
Lyman Royal Sherman

(1804–1839)

D&C 108

Lyman's early interest in the Book of Mormon was recorded by his brother-in-law Benjamin F. Johnson: "My mother, brother Seth, sister Nancy, and Lyman R. Sherman, with some of the neighbors, would meet together to read the Book of Mormon. Their reading soon led to marveling at the simplicity and purity of what they read, and at the spirit which accompanied it, bearing witness to its truth."¹ After Lyman entered baptismal waters, "the spirit came upon Brother Sherman in mighty power, and he opened his mouth in an unknown tongue, to the great surprise and joy of all."²

In Kirtland, Ohio, Lyman was called to be one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventies. His service as a president was cut short when it was known that he had previously been ordained to the office of high priest. On December 26, 1835, Lyman said to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "I have been wrought upon to make known to you my feelings and desires, and was promised that I should have a revelation which should make known my duty."³ The Prophet received a revelation that very hour informing Lyman, "Your sins are forgiven you, because you have obeyed my voice in coming up hither this morning to receive counsel of him whom I have appointed." Lyman was also told, "Wait patiently until the solemn assembly shall be called of my Servants, then you shall be remembered with the first of mine elders, and receive right by ordination with the rest of mine elders whom I have chosen" (D&C 108:1, 4).

¹ Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), 11.

² Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs, in E. Dale Le Baron, "Benjamin Franklin Johnson Colonizer, Public Servant, and Church Leader," MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1967, 344.

³ Journal, 1835–1836. Joseph Smith Papers.

In March 1836 Lyman attended the Kirtland Temple dedication. On January 8, 1837, while attending a meeting of priesthood leaders in the Kirtland Temple, Lyman sang “in the gift of tongues & proclaimed great & marvelous things while clothed upon by the power & spirit of God.”⁴ A few months later, he was called to serve on the Kirtland high council.

When Lyman learned that dissenters in Kirtland were making plans to use the press in the printing office to print lies and slanderous opposition to the Prophet Joseph, he set fire to the office to thwart their plans. The blaze destroyed the printing office and scorched the Kirtland Temple and other buildings.

When religious persecution became unbearable in Kirtland, Lyman and his family moved to Far West, Missouri. In December 1838 Lyman was called to take the place of Newell Knight on the Far West high council. A January 16, 1839, letter, signed by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith, while confined in Liberty Jail, informed Lyman of his call to the apostleship.⁵ He was to replace Orson Hyde in the Twelve. Lyman was never ordained to the apostolic priesthood, as he died on January 27, 1839, at age 34, eleven days after the letter was written.

⁴ Dean C. Jessee, “The Kirtland Diary of Wilford Woodruff,” *BYU Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 382.

⁵ See Lyndon W. Cook, “Lyman Sherman—Man of God, Would-Be Apostle,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 124.