

Section 126

Section 126 put Brigham Young in position to lead when Joseph's mission was finished. Brigham answered the Lord's call to serve in England (see section 118). Both he and his family were sick and homeless when Brigham left Nauvoo in the fall of 1839. While Brigham was in England, section 124 formalized his call as president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (D&C 124:127). Then, having converted hundreds, he returned to Nauvoo in July 1841 and found his family living in a small, unfinished cabin. A week later the Lord gave section 126 to Joseph.¹

Joseph communicated the revelation to Brigham with his own affectionate introduction to his "Dear and well-beloved brother." The Lord, having accepted Brigham's offering in laborious missions away from home, no longer requires him to leave his family. Instead, the Lord commands Brigham to send the Lord's word abroad and look to the care of his family "henceforth and forever" (D&C 126:3).

Brigham set to work to care for his family. He chinked the cracks in the cabin, planted an orchard, built a cellar, and got up a garden to meet their needs. Joseph gave Brigham a few weeks and then assigned him to lead the apostles in taking care "of the business of the church in Nauvoo," including overseeing missionary work (in obedience to section 126's command to "send my word abroad"), the gathering of converts, and consecration.² This represented a shift in the apostles' responsibility.

¹ "Revelation, 9 July 1841 [D&C 126]," 26, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 5, 2020; Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 98.

² Arrington, *Brigham Young*, 99–100.

Joseph had often kept them at arm's length since their calling in 1835, testing them with tough assignments. Some of Brigham's fellow apostles apostatized under that pressure. Brigham did everything the Lord asked of him. He had marched into hostile Missouri to obey a revelation. Then, sick and impoverished, he forsook everything else dear to preach the gospel in England.

As a result of section 126, Brigham remained near Joseph for the Prophet's few remaining years, learning and receiving the temple ordinances and ultimately also the keys angels had conferred on Joseph.