

Section 114

What would happen if one-third of the apostles apostatized or were killed? Section 114 is an answer. Elder David W. Patten was second in seniority in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he and his wife, Ann, moved from Kirtland, Ohio, to Far West, Missouri, in late 1836 or early 1837. With his quorum president, Thomas Marsh, David led the Saints in Missouri as several Church leaders apostatized in the early months of 1838. After Joseph arrived in Missouri that spring, David asked Joseph to seek a revelation for him. Section 114 was recorded in Joseph's Scriptorium Book, his journal for 1838.¹ That book is full of records of councils in which several of the apostles, as well as Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, were disciplined or excommunicated from the Church.

The brief revelation instructed David and other apostles to prepare for a mission the following spring (1839). Although the revelation does not mention where the apostles would serve, apostles Heber Kimball, Orson Hyde, and their companions had sent reports of their success in Great Britain. Section 114 implies a call to the entire quorum to serve a follow-up mission to the British Isles the next year. David Patten did not live to serve that mission. He was killed on October 25, 1838, after being wounded in a conflict between Saints and Missouri militiamen. The apostles did go to

¹ "[Revelation, 11 April 1838 \[D&C 114\]](#)," 32, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 25, 2020.

Britain, however. On July 8, just over two months following the receipt of this revelation, Joseph received another with more details of their call (see section 118).

The vacancies left by David Patten's death and the apostasy of Oliver Cowdery, the entire presidency of the Church in Missouri, and a third of the apostles, did not remain. Rather nonchalantly, the revelation says their "bishopric," or office, can be filled by others; the Lord seems unconcerned. Section 114 shows how the Lord grants individual agency, including the potential for apostasy, without compromising the Kingdom. Sad as the casualties are, the work rolls forward when someone opts out. Replacements are ready. In this case, men named John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, among others, were called and filled in nicely (see section 118).