

A Greater Work

Doctrine and Covenants 35



“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;”

1 Corinthians 1:27



Suggested Hymn:
#61 *Raise Up
Your Voices to the
Lord*

Background History

1830

Within six months of the Church's organization, Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer Jr. were called to preach the gospel to the American Indians.

Ziba Peterson and Parley P. Pratt were called soon thereafter to accompany them.

On their way to the western borders of Missouri, they stopped in Mentor, Ohio, and Kirtland, Ohio, where they shared the message of the restored gospel with Elder Pratt's friend and former minister, Sidney Rigdon

In a short time more than 100 people, including Sidney Rigdon and many members of his congregation, were baptized. This more than doubled the Church's total membership.



Sidney Rigdon

He was born on February 19, 1793 near St. Clair, Pennsylvania

He was an accomplished orator, a Baptist minister, and later one of the founders of the Campbellite movement. He was a journeyman tanner

He was well versed in the Bible

At one point in time he had Parley P. Pratt in his audience, and later Parley P. Pratt introduced him to the Book of Mormon

He was baptized on November 14, 1830

He served as a scribe for Joseph Smith who was translating the inspired version of the Bible and participated in several revelations

He was a spokesman and defender for the cause of Zion

He suffered persecutions, even tarring and feathering, along with Joseph in 1832





One Eternal Round

“God governs by law—wholly, completely, invariably, and always. He has ordained that identical results always flow from the same causes.

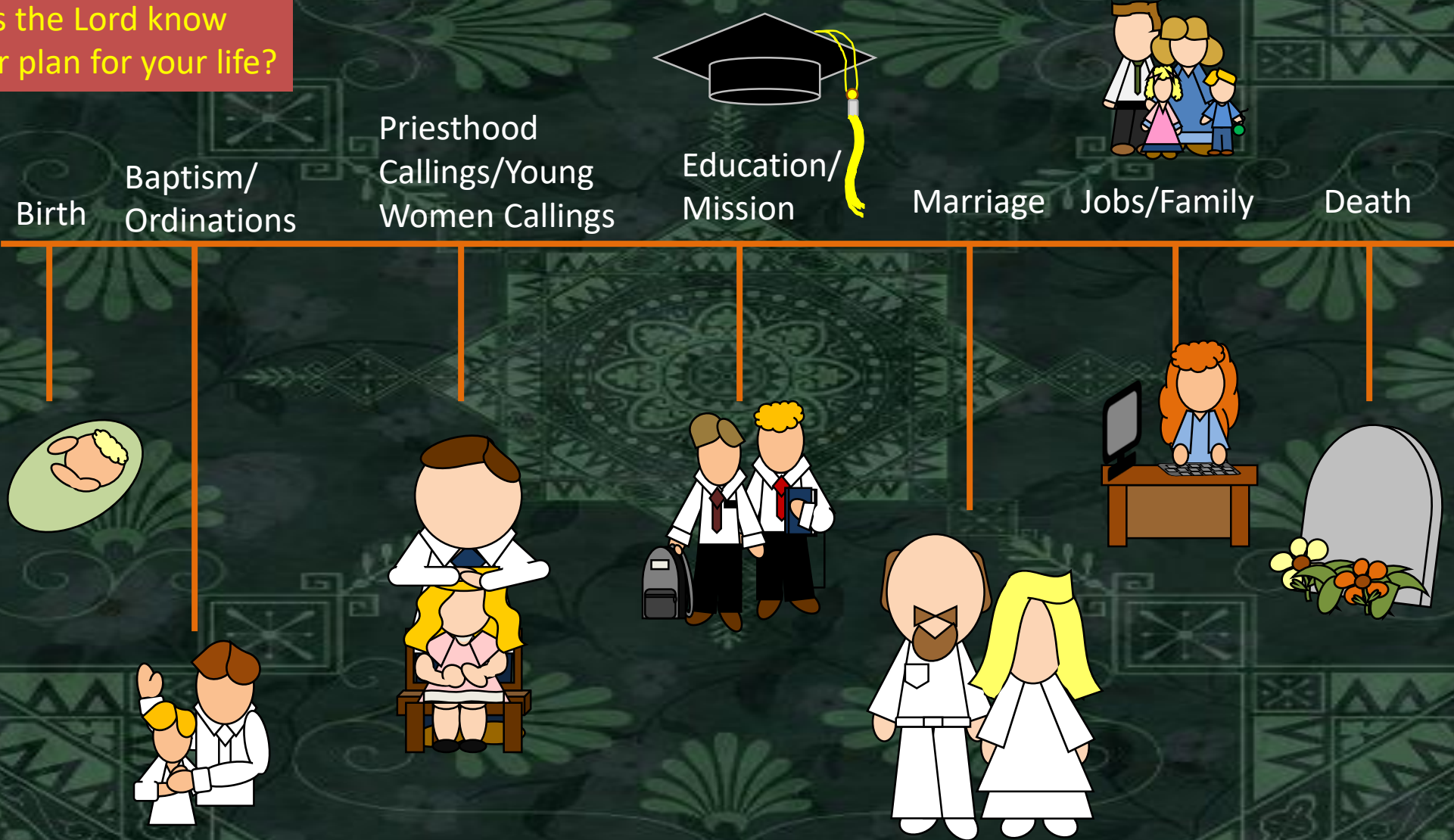
There is no respect of persons with him, and he is a Being ‘with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.’ ([James] 1:17; D. & C. 3:1–2.)

Hence, the Lord’s ‘course is *one eternal round*, the same today as yesterday, and forever.’ (D. & C. 35:1.)” Bruce R. McConkie



Your Plan for Life

What does the Lord know about your plan for your life?



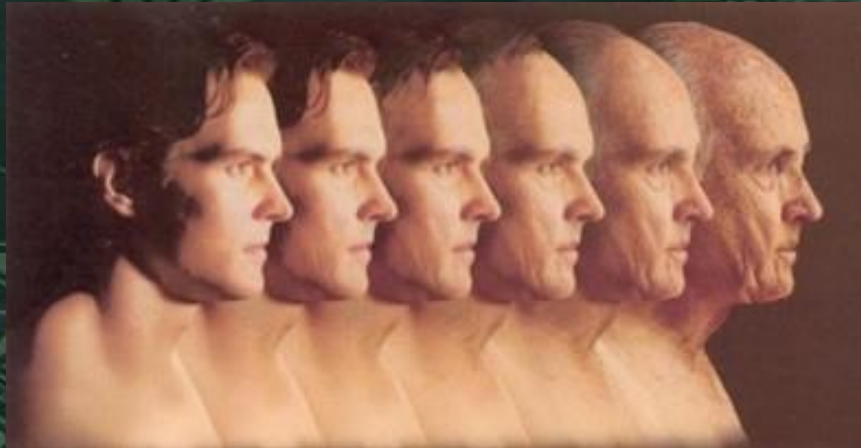
The Lord knows us and has a work for each of us to do



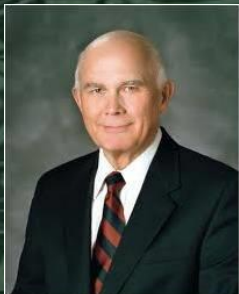
The Spirit of Truth

“I testify to you that God has known you individually ... for a long, long time.

He has loved you for a long, long time. ... He knows your names and all your heartaches and your joys!”
Neil A. Maxwell



“Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;”
D&C 93:23



“Faith and trust in the Lord give us the strength to accept and persist, whatever happens in our lives. ...

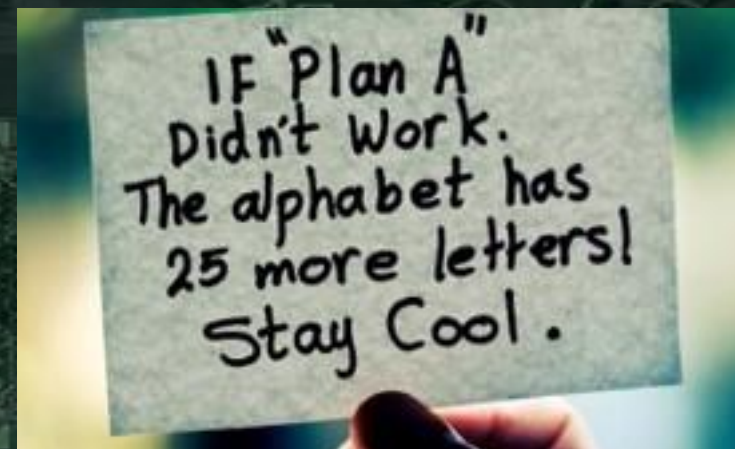
... Do not rely on planning every event of your life—even every important event. Stand ready to accept the Lord’s planning and the agency of others in matters that inevitably affect you.

Plan, of course, but fix your planning on personal commitments that will carry you through no matter what happens.

Anchor your life to eternal principles, and act upon those principles whatever the circumstances and whatever the actions of others.

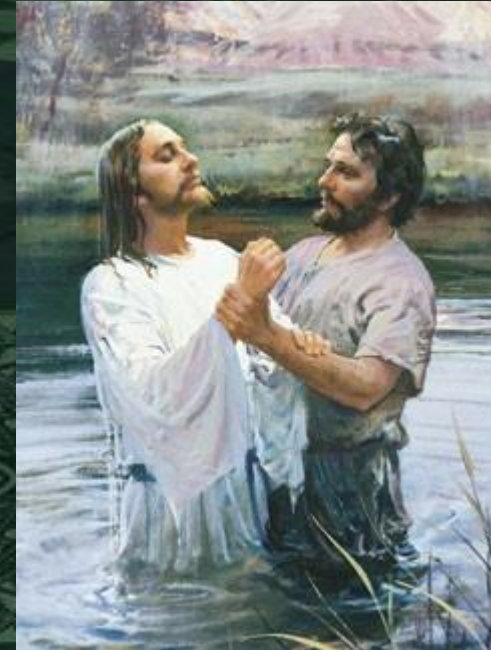
Then you can await the Lord’s timing and be sure of the outcome in eternity.”

Dallin H. Oaks

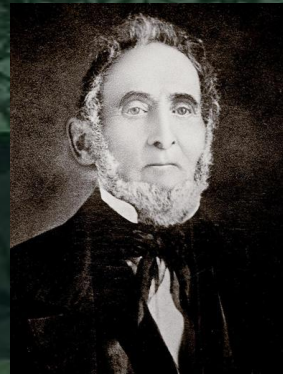


Forerunner

How did John the Baptist prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ?

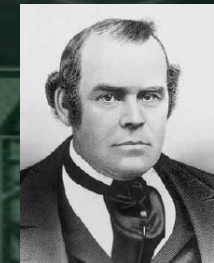


Before Sidney Rigdon was introduced to the gospel he was prepared...He was very knowledgeable of the scriptures (Bible)...he had previously been engaged in preaching to congregations...



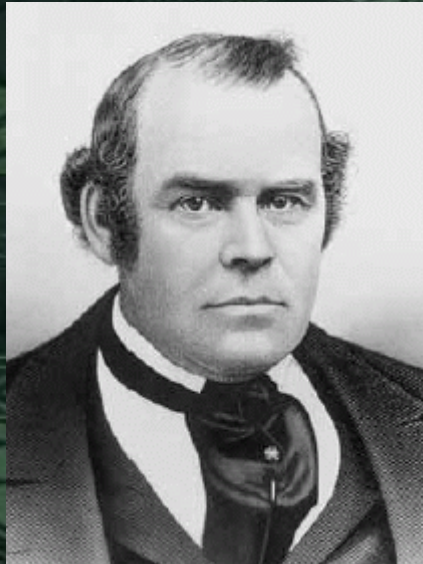
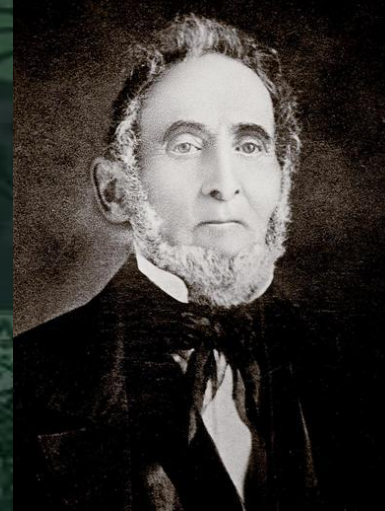
“...when I found he preached faith in Jesus Christ, repentance towards God, and baptism for remission of sins, with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost to all who would come forward, with all their hearts, and obey this doctrine!”

Parley P. Pratt



The Greater Work

Sidney Rigdon would help others receive baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost through the proper authority.



“...At length Mr. Rigdon and many others became convinced that they had no authority to minister in the ordinances of God; and that they had not been legally baptized and ordained. They, therefore, came forward and were baptized by us, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands, and prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Parley P. Pratt

According to Our Faith

The Lord will work miracles, signs, and wonders according to the faith of those who believe on His name.



Miracles are not given as a foundation for faith, but to confirm the faith that has been built already upon the Word of God.

The promise is given that those who, in faith, ask for the gift of miracles shall cast out devils and heal the sick, but without faith no other miraculous manifestation shall be given than the desolation of Babylon.

Smith and Sjodahl

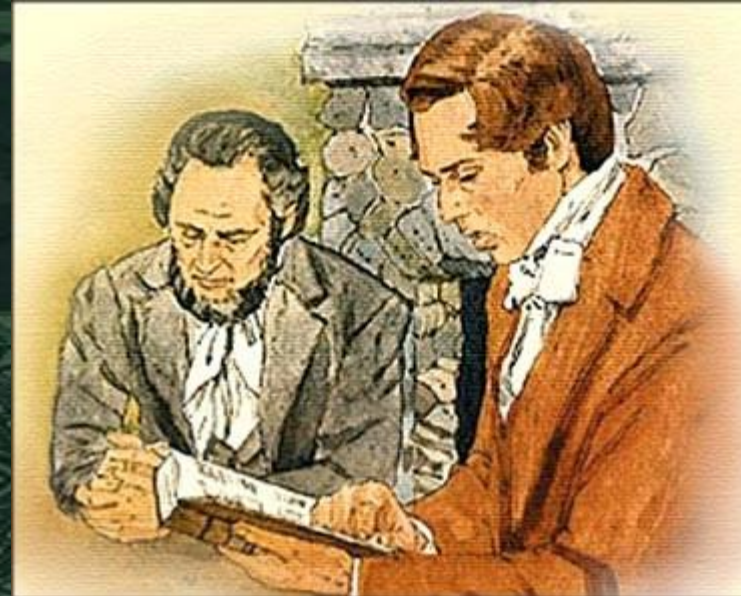
The Weak

Who does the Lord call to assist in His work?

In what ways could those whom the Lord calls to assist in His work be considered “the weak things of the world”?

God will use those who are humble (weak) and those who put their trust in Him

Why might those whom the world considers weak be good candidates to help the Lord accomplish His work?



Threshing is the process by which a grain, such as wheat, is separated from its stalk and husk. The grain is kept, and the stalk and husk are discarded.

Our Weaknesses

How could this truth help someone who feels nervous about serving a mission?



How could it help someone who has been asked to teach at church but feels inadequate?

How could it help someone who feels prompted to share the gospel but isn't sure what to say or do?



“The Church has no professional clergy. The call to leadership positions worldwide is drawn from the congregation. ...

“Everything that is done in the Church—the leading, the teaching, the calling, the ordaining, the praying, the singing, the preparation of the sacrament, the counseling, and everything else—is done by ordinary members, the ‘weak things of the world’”

President Boyd K. Packer



Gird Up Your Loins

“Some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to a calling.

Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone.

It is the Lord’s work, and when we are on the Lord’s errand, we are entitled to the Lord’s help.

Remember that the Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it”

President Thomas S. Monson



Parable of the Fig Tree

“When Jesus spoke to his disciples in answer to their query: ‘Show us when the end of the world shall come, and the time of thy coming’ [Matthew 24:3], he spoke of certain signs that would indicate the time of his coming, the very signs that the world, if they only had eyes to see, could be beholding today: Said he: judge the matter even as you would judge the coming of spring.

When you see the fig tree putting forth its leaf, ye know that summer is near, and so when you see these signs, you may know that the coming of the Son of man is nigh at hand.”

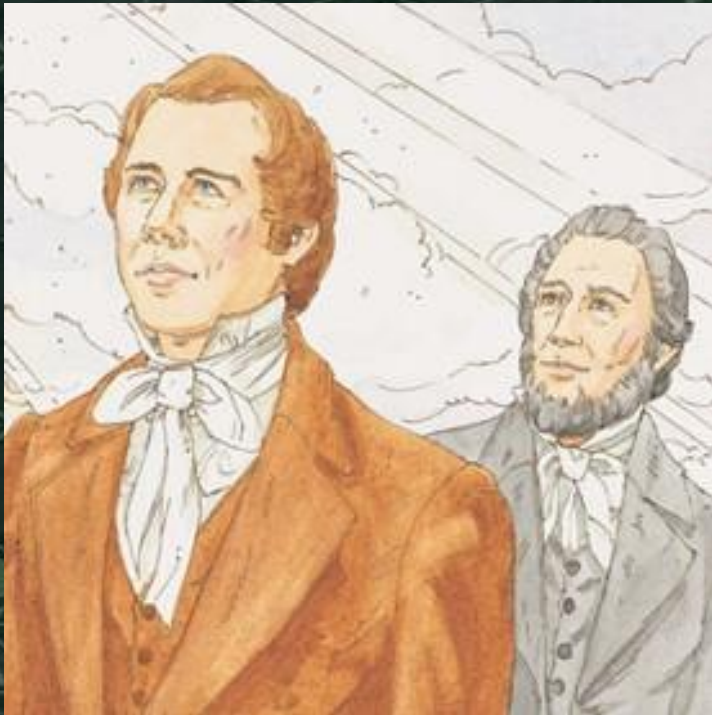
Melvin J. Ballard



Figs are one of the oldest cultivated crops, predating even the growing of wheat, and were enjoyed by the ancient Egyptians, Romans and Greeks.

Counsel and Commandments

“Watch over him (Joseph Smith) that his faith fail not,”
“tarry with him,” and “forsake him not.”

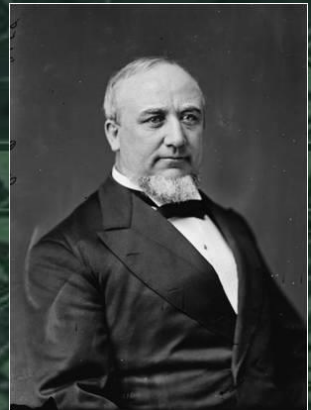


“To Sidney He gave a special command that he should write for Joseph.

The Lord made known to Sidney what Joseph already understood—that the Scriptures should be given, even as they were in God’s own bosom, to the salvation of His elect.

And soon after this time, Joseph began a new translation of the scriptures. While he labored, many truths, buried through scores of ages, were brought forth to his understanding, and he saw in their purity and holiness all the doings of God among His children, from the days of Adam unto the birth of our Lord and Savior.”

Elder George Q. Cannon



Revise and Restore

One of Sidney's duties was to be a scribe for Joseph Smith. Joseph's previous scribes, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, had been called on missions.

The translation of the Book of Mormon was complete by this time, but the Lord had commanded Joseph to restore or revise portions of the King James Version of the Bible that had been lost or changed.

Joseph needed a scribe to assist with this work.

Bible Dictionary,
Joseph Smith Translation.



A red lantern with a white central panel containing text. The lantern has a gold ring at the top, a red top section, a white central panel, a gold middle section, a red bottom section, and a red base. The background is a dark green pattern with repeating motifs of stylized leaves and geometric shapes.

*As we keep the
commandments
and honor our
covenants, the Lord
will help us
accomplish His work*

More Sidney Rigdon

He served with Joseph Smith on missions to Canada and New York State and is mentioned 13 times in the introductory sections of the D&C

The Lord saw great promise in him as the forerunner of the Restoration

The revelation of the degrees was given to Joseph Smith and him jointly

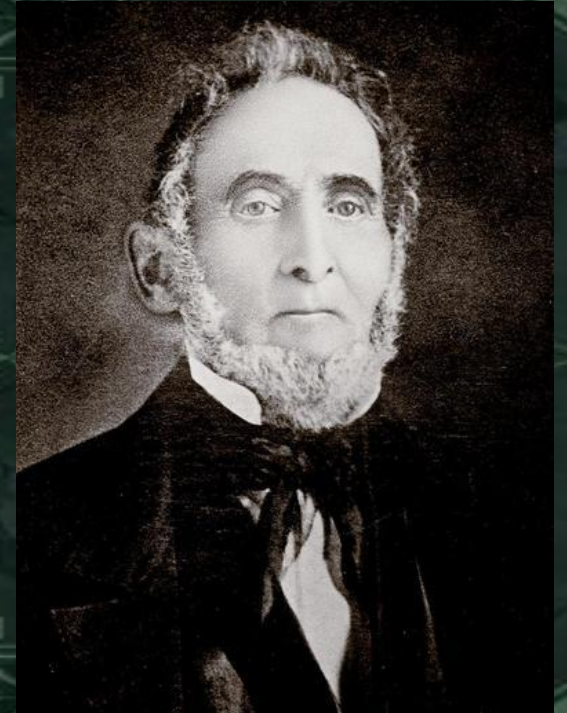
He participated in the land of Zion and he is mentioned as a counselor to the Prophet

Because of pride he severed from the church on August 13, 1843 and moved to Pittsburg, but was later reinstated

Following the martyrdom of Joseph he returned to Nauvoo in response to a vision and claimed that he should be “guardian” over the Church

But the “mantel” fell to Brigham Young. In short, with Sidney’s disagreement he was excommunicated in 1844

He formed his own church called “The Rigdonites” in which followers soon left. He lived in Pennsylvania and New York and died in Friendship, New York on July 14, 1876



Sources:

Videos:

Our True Identity (3:38)

The Lord Will Help Us (0:33)

Rise To Your Call (1:57)



Bruce R. McConkie *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 545–46.

Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants by Ed J. Pinegar and Richard J. Allen pgs. 121-124

Neil A. Maxwell ("Remember How Merciful the Lord Hath Been," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 46).

Dallin H. Oaks ("Timing," *Ensign*, Oct. 2003, 17).

Parley P. Pratt *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* Chapter 5, 7

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* pg. 185

President Boyd K. Packer "The Weak and the Simple of the Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 6–7.

President Thomas S. Monson ("To Learn, to Do, to Be," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 62).

Melvin J. Ballard, in Conference Report, Oct. 1923, p. 32.)

Elder George Q. Cannon (*Life of Joseph Smith*, pp. 83–84.)

(See Bible Dictionary, "Joseph Smith Translation.")

Forerunner Sidney Rigdon:

President Joseph Fielding Smith showed how Sidney Rigdon had been prepared long before the missionaries came to Ohio and met him: "The Lord told Sidney that he had looked upon him and his works, having reference to his ministry as a Baptist and later as one of the founders of the 'Disciples' with Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott. During those years the hand of the Lord was over him and directing him in the gathering of many earnest souls who could not accept the teachings of the sects of the day. His prayers in which he sought further light than the world was able to give, were now to be answered. The Lord informed him that he had been sent to prepare the way, and in the gathering of his colony and the building up of his congregation in and around Kirtland, the hand of the Lord was directing him, and the way for the reception of the fulness of truth was being prepared. It should be carefully noted that a great number of forceful, intelligent men who became leaders in the Church had been gathered by Sidney Rigdon, with the help of the Lord, in this part of the land. Without any question, the Spirit of the Lord had rested upon these men, as it did on Sidney Rigdon and Parley P. Pratt, to direct them to gather in Kirtland at that early day. When, therefore, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson and their companions came to Kirtland they found the way prepared for them through the preaching, very largely, of Sidney Rigdon, so that it was not a difficult matter for these missionaries to convince this group of the truth. While Sidney was preaching and baptizing by immersion without authority, which the Lord informed him in this revelation, yet it all resulted in good when the Gospel message reached them. These men were not only convinced and ready for baptism, but were in a condition by which the Priesthood could be given them, and this was done." (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:160.)

Feeling Inadequate: D&C 35:13

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered the following encouragement to those who feel too inadequate or weary to assist in the Lord's work:

"For you members of the Church who hold back because of feelings of inadequacy, I plead with you to step forward, put your shoulder to the wheel, and push. Even when you feel that your strength can add little, the Church needs you. The Lord needs you. Remember that the Lord often chooses 'the weak things of the world' to accomplish His purposes. [D&C 1:19.]

"To all who are weary, let the comforting words of the Savior console you: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' [Matthew 11:28.] Let us rely on that promise. The power of God can infuse our spirits and bodies with energy and vigor. I urge you to seek this blessing from the Lord.

"Draw near to Him, and He will draw near to you, for He has promised that 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.' [Isaiah 40:31.] ...

"Remember, sometimes those who start out the slowest end up going the farthest" ("Concern for the One" *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 19).

"About this time one Mr. Sidney Rigdon came into the neighborhood as a preacher, and it was rumored that he was a kind of Reformed Baptist, who, with Mr. Alexander Campbell, of Virginia, a Mr. Scott, and some other gifted men, had dissented from the regular Baptists, from whom they differed much in doctrine. At length I went to hear him, and what was my astonishment when I found he preached faith in Jesus Christ, repentance towards God, and baptism for remission of sins, with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost to all who would come forward, with all their hearts, and obey this doctrine!"

Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt
(1807-1857) Chapter 5

The **salt sermon** was an oration delivered on June 17, 1838 by Mormon leader, **Sidney Rigdon**, against Mormon dissenters. Rigdon was First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and often acted as spokesman for Joseph Smith, Jr.. The dissenters included Book of Mormon witnesses Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and John Whitmer, and other leaders including William Wines Phelps.

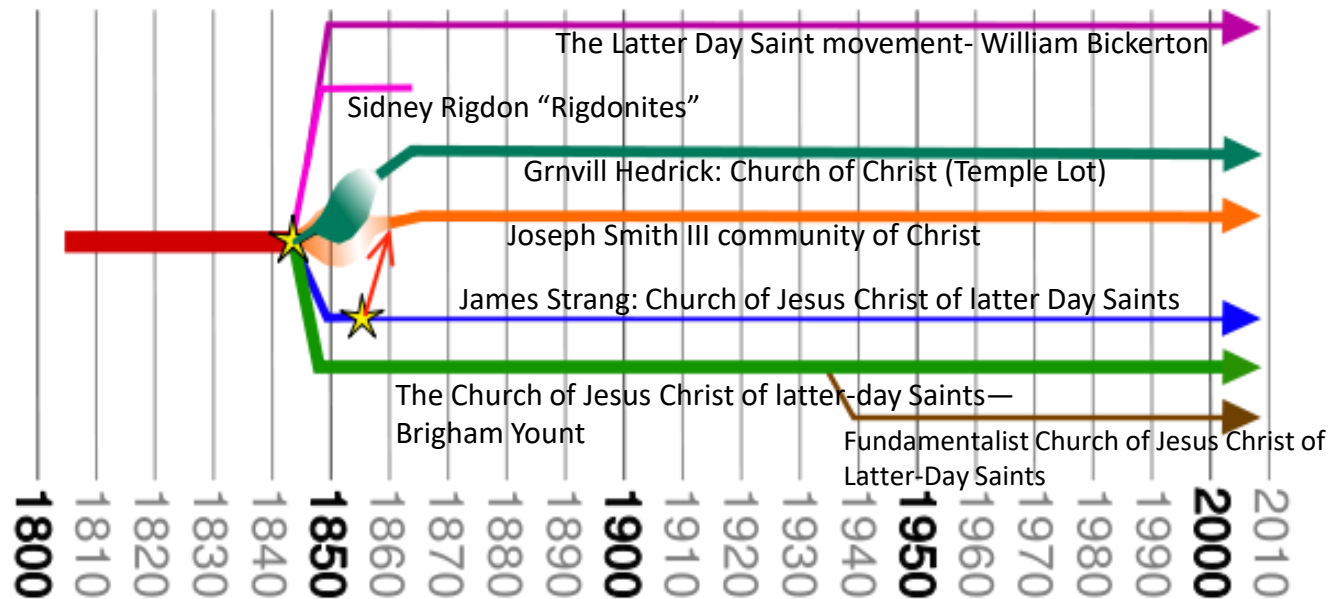
According to Rigdon, the dissenters were like the "salt" spoken of by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (part of the metaphors of Salt and Light in the Sermon on the Mount): "If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Two days after Rigdon preached the Salt Sermon, eighty Latter-day Saints signed a statement (the so-called Danite Manifesto) warning the dissenters to "depart, or a more fatal calamity shall befall you."

The dissenters and their families interpreted these words as threats, and they quickly left Caldwell County, Missouri. Their stories helped stir up anti-Mormon feeling in northwestern Missouri and contributed to the outbreak of the 1838 Mormon War.

The Salt Sermon is often confused with Rigdon's July 4th Oration.

Wikipedia

Main Branches of Latter-day Saints Movement Main branches of the Latter Day Saint movement



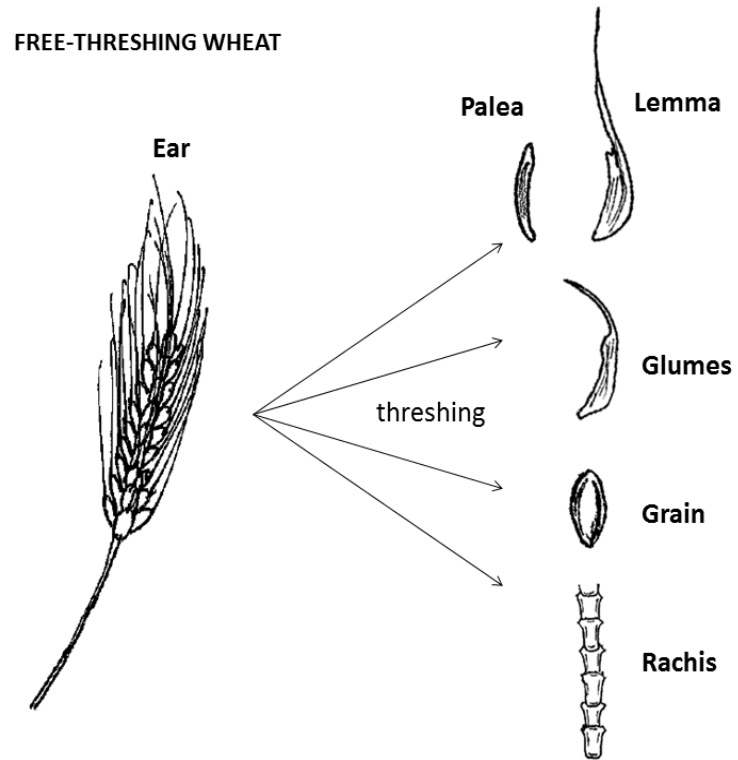
Churches tracing their leadership through Rigdon

More:

<http://sidneyrigdon.com/RigHist/RigHist2.htm>

Name	Organized by	Date	Split off / Continuation of	Current status	Notes
Church of Jesus Christ of the Children of Zion	Sidney Rigdon	1844	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	Dissolved by 1847	Originally also used the name "Church of Christ". Also known as Rigdonites.
The Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite)	William Bickerton	1862	Organized by former members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Children of Zion (Rigdonites), by then defunct	12,136 as of 2007; headquartered in Monongahela, Pennsylvania	Adherents commonly referred to as Bickertonites (church actively opposes use of this term).
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite)	Half of the Bickertonite Quorum of Twelve Apostles	1907	Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite)	Defunct	Dispute over nature of life in the millennium split Bickertonite Quorum of the Twelve in two; later merged with the Primitive Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite)
Primitive Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite)	James Caldwell	1914	Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite)	Defunct	Rejected the First Presidency as a valid leadership organization of the church; later merged with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonites).

More interesting stuff...



When the harvested crops are threshed, hulled wheat grains remain encased in their tightly adhering spikelets, whereas the grains of free-threshing wheats fall free from the chaff immediately upon threshing.