

Wilford Woodruff  
on doing temple work for  
the Founding Fathers  
and other great men.

Discourse by Elder Wilford Woodruff,  
 Sunday, September 16, 1877  
*Journal of Discourses*, 19:229

I will here say, before closing, that two weeks before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, "You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, - but we remained true to it and were faithful to God." These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and they waited on me for two days and two nights. I thought it very singular, that notwithstanding so much work had been done, and yet nothing had been done for them. The thought never entered my heart, from the fact, I suppose, that heretofore our minds were reaching after our more immediate friends and relatives. I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them.

I have felt to rejoice exceedingly in this work of redeeming the dead. I do not wonder at President Young saying he felt moved upon to call upon the Latter-day Saints to hurry up the building of these Temples.

---

President Wilford Woodruff,  
 April 10, 1898  
 Conference Report, p.89-90.

Brother Cannon has been laying before you something with regard to the nation in which we live and what has been said concerning it. I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it again in my live, that those men who laid the foundation of this American government and signed the Declaration of Independence were the best spirits the God of heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men General Washington and ll the men that labored for the purpose were inspired of the Lord.

Another thing I am going to say here, because I have a right to say it. Every one of those men that signed the Declaration of Independence, with General Washington, called upon me, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Temple at St. George, two consecutive nights, and demanded at my hands that I should go forth and attend to the ordinances of the House of God for them. Men are here, I believe, that know of this, Brothers J.D.T. McAllister, David H. Cannon and James G. Bleak. Brother McAllister baptized me for all those men, and than I told those brethren that it was their duty to go into the Temple and labor until they had got endowments for all of them. They did it. Would those spirits have called upon me, as an Elder

in Israel, to perform that work if they had not been noble spirits before God? They would not.

I bear this testimony, because it is true. The Spirit of God bore record to myself and the brethren while we were laboring in that way.

---

Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898, Typescript in 9 vols. edited by Scott G. Kenney

August 19, 1877

"I spent the Evening in preparing a list of the Noted Men of the 17 Century and 18th including the signers of the declaration of Independence and the Presidents of the United States for Baptism on Tuesday the 21 Aug 1877."

August 21, 1877

"I Wilford Woodruff went to the Temple of the Lord this morning and was Baptized for 100 persons who were dead including the signers of the Declaration of Independence all except John Hancock and [William Floyd]. I was baptized for the following names: [lists names] ....

Baptized for the following Eminent Men: [lists names] ....

When Br McAllister had Baptized me for the 100 Names I Baptized him for 21, including Gen Washington & his forefathers and all the Presidents of the United States that were not in my list Except Buchanan Van Buren & Grant.

It was a vary interesting day. I felt thankful that we had the privilege and power to administer for the worthy dead especially for the signers of the declaration of Independence. that inasmuch as they had laid the foundation of our Government that we Could do as much for them as they had done for us.

Sister Lucy Bigelow Young went forth into the font and was Baptized for Martha Washington and her family and seventy (70) of the Eminent women of the world. I Called upon all the Brethren & Sisters who were present to assist in getting

Endowments for those that we had been Baptized for that day.

August 22, 1877

.... [Wilford Woodruff] ordained 2 High Priests for George Washington and John Wesley ....

August 23, 1877

.... W Woodruff Ordained 2 High Priest One for Christopher Columbus. ....

March 19, 1894

I had a Dream in the night. I met with Benjamin Franklin. I though He was on the Earth. I spent several hours with him and talked over our Endowments. He wanted some more work done for him than had been done which I promised him He should have (2d). I thought then He died and while waiting for burial I awoke. I thought very strange of my Dream. I made up m mind to get 2d Anointing for Benjamin Franklin & George Washington.→