

planned to leave Nauvoo. Perhaps only Emma would have known that he was not planning to return until after the Church was sifted and cleansed. Emma was closer to the Prophet than any other individual. Her statements regarding this period in Church history have too long been ignored.

To whom was Emma referring when she said that there were those who kept the best elders away from him? Who allowed the worst characters to hover “around him [the Prophet] all the time” during his last two years? Who had that much power? The answer is, Only the Twelve Apostles had that much authority! It was part of their effort to take control and introduce a polygamous lifestyle into the Church.

Emma asserted that Joseph intended to leave and send for her and the children and remain away until the Church was cleansed and sifted. Cleansed and sifted of what? When grain is sifted, the chaff is separated from the kernels. The Church would be sifted and cleansed by the transgressors being separated from the faithful Saints. One of the grosser sins which the Church needed to be cleansed of was polygamy. Emma speaks of Joseph leaving Nauvoo and some of his brothers in the Church calling him a coward. There is evidence that this occurred in June 1844, when the Prophet fled into Iowa. Word reached him that some of the brethren had called him a coward. Joseph returned to Nauvoo to fight the apostasy in the Church, with the knowledge that it would cost him his life.

Joseph Spoke Publicly of His Impending Death

Joseph’s private secretary, High Priest James Whitehead, stated that the Prophet made inference to his forthcoming death at Nauvoo months before his martyrdom. Whitehead declared:

... Joseph the Martyr brought his son Joseph on the stand with him in Nauvoo at the east end of the Temple, and after he had preached one of the grandest discourses I ever heard him preach, he called Joseph [III] to his right hand—I was as close to him as I am to that brother—he called him to his right hand, and put one of his hands upon his head and said,

“Brothers and sisters, I am no longer your prophet; this is your prophet. I am going to rest.” But we did not think he was going to be killed. But he knew. (Supplement to *Lamoni Gazette*, Lamoni, Iowa, January 1888)

Testimonies that Joseph Prophesied of His Death

Brigham Young’s Testimony. Brigham preached a sermon August 1, 1852, in Great Salt Lake City in which he told of hearing Joseph prophesy that he would die before he reached the age of forty. Young declared:

Though he [Joseph] had prophesied that he would not live to be forty years of age, yet we all cherished hopes that *that* would be a false prophecy, and we should keep him for ever with us; we thought our faith would outreach it, but we were mistaken—he at last fell a martyr to his religion. (*Journal of Discourses* 1 [Salt Lake City, Utah, 1854]: 364)

In a sermon at Salt Lake City, May 6, 1877, Young referred to the same subject, saying:

I heard Joseph say many a time, “I shall not live until I am forty years of age.” (ibid., 18:361)

Apostle John Taylor Spoke of Joseph’s Tomb. In 1870 Apostle John Taylor spoke of Joseph having “built a tomb for himself” in Nauvoo (see *Journal of Discourses* 13:231).

In 1876 Apostle Taylor delivered a funeral sermon in Salt Lake City in which he again referred to Joseph’s “tomb” at Nauvoo:

I heard Joseph Smith say, at the time he was making a tomb at Nauvoo, that he expected, when the time came when the grave would be rent asunder, that he would arise . . . (ibid., 18:333)

Elder John Brush’s Testimony. Elder John Brush, who lived in Nauvoo during the days of Joseph Smith, told of an experience which confirmed to him that the Prophet had prior knowledge of his early death. His biographers wrote:

The gift of tongues still seemed to be poured out upon Bro. Brush, and many were strengthened by prophecy or exhortation in this manner. . . . One time when Bro. Brush had gone to the prayer meeting of another ward he was moved upon to speak in tongues, and the interpretation of the tongue was as follows: "Thus saith the Lord, except the people of my church do better and more faithfully keep my law, they shall be driven even from here, and Joseph their prophet shall be taken."

This was a startling revelation to the Saints, as they could not know the hidden workings of the minds of all. They could not believe that Joseph their prophet could be taken, and they doubted the source of the tongue. Grieved to the heart over the interpretation of the tongue, and unable to rest until he ascertained the truth concerning it, Bro. Brush at last sent a man to Bro. Joseph, who, after repeating it, asked him if the tongue was of the Lord. Bro. Joseph replied, "Tell the brother to set his mind at rest. The tongue is too true; it is of the Lord." (*Autumn Leaves* 4 [Lamoni, Iowa, 1891]: 175)

Joseph Had His Sepulcher Built

Joseph was so convinced that his life would soon be taken, that he set men to work constructing a sepulcher to receive his body. He had the sepulcher built into the side of the hill close to the Temple, which was at the time under construction. The sepulcher was completed before Joseph and Hyrum were murdered.

Joseph III Remembered the Sepulcher

Only Emma, her eleven-year-old son, Joseph III, and a few trusted individuals knew that Joseph and Hyrum had been buried beneath the little springhouse on the Homestead property. At the time of Joseph's death there was a financial reward for his capture, dead or alive. The bodies had lain in state at the Mansion House. That night Emma, fearing the desecration of Joseph and Hyrum's bodies if they were placed in the sepulcher, had trusted friends lift their caskets from their burial vaults. Bags filled with sand were placed in the vaults. After appropri-