

CHAPTER 3

Word and Will of the Lord

Editors' note: This is an excerpt of chapter 3 from Saints volume 2, No Unhallowed Hand. (Volume 2 will be released early next year.) In the fall of 1846, about 2,500 Church members, including President Brigham Young, are living in Winter Quarters, a temporary Latter-day Saint settlement on the west of the Missouri River. Many Saints there are suffering from disease.

Amid the suffering in Winter Quarters, Brigham received word that a mob of about a thousand men had attacked the small community of Saints still in Nauvoo. About 200 Saints fought back, but they were defeated in battle after a few days. City leaders negotiated for a peaceful evacuation of the Saints, many of whom were poor and sick. But as the Saints left the city, the mob harassed them and ransacked their homes and wagons. A mob seized the temple, desecrated its interior, and mocked the Saints as they fled to camps on the other side of the river.²⁸

When Brigham learned about the desperation of the refugees, he dispatched a letter to Church leaders, reminding them of the covenant they had made in Nauvoo to help the poor and assist every Saint who wanted to come west.

“The poor brethren and sisters, widows and orphans, sick and destitute, are now lying on the west bank of the Mississippi,” he declared. “Now is the time for labor. Let the fire of the covenant, which you made in the house of the Lord, burn in your hearts, like flame unquenchable.”²⁹

Though they had sent 20 relief wagons to Nauvoo two weeks earlier and had little food and few supplies to spare, the Saints at Winter Quarters and neighboring settlements sent additional wagons, ox teams, food, and other supplies back to Nauvoo. Newel Whitney, the presiding bishop of the Church, also purchased flour for the impoverished Saints.³⁰

When relief parties found the refugees, many of the Saints there were feverish, ill-equipped for cold weather, and desperately hungry. On October 9, as they prepared to make the journey to the Missouri River, the Saints watched as a flock of quail filled the sky and landed on and around their wagons. Men and boys scrambled after the birds, catching them with their hands. Many recalled how God had also sent Moses and the children of Israel quail in their time of need.



“This morning we had a direct manifestation of the mercy and goodness of God,” wrote Thomas Bullock, a Church clerk, in his journal. “The brethren and sisters praised God and glorified His name that what was showered down upon the children of Israel in the wilderness is manifested unto us in our persecution.”

“Every man, woman, and child had quails to eat for their dinner,” Thomas wrote.³¹

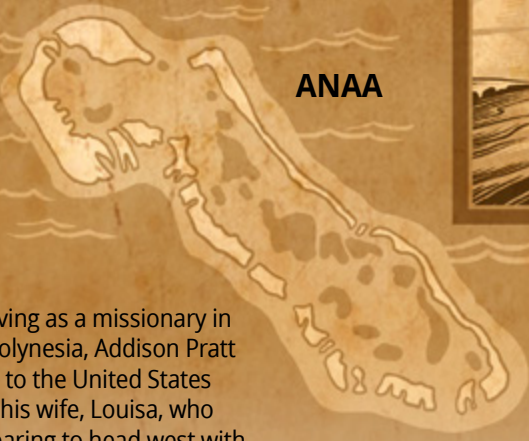
Meanwhile, thousands of miles away on the Anaa atoll in the Pacific Ocean, an Aaronic Priesthood holder named Tamanehune addressed a conference of more than 800 Latter-day Saints. “A letter should be sent to the Church in America,” he proposed, “requesting them to send out here immediately from five to one hundred elders.” Ariipaea, a member of the Church and a local village leader, seconded

the proposal, and the South Pacific Saints raised their hands in assent.³²

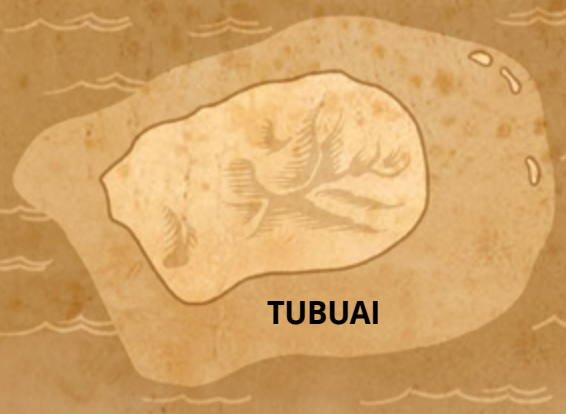
Presiding at the conference, Addison Pratt agreed wholeheartedly with Tamanehune. Over the last three years, Addison and Benjamin Grouard had baptized more than a thousand people. But in that time they had received only one letter from any of the Twelve, and it had given no instructions for returning home.³³

In the six months since that letter had arrived, the two missionaries had heard nothing else from family, friends, or Church leaders. Whenever a newspaper came to the island, they scoured its pages for news about the Saints. One paper they read claimed that half the Saints in Nauvoo had been slaughtered while the rest had been forced to flee to California.³⁴

Anxious to learn the fate of Louisa and his daughters, Addison decided to return to the United States. “To know



ANAA



TUBUAI

After serving as a missionary in French Polynesia, Addison Pratt returned to the United States to rejoin his wife, Louisa, who was preparing to head west with their children.

the truth, even if it is bad,” he told himself, “is better than to remain in doubt and anxiety.”³⁵

Addison’s friends Nabota and Telii, the husband and wife who had served with him on Anaa, decided to return to Tubuai, where Telii was beloved as a spiritual teacher among her fellow women of the Church. Benjamin planned to remain on the islands to lead the mission.³⁶

When the Pacific Saints learned of Addison’s coming departure, they urged him to return quickly and bring more missionaries with him. Since Addison already planned to return to the islands with Louisa and his daughters, provided they were still alive, he readily agreed.³⁷

As colder weather settled over Winter Quarters, Brigham prayed often to know how to prepare the Church for the journey beyond the Rocky Mountains. After almost a year on the trail, he had learned that organizing and equipping the Saints for the road ahead was vital to their success. Yet setback after setback had also shown him how important it was to rely on the Lord and follow His direction. As in the days of Joseph, only the Lord could direct His Church.

Soon after the start of a new year, Brigham felt the Lord open his mind to new light and knowledge. In a meeting with the high council and the Twelve on January 14, 1847, he began recording a revelation from the Lord to the Saints. Before Brigham went to bed, the Lord gave him further instructions for the coming journey. Taking out the unfinished revelation, Brigham continued recording the Lord’s directions for the Saints.³⁹

The next day, Brigham presented the revelation to the Twelve. Called the “Word and Will of the Lord,” it

emphasized the need to organize the Saints into companies under the leadership of the apostles. In the revelation, the Lord commanded the Saints to provide for their own needs as well as work together on their journey, looking after widows, orphans, and the families of Mormon Battalion members.

“Let every man use all his influence and property to remove this people to the place where the Lord shall locate a stake of Zion,” the revelation directed. “If ye do this with a pure heart, in all faithfulness, ye shall be blessed.”⁴⁰

The Lord also commanded His people to repent and humble themselves, treat each other kindly, and cease drunkenness and evil-speaking. His words were presented as a covenant, directing the Saints to “walk in all the ordinances,” keeping the promises made in the Nauvoo temple.⁴¹

“I am the Lord your God, even the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob,” He declared. “I am he who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; and my arm is stretched out in the last days.”

Like the ancient Israelites, the Saints were to praise the Lord and call on His name in times of distress. They were to sing and dance with a prayer of thanksgiving in their hearts. They were not to fear the future but to trust in Him and bear their afflictions.

“My people must be tried in all things,” the Lord declared, “that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion.”⁴²

For the rest of the winter, the apostles continued to seek revelation as they prepared to send wagon companies over the Rocky Mountains. Under their leadership, a small advance company would leave Winter Quarters in the spring, cross



**GREAT SALT
LAKE VALLEY**

WINTER QUARTERS

NAUVOO

the mountains, and establish the new gathering place for the Saints. To obey the Lord's command and fulfill prophecy, they would raise an ensign to the nations and begin work on a temple. Larger companies, made up mainly of families, would soon follow them, obeying the Word and Will of the Lord on their journey.⁴⁸

Before leaving Nauvoo, the Quorum of the Twelve and the Council of Fifty had contemplated settling in the Salt Lake Valley or the Bear River Valley to the north. Both valleys were on the far side of the Rocky Mountains, and descriptions of them were promising.⁴⁹ Brigham had seen in a vision the spot where the Saints would settle, but he had only a general sense of where to find it. Still, he prayed that God would direct him and the advance company to the right gathering place for the Church.⁵⁰

On the afternoon of April 16, 1847, the advance company began their journey under cold and gloomy skies. "We mean to open up the way for the salvation of the honest in heart from all nations, or sacrifice everything in our stewardship," the apostles declared in a farewell letter to the Saints at Winter Quarters. "In the name of Israel's God, we mean to conquer or die trying."⁵³ ■

To read the rest of the chapter, please visit saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org or the digital version of this article on the Gospel Library app or at liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org. The word Topic in the notes indicates additional information at saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

NOTES

28. James Whitehead to Brigham Young, Aug. 18, 1846, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; George Alley to Joseph Alley, Jan. 26, 1847, George Alley, Letters, CHL; Mace, *Autobiography*, 138–45; "Articles of Accommodation Treaty Agreement," Sept. 16, 1846, Chicago Historical Society, Collection of Manuscripts about Mormons, CHL; Bullock, *Journal*, Sept. 1846; Historical Department, *Journal History of the Church*, Sept. 18, 1846; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 606–16.

29. Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 16, Sept. 24 and 27, 1846, 49, 51; Brigham Young to "the High Council at Council Point," Sept. 27, 1846, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL.
30. Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 16, Sept. 14, 1846, 34; Sept. 27, 1846, 52; Oct. 5, 1846, 7–8; Oct. 6, 1846, 11.
31. Bullock, *Journal*, Oct. 9, 1846; Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 16, Oct. 5 and 9, 1846, 7–8, 14–15.
32. Society Islands Conference Report, Sept. 24, 1846, in Historian's Office, *Minutes and Reports (local units)*, CHL; Addison Pratt, *Journal*, Feb. 3, 1846; Sept. 24, 1846; Nov. 1850. In his November 1850 journal report, Addison appears to misidentify the date of the conference. **Topic:** French Polynesia
33. Addison Pratt, *Journal*, Mar. 5, 1846; Apr. 17, 1846; Nov. 14, 1846; Woodruff, *Journal*, Nov. 26, 1844.
34. Grouard, *Journal*, 145; see also Addison Pratt, *Journal*, Feb. 6, 1847.
35. Addison Pratt, *Journal*, Nov. 7, 1846.
36. Addison Pratt, *Journal*, Mar. 13 and 17, 1846; Nov. 14 and 17, 1846; Jan. 9, 1847; Addison Pratt to "My Dear Family," Jan. 6, 1846, Addison Pratt Family Collection, CHL; Grouard, *Journal*, 165–66.
37. Grouard, *Journal*, 172; Addison Pratt, *Journal*, Nov. 1850; Addison Pratt to "My Dear Family," Jan. 6, 1846, Addison Pratt Family Collection, CHL; see also Addison Pratt, *Journal*, Jan. 13, 1847.
39. Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 17, Jan. 14, 1847, 18–19; Willard Richards, *Journal*, Jan. 14, 1847; see also Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 148–57. **Topic:** Brigham Young
40. Doctrine and Covenants 136:1–11 (Revelation, Jan. 14, 1847, Revelations Collection, CHL); Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 17, Jan. 15, 1847, 19.
41. Doctrine and Covenants 136:4, 8, 19, 23–27, 32 (Revelation, Jan. 14, 1847, Revelations Collection, CHL).
42. Doctrine and Covenants 136:17, 21–22, 28–31 (Revelation, Jan. 14, 1847, Revelations Collection, CHL); see also Exodus 2:23–25; 4:31; 6:6–7; 15:1.
48. Woodruff, *Journal*, Sept. 4, 1847; Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 17, Mar. 6 and 21, 1847, 65–66, 72; Lee, *Journal*, Feb. 15 and 27, 1847; Council of the Twelve Apostles to "the Brethren at Winter Quarters," Apr. 16, 1847, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; see also Doctrine and Covenants 136 (Revelation, Jan. 14, 1847, Revelations Collection, CHL).
49. Council of Fifty, "Record," Sept. 9, 1845, and Jan. 11, 1846, in *JSP*, CFM:472, 513.
50. Lee, *Journal*, Jan. 13, 1846, 79; George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, June 20, 1869, 13:85; Council of the Twelve Apostles to "the Brethren at Winter Quarters," Apr. 16, 1846, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; Norton, *Reminiscence and Journal*, July 28, 1847; Erastus Snow, in *Journal of Discourses*, Sept. 14, 1873, 16:207; see also Thomas Bullock to Henrietta Rushton Bullock, June 9, 1847, Henrietta R. Bullock Collection, CHL.
53. Woodruff, *Journal*, Apr. 14–16, 1847; Clayton, *Diary*, Apr. 16, 1847; Council of the Twelve Apostles to "the Brethren at Winter Quarters," Apr. 16, 1847, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL.