

# The Apostle Peter and the Kirtland Temple



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Lyndon Cook

In a recent article regarding the Kirtland Temple the writer indicated that Section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants, a revelation given on 3 April 1836, was incomplete and that it should include an appearance of the apostle Peter<sup>1</sup>. There seems little question that Peter did visit the Kirtland Temple and was seen and identified by the Prophet Joseph Smith, but the date of that appearance has been confused, and the matter needs additional consideration.

It will be remembered that on Sunday, 3 April 1836, approximately 1,000 Saints assembled to worship in the Kirtland Temple. During the morning session, Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten addressed the congregation. In the afternoon, after the sacrament had been administered and distributed, the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery retired to the pulpit, the veils being dropped to separate them from the congregation, and engaged in solemn and silent prayer. When they rose to their feet, a series of visions were opened to them.

Although the Prophet recorded that the Savior, Moses, Elias, and Elijah were seen, the last three prophets committing to Joseph and Oliver certain divine keys and powers by which the full program of the Patriarchal Order could be built up and perfected<sup>2</sup>, there is no evidence to suggest that Peter appeared in the Kirtland Temple on this date. It is highly unlikely that Joseph Smith would have failed to record an appearance by the apostle had he come with the others. Further consideration would suggest that it was at the dedicatory services of the Kirtland Temple, on 27 March 1836, that Peter made an appearance, seven days prior to the appearances recorded in D&C 110. There are three corroborating accounts of the visitation of an angel at the dedication of 27 March, and one of those identifies the angelic visitor as Peter. The Prophet Joseph tells us that “Frederick G. Williams arose and testified that while Sidney Rigdon was making his first prayer an angel entered the window and took his seat between Father Smith and himself, and remained there during the prayer<sup>3</sup>.”

Heber C. Kimball also recorded that “During the ceremonies of the dedication, an angel appeared and sat near President Joseph Smith, sen., and Frederick G. Williams, so that they had a fair view of his person. He was a very tall personage, black eyes, white hair, and stoop shouldered; his

garment was whole, extending to near his ankles; on his feet he had sandals. He was sent as a messenger to accept of the dedication<sup>4</sup>.”

Truman O. Angell informs us that the angelic being seen by Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith, Sr., during Sidney Rigdon’s prayer was Simon Peter, the ancient apostle. “F. G. Williams being in the upper east stand . . . rose and testified that midway during the prayer an Holy Angel came and seated Himself in the stand. When the afternoon meeting assembled Joseph feeling very much elated, arose the first thing and said the Personage who had appeared in the morning was the Angel Peter come to accept the dedication<sup>5</sup>.”

Thus the corroborative accounts of Joseph Smith, Heber C. Kimball, and Truman O. Angell record the visit of an angel to the Kirtland Temple on 27 March 1836. Angell’s report provides the additional but important note that the angel who came to accept the dedication of the temple was Peter. This being the case, Section 110 undoubtedly is not incomplete.

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Lyndon Cook, formerly a student instructor for the College of Religious Instruction at BYU, will begin teaching seminary in Mesa Arizona this fall.

1. Lauritz G. Peterson, “The Kirtland Temple,” *BYU Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 400–09.

2. See Doctrine & Covenants 110. See also Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 2:435–36. Hereafter cited as *HC*.

3. *HC* 2:427; *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 2 (March 1836): 281.

4. Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), p. 103. See also *Woman’s Exponent* 9 (1 February 1881): 130.

5. Truman O. Angell, Journal p. 5, typescript, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.