

Excursus 40

Dating Joseph Smith's Vision of Adam-ondi-Ahman

WILLARD Richards reported the Prophet as saying: “I saw Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. He called together his children and blessed them with a patriarchal blessing. The Lord appeared in their midst, and he (Adam) blessed them all, and foretold what should befall them to the latest generation.”⁹²⁷ About the possible date and setting of this vision, Matthews writes:⁹²⁸

The Prophet did not specify the circumstances or the date when these things were communicated to him, but it is possible that it was part of the accumulation of knowledge and spiritual experience that came to him in connection with the translation of the Bible...

The subject matter of section 107—concerning Adam, the ancient patriarchs, a council at Adam-ondi-Ahman, Melchizedek, latter-day councils, and priesthood quorums—seems entirely consistent with this hypothesis. That the pattern of councils and Church organization was shown to the Prophet by vision is claimed in D&C 107:93, where it is said that the order of the Seventy (and presumably the other quorums also) was “according to the vision.” Likewise Parley P. Pratt has quoted the Prophet as saying to the Twelve:

“I have now finished the work which was laid upon me, by committing to you all things for the building up of the kingdom according to the heavenly vision, and the pattern shown to me from heaven.”⁹²⁹

Although section 107 was recorded [in] 1835, it is certain from the translation of the early chapters of Genesis in 1830 and from the Prophet's instructions to the elders about ancient councils in 1831... that he knew about these things long before 1835. It is certain that much of the information contained in this section on Priesthood was revealed to the Prophet several years before the formal writing of section 107 in [April] 1835... A logical time would be during the translation of the Bible.

The same hypothesis could link the translation of the Bible to the instructions given at the organization of the first high council at Kirtland, Ohio (February 17, 1834), as recorded in D&C 102. These connections are reasonable and possible—even probable.

As to more specific dates for the reception and recording of vision(s) and revelation(s) relating to D&C 107:40-52 and 53-56, four plausible time frames present themselves:

1. *December 1830.* The mention that “These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time”⁹³⁰ could indicate that a vision was given as early as December 1830, when Moses 6 and 7 were received.
2. *August 1831-June 1832.* Sometime between August 1831 and July 1832 Oliver Cowdery wrote in several changes to the ages of the patriarchs in OT1.⁹³¹ Moreover, additional insertions of previous revelations into the last part of D&C 107 were dated 11 November 1831 in *Manuscript Revelation Book 1* (BCR 122-123) and *Book 2* (KRB 84-86).⁹³² D&C 66-68, which

sacred sites in Missouri by various churches with roots in the LDS tradition, see C. S. Campbell, *Images*. See also *Commentary* 3:8-b, p. 160.

927 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, before 8 August 1839, p. 158.

928 R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, pp. 259-260. See also L. E. Dahl, *Plain*, p. 126; G. A. Horton, Jr., *Insights*, pp. 66-67.

929 Statement by Parley P. Pratt in New York, January 1, 1845, printed in *Millennial Star*, March 1845, p. 151, cited in R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, p. 259.

930 D&C 107:57.

931 S. H. Faulring, *et al.*, *Original Manuscripts*, pp. 97-98, 110; K. P. Jackson, *Book of Moses*, p. 102.

932 J. Smith, Jr., *Papers 2008-*, Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, pp. 217-219, 585-589.