognized the appeal and shortly afterward refused General Samuel D. Lucas's order to execute Joseph Smith and the other prisoners.

(Addison Everett, letter published in *The Saints' Herald*, 1882; reprinted in *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 4:39–40.)

This account deserves careful treatment because it rests upon a recollection written more than forty years after the event. The chronology itself is well established. General Lucas ordered the execution of Joseph Smith and the other prisoners on October 31, 1838, and General Doniphan refused, calling the order "cold-blooded murder" and warning Lucas that he would hold him personally responsible before an earthly tribunal. Doniphan's refusal is documented in multiple contemporary and near-contemporary historical sources.

(Joseph Smith, *History*, 1838–1856, Volume C-1, Joseph Smith Papers; B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 3:190–191.)

The connection between Doniphan's refusal and a Masonic distress signal, however, appears only in Everett's much later reminiscence. No surviving contemporary diary, military report, letter, or court record from 1838 mentions Joseph giving a Masonic signal or Doniphan responding because of one. Historians therefore distinguish between two separate historical claims:

TWO DISTINCT HISTORICAL CLAIMS

1. ESTABLISHED HISTORICAL FACT

Doniphan refused Lucas's execution order and almost certainly saved Joseph Smith's life.

(Joseph Smith Papers; *History of the Church*, 3:190–191.)

2. LATER HISTORICAL TRADITION

Joseph may have attempted a Masonic appeal during the confrontation, according to Addison Everett's recollection recorded more than four decades later.

(Addison Everett reminiscence, 1880; published 1882.)

HOW I PRESENT IT TO THE CLASS

"A later recollection claims that Joseph Smith gave a Masonic appeal during the Far West surrender. General Doniphan's refusal to carry out the execution order is firmly established by contemporary historical sources. The connection between that refusal and a Masonic distress call rests upon Addison Everett's reminiscence written more than forty years after the event."

GEN. ALEXANDER W. DONIPHAN

Mason. Refused Lucas's execution order, calling it "cold-blooded murder."

JOSEPH SMITH

Alleged by a later recollection to have given a Masonic call of distress.

GEN. SAMUEL D. LUCAS

Ordered the execution of Joseph Smith and other prisoners on October 31, 1838.

FAR WEST SURRENDER
OCT.–NOV. 1838

★

Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were captured by Missouri militia at Far West.

FAR WEST

“Doniphan's refusal almost certainly saved Joseph Smith's life. The Masonic signal connection rests on a late reminiscence.”

PRIMARY SOURCES

Joseph Smith Papers

- History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1 (Far West imprisonment and Doniphan's refusal)
- October–November 1838 historical documents

Addison Everett

- Addison Everett reminiscence, written 1880.
- Published in *The Saints' Herald* (1882).
- Reprinted in *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 4, pp. 39–40.

SECONDARY SOURCES

B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 3:190–191.

Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith: *Rough Stone Rolling*, discussion of the Missouri imprisonment.

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Freemasonry and the Origins of Modern Temple Ordinances", (discussion of the tradition and evidentiary status).

Church History Topics Essay, "Masonry" — discusses later traditions surrounding Joseph and Masonic distress signals while distinguishing them from documented contemporary evidence.

The Far West material gives us a direct exercise in our study and the historical method. The execution order and Alexander Doniphan's refusal are firmly established history that we need to put in the correct context. Hyrum Smith later testified that Doniphan called the proposed execution cold blooded murder and withdrew his brigade, while the Saints' petition to Congress credited his protest with preventing the killing and the sources clearly indicate Joseph using the Masonic distress call. Read the contemporary and near contemporary records first, then evaluate how much weight a later recollection should carry when no surviving 1838 diary, military report, letter, or court record identifies a Masonic signal. Decide for yourself how you feel about this.

Readings:

[Church History Topics, "Mormon Missouri War of 1838"](#)

Use this overview to reconstruct the conflict, the siege of Far West, the execution order, Doniphan's intervention, Joseph's imprisonment, and the expulsion of the Saints.

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Hyrum Smith, Testimony, 1 July 1843," page 14](#)

This is Hyrum's account of Doniphan refusing to participate in what he called cold blooded murder. Read the wording carefully and note what the source does and does not say.

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Petition to United States Congress, circa 29 November 1839," page 27](#)

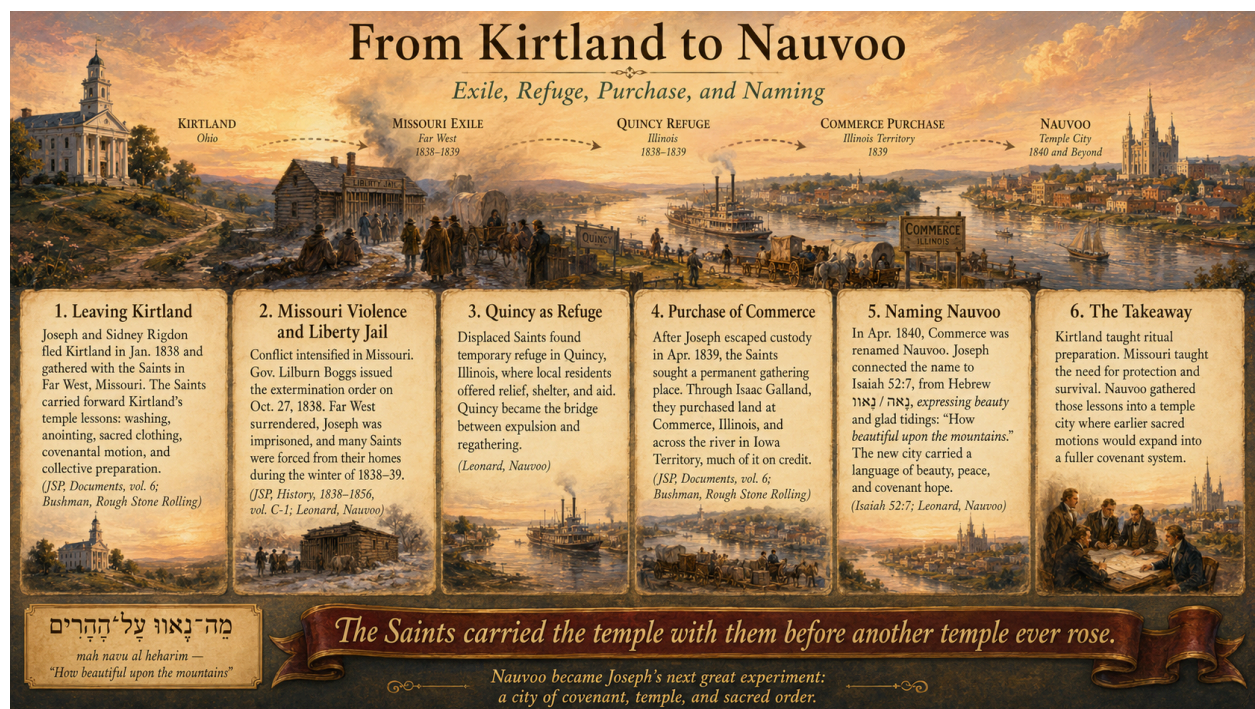
This petition records the court martial, the sentence, Doniphan's protest, and the claim that his intervention prevented the execution.

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Extermination Order"](#)

This event page gives the date and basic documentary setting for Governor Lilburn Boggs's order authorizing expulsion or extermination.

[History of the Reorganized Church, Volume 2, Chapter 19](#)

This later compiled history preserves the Doniphan narrative. Use it as a comparison source and ask how its distance from the events changes the weight you assign to it.



Finish the homework by tracing the Saints from Far West into Illinois. After Joseph escaped Missouri custody in April 1839, Church leaders investigated land on both sides of the Mississippi River and purchased property in Commerce, Illinois, as well as thousands of acres in Iowa Territory. The new settlement became Nauvoo in April 1840, a name connected with Hebrew language for beauty. Read these documents as the practical foundation for everything that comes next. Nauvoo begins through land contracts, debt, settlement planning, legal protection, and the determination to build another temple after Kirtland and Missouri.

Readings:

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Minutes, 24 April 1839"](#)

These minutes appoint Joseph Smith, Vinson Knight, and Alanson Ripley to inspect land and explain how the search led to purchases in Illinois and Iowa.

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Agreement with George W. Robinson, 30 April 1839"](#)

This is one of the foundational land documents for the purchase near Commerce from Isaac Galland.

[Joseph Smith Papers, "Nauvoo, Illinois"](#)

This place page summarizes the purchase of Commerce, the April 1840 name change, the Hebrew sense of beautiful, and the development of the temple city.

[Isaiah 52:7](#)

Read the Hebrew naming context through Isaiah's image of beautiful feet bringing peace and good news, then consider why Joseph chose that language for a refugee city.

Questions to bring to class:

How does Joseph preserve spiritual experimentation while defining the limits of governing revelation? Which Kirtland ritual elements arise directly from Christian scripture, and which resemble the broader ritual grammar of Freemasonry? How should historians weigh a late recollection against contemporary documentary evidence? What did the losses of Kirtland and Missouri teach Joseph about the legal, political, and physical conditions required to build a temple city?