

Section 57

Section 57 is the first revelation Joseph received in Missouri. After receiving the commandment to travel there from Ohio in section 52, it took Joseph two weeks to prepare and a month to make the long trip. Mindful of the prophecies of Isaiah, Joseph asked the Lord for details concerning their fulfillment: “when will the wilderness blossom as the rose; when will Zion be built up in her glory, and where will thy Temple stand unto which all nations shall come in the last days.”¹ Joseph described how the Lord answered with section 57.²

The Lord identified Independence, Missouri, as the center of the place he appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the Saints. It is the promised land, the site for New Jerusalem, the city of Zion. As if Joseph was a disoriented pedestrian, the Lord directs him to the spot where the temple should be built just a few blocks west of the courthouse. The Lord desires the Saints to purchase that land and every tract they can in what is now Kansas City (all the way to the territory created in 1831 for Native Americans) and Independence. This land is ultimately to be inherited by faithful Saints.

The Lord commands Bishop Partridge to carry out his duties outlined in sections 41, 42, and 51. The Lord appoints Sidney Gilbert as Bishop Partridge’s real estate agent, with

¹ “[History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 \[23 December 1805–30 August 1834\]](#),” p. 127, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 2, 2020.

² “[Revelation, 20 July 1831 \[D&C 57\]](#),” p. 93, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 2, 2020.

directions to establish a store to supply the Saints' needs and to use the revenue to buy the land. Gilbert is also to obtain a license from the Indian agents to permit him to get involved in supplying the Native Americans. The point of that is to get access to give the restored gospel to Native Americans and employment and resources for the Saints.

The Lord appoints William Phelps as the Church's printer and commands him to set up shop in Independence and use his skills to obtain as much money as he righteously can in order to build Zion. Oliver Cowdery is to assist him. The Lord commands these four men to become "planted" in Independence, along with their families, as soon as possible in order to begin the buying and building of Zion. They are to prepare for the gathering of other Saints and to provide inheritances for them as they come. The Lord promises to provide further directions to that end.

Sidney Rigdon dedicated the Land of Zion on August 1, and Joseph dedicated its temple site the following day. Bishop Partridge bought the 63 acres that included this site and over 2,000 acres in the area. These he technically owned, but he deeded many of them as stewardships to Latter-day Saints for their inheritances as sections 51 and 57 instructed him to do. Sidney Gilbert established a store across the street from the courthouse the Lord mentioned, and William Phelps established a printing office nearby. These men and their families went to work to build New Jerusalem.

When the printing office was burned down two years later, and Bishop Partridge was dragged from his home to be tarred and feathered on the courthouse square, it was not because a few loud-mouthed Latter-day Saints had created hard feelings among the Missourians. It was because the men named in section 57 and their families were doing what the revelation commanded them to do: printing the Lord's revelations, legally buying the Lord's land to provide inheritances for His people, and operating a store to facilitate the gathering of Israel. Having violently attacked the Saints, a group of antagonistic citizens drafted a "Memorandum of agreement" between them. It stipulated that the Saints stop doing exactly what section 57 commanded them to do.³

Antagonistic Missourians hated Zion. No wonder the Lord had called them "enemies" (D&C 52:42).

³ "[Letterbook 2](#)," p. 54, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 2, 2020.