
The Inheritances of the Saints

D&C 85:3–12

On November 27, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote a letter to W. W. Phelps to “answer questions about those saints who had moved to Zion, but who had not received their inheritances” (D&C 85: Introduction). The Joseph Smith letter began—

I say brother, because I feel so from the heart, and although it is not long since I wrote a letter unto you, yet I feel as though you would excuse me for writing this, as I have many things which I wish to communicate. ... While I dictate this letter, I fancy to myself that you are saying or thinking something similar to these words:—

“My God, great and mighty art Thou, therefore show unto Thy servant what shall become of those who are essaying to come up unto Zion, in order to keep the commandments of God, and yet receive not their inheritance by consecrations, by order of deed from the Bishop, the man that God has appointed in a legal way, agreeably to the law given to organize and regulate the Church, and all the affairs of the same.”¹

What follows in the letter is contained in D&C 85. In this section, the Prophet Joseph expressed disappointment with Bishop Edward Partridge for the manner in which he conducted Church affairs in Jackson County and threatened to “send one mighty and strong” to replace him (D&C 85:7).

¹ Letter to William W. Phelps, 27 November 1832, 1. Joseph Smith Papers.

To clarify the phrase “one mighty and strong,” on November 11, 1905, the First Presidency issued the following proclamation:

The “man who was called and appointed of God” to “divide unto the Saints their inheritance”—Edward Partridge—was at that time out of order, neglecting his own duty, and putting “forth his hand to steady the ark”; hence, he was warned of the judgment of God impending, and the prediction was made that another, “one mighty and strong,” would be sent of God to take his place, to have his bishopric—one having the spirit and power of that high office resting upon him. ...

If, however, there are those who will still insist that the prophecy concerning the coming of “one mighty and strong” is still to be regarded as relating to the future, let the Latter-day Saints know that he will be a future bishop of the Church who will be with the Saints in Zion, Jackson county, Missouri, when the Lord shall establish them in that land; and he will be so blessed with the spirit and power of his calling that he will be able to set in order the house of God, pertaining to the department of the work under his jurisdiction; and in righteousness and justice will “arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints.”²

Bishop Edward Partridge resolved the issue of inheritance among Church members in Jackson County. Therefore, the need to send “one mighty and strong ... to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints” was not necessary (D&C 85:7).

² First Presidency, “One Mighty and Strong,” *Deseret News*, November 11, 1905, 4.