

Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual

Religion 324–325

SEPTEMBER 2017

Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual

Religion 324–325

Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

Comments and corrections are appreciated. Please send them to:

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Curriculum Services
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0008
USA
Email: ces-manuals@ldschurch.org
Please list your complete name, address, ward, and stake.

Be sure to give the title of the manual when you offer your comments.

Individuals may print this manual for their own personal, noncommercial use (including such use in connection with their calling or appointment in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Please request permission for any other use at permissions.lds.org.

© 2017, 2018 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America
Version 1, 9/17

English approval: 9/16
14344

Contents

Introduction to the Student Manual v
Maps ix
1 Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants; Doctrine and Covenants 2 . . . 1
2 Doctrine and Covenants 1 16
3 Doctrine and Covenants 3; 10 27
4 Doctrine and Covenants 5; 17 43
5 Doctrine and Covenants 6; 8–9 56
6 Doctrine and Covenants 7; 13; 18 72
7 Doctrine and Covenants 4; 11–12; 14–16 87
8 Doctrine and Covenants 19 102
9 Doctrine and Covenants 20–22 118
10 Doctrine and Covenants 23–25 133
11 Doctrine and Covenants 26–28 150
12 Doctrine and Covenants 29 166
13 Doctrine and Covenants 13–34 178
14 Doctrine and Covenants 35–36; 39–40 194
15 Doctrine and Covenants 37–38; 41 211
16 Doctrine and Covenants 42 224
17 Doctrine and Covenants 43–45 242
18 Doctrine and Covenants 46–49 258
19 Doctrine and Covenants 50 273
20 Doctrine and Covenants 51–56 286
21 Doctrine and Covenants 57–58 301
22 Doctrine and Covenants 59–62 316
23 Doctrine and Covenants 63 331
24 Doctrine and Covenants 64–65 344
25 Doctrine and Covenants 66–70 356
26 Doctrine and Covenants 71–75 371
27 Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–49 385
28 Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–119 396
29 Doctrine and Covenants 77–80 409
30 Doctrine and Covenants 81–83 423
31 Doctrine and Covenants 84 436

32 Doctrine and Covenants 85–87 453
33 Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–69 468
34 Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–141 480
35 Doctrine and Covenants 89–92 494
36 Doctrine and Covenants 93 510
37 Doctrine and Covenants 94–97 524
38 Doctrine and Covenants 98–100 541
39 Doctrine and Covenants 101 557
40 Doctrine and Covenants 102; 104 575
41 Doctrine and Covenants 103; 105 591
42 Doctrine and Covenants 106–8 604
43 Doctrine and Covenants 109–10 621
44 Doctrine and Covenants 111–14 641
45 Doctrine and Covenants 115–20 660
46 Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–10; 122–23 677
47 Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–46 693
48 Doctrine and Covenants 124 707
49 Doctrine and Covenants 125–28 725
50 Doctrine and Covenants 129–30 746
51 Doctrine and Covenants 131; 132:1–33 763
52 Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–66; Official Declaration 1 781
53 Doctrine and Covenants 133 806
54 Doctrine and Covenants 134–36 823
55 Doctrine and Covenants 137–38 843
56 Official Declaration 2 861

Introduction to the Student Manual

The Doctrine and Covenants is a sacred volume of scripture comprised of divine revelations and inspired declarations given through the Lord's latter-day prophets. These revelations provide instructions to Church leaders and members as well as to all of the inhabitants of the earth. Through these revelations the voice of the Lord is heard in this dispensation, giving direction regarding the establishment of His Restored Church and the temporal and spiritual welfare of all of God's children.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained how valuable the Doctrine and Covenants is to us: "[The] Doctrine and Covenants contains the word of God to those who dwell here now. It is our book. It belongs to the Latter-day Saints. More precious than gold, the Prophet [Joseph Smith] says we should treasure it more than the riches of the whole earth" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:199).

Religion 324–325 is a two-semester course designed to help you understand the historical background and meaning of the revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants and to help you learn and apply the sacred truths they contain. Through your study of the Lord's revelations, you will have the opportunity to come to know the Lord more personally as you hear His voice speaking to you through these scriptures (see D&C 18:33–36) and through the power of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:2–3).

The Purpose of This Manual

The text for Religion 324–325 is the Doctrine and Covenants. This student manual is not designed to replace your reading of the scriptures, nor can it substitute for the inspired guidance of the Holy Ghost as you combine your scripture reading with humble prayer and thoughtful study. This manual can assist you as you study the Doctrine and Covenants by helping you better understand the historical setting for each section and by helping you deepen your understanding of these scriptures and the doctrine and principles they teach. This manual can also help you consider how the truths taught in the Doctrine and Covenants relate to your circumstances and how you might incorporate these truths into your life. Although there are several ways you might use this manual to enhance your study, it is primarily designed to be used in harmony with your scripture reading.

This manual is not intended to replace the experience you will have studying the Doctrine and Covenants in class. It is intended to help you better understand the Doctrine and Covenants through your personal study and prepare you to participate in class in more meaningful ways.

How This Manual Is Organized

Because one purpose of this *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* is to help you prepare to have a more meaningful experience in class, each chapter in this manual coincides with a lesson in the teacher manual. Each chapter includes an

introduction and timeline, additional historical background for each section, commentary, and guided study helps.

Introduction and Timeline

Each chapter begins with a brief introduction of the section or sections of the Doctrine and Covenants you will study. The introduction provides a brief summary of the historical context and the content of each revelation, which will help orient you as you study the revelations. The timeline provides context for each revelation by helping you see when the revelation was given in relation to other events in Church history.

Additional Historical Background

The Additional Historical Background provides information about questions, concerns, or circumstances surrounding the coming forth of each section of the Doctrine and Covenants. It also provides details about people, places, and events that might help you better understand the section. A map will sometimes be included in this section to help you understand where events relating to the section of the Doctrine and Covenants took place, as well as other helpful geographical information.

Commentary

The commentary will help you better understand the content of specific scripture passages you are studying and the doctrine and principles they contain. This commentary will help clarify the meaning of difficult words and phrases, help you connect historical context to the teachings and counsel in the scriptures, and deepen your understanding of doctrinal truths. Teachings of latter-day prophets and apostles and other Church leaders provide doctrinal commentary and clarify important or difficult scripture passages. As you carefully study and ponder this commentary in connection with your study of the Doctrine and Covenants, you can invite the Holy Ghost to deepen your understanding of the doctrine and principles of the gospel and to strengthen your testimony of Jesus Christ, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel in these latter days.

Guided Study Helps

Throughout each chapter are guided study helps. These study helps include suggestions regarding what you might look for as you read the scripture passages and questions to help you to search, analyze, and in some instances, consider personal application of the scripture passages. The following are examples of study helps contained in this manual:

> Think about some of the significant decisions you are currently facing or may face in the future. Why would it be important for you to seek Heavenly Father's guidance as you make these decisions? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 6; 8–9, look for truths that will help you to recognize and receive revelation from Heavenly Father through the Holy Ghost.

How might the Lord's words recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 6:32–37 have encouraged Oliver Cowdery and the Prophet Joseph Smith? How can these words encourage you as you seek to do the Lord's work?

Taking time to incorporate these suggestions and questions into your study will enhance your learning experience and help you have a more meaningful experience in class. This will also help the truths of the Doctrine and Covenants become a part of your life.

As you consider how you will use these suggestions and questions during your study, keep in mind the following statement by **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "A learner exercising agency by acting in accordance with correct principles opens his or her heart to the Holy Ghost and invites His teaching, testifying power, and confirming witness. Learning by faith requires spiritual, mental, and physical exertion and not just passive reception. It is in the sincerity and consistency of our faith-inspired action that we indicate to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, our willingness to learn and receive instruction from the Holy Ghost" ("Seek Learning by Faith," *Ensign,* Sept. 2007, 64).

As you study the Doctrine and Covenants and consider the questions and suggestions in the guided study helps, you may want to use a journal or notebook to record thoughts, goals, and spiritual impressions. **Elder Richard G. Scott** (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "It is through the repeated process of feeling impressions, recording them, and obeying them that one learns to depend on the direction of the Spirit more than on communication through the other five senses" ("To Learn and to Teach More Effectively" [Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 21, 2007], 5, speeches.byu.edu).

The 2013 Edition of the Scriptures

The information in this manual is based on the 2013 edition of the English-language scriptures published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The 2013 edition of the scriptures includes revised section headings for some sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. Changes to the section headings have been made to reflect recent research and historical findings and to provide additional or clearer context for the scriptures. In some cases, dates or locations have been adjusted in the section headings to reflect newly available research.

The text of the 2013 edition of the English-language scriptures is available online at scriptures.lds.org and in the Gospel Library app.

If you are using the previous (1981) edition of the scriptures, you should not feel obligated to purchase the new edition, since most of the changes are minor and will not impact your study of the Doctrine and Covenants. You should simply be aware that on occasion, a date or place given in this manual may differ from what you find stated in a section heading in the edition you are using. In these instances you may want to refer to the 2013 edition available online or in the Gospel Library app.

The Joseph Smith Papers Project

Much of the historical information in this manual is based on research from the Joseph Smith Papers Project. You can access the transcripts of many of the original documents online at josephsmithpapers.org. If you desire further information, the citations for the Joseph Smith Papers references in this manual that are available online include a link that will take you to the transcript on the Joseph Smith Papers website.

Information for Those with Disabilities

Alternate formats of this student manual may be available at institute.lds.org. If you have difficulty using this manual due to a disability, please contact your instructor for additional resources.

Maps

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS OF DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTIONS

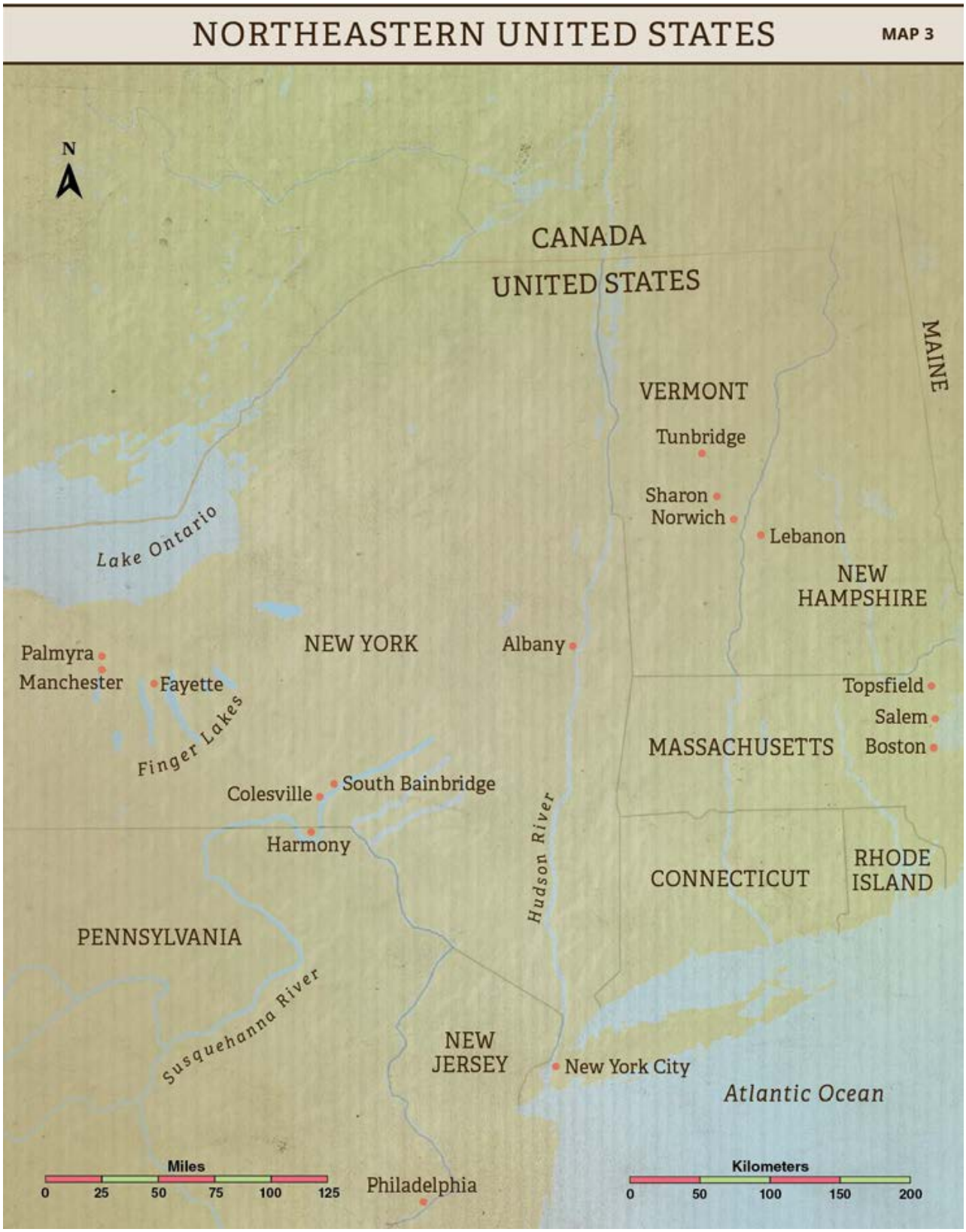
MAP 1

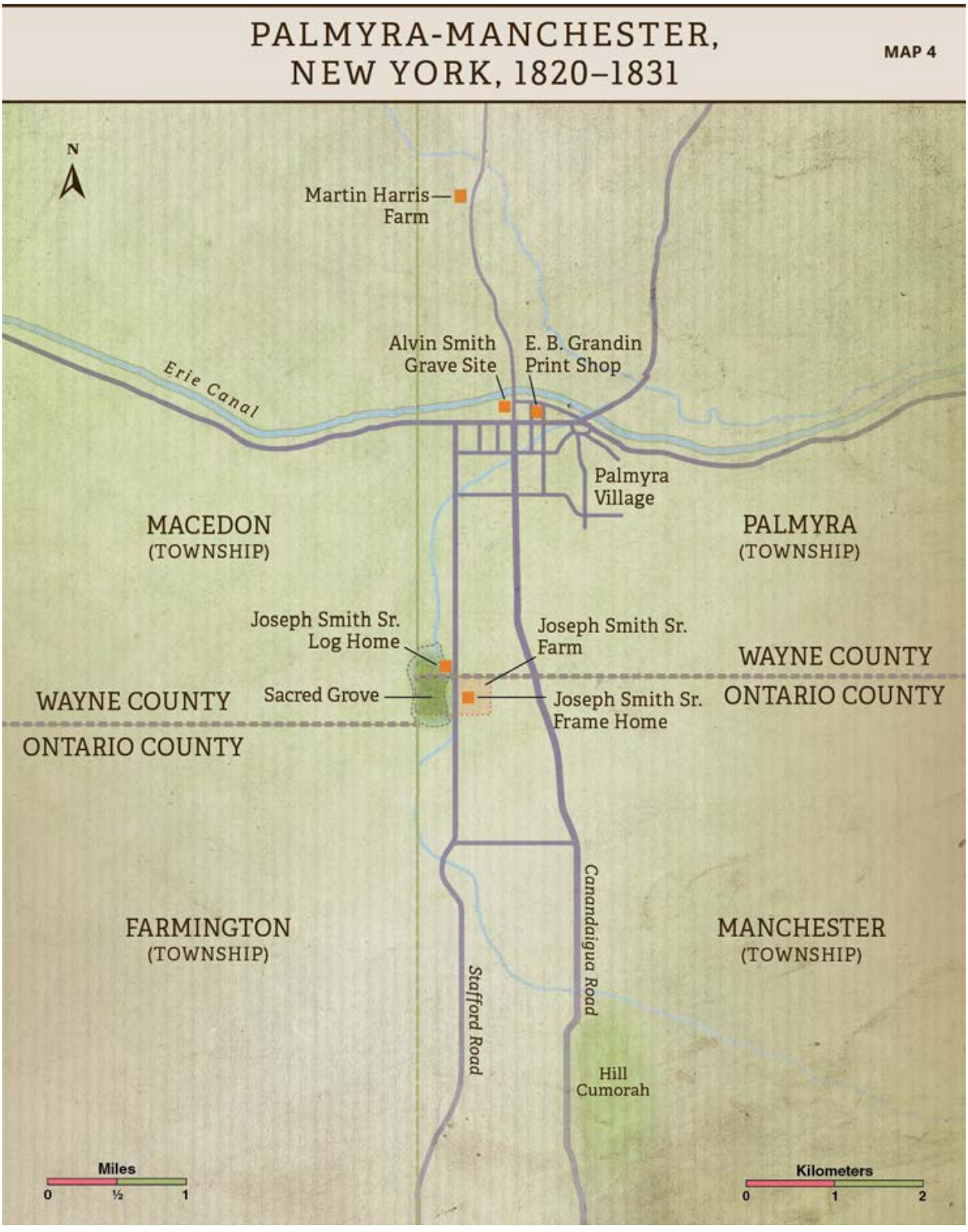


SOME IMPORTANT LOCATIONS IN EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

MAP 2




NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES
MAP 3
N
CANADA
UNITED STATES
MAINE
VERMONT
Tunbridge
Sharon
Norwich
Lebanon
Lake Ontario
NEW HAMPSHIRE
NEW YORK
Albany
Palmyra
Manchester
Fayette
Topsfield
Salem
Boston
MASSACHUSETTS
Finger Lakes
Colesville
South Bainbridge
Harmony
Hudson River
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
PENNSYLVANIA
Susquehanna River
NEW JERSEY
New York City
Atlantic Ocean
Philadelphia
Miles
0 25 50 75 100 125
Kilometers
0 50 100 150 200


PALMYRA-MANCHESTER,
NEW YORK, 1820–1831
MAP 4
N
Martin Harris Farm
Alvin Smith Grave Site
E. B. Grandin Print Shop
Erie Canal
Palmyra Village
MACEDON (TOWNSHIP)
PALMYRA (TOWNSHIP)
Joseph Smith Sr. Log Home
Joseph Smith Sr. Farm
WAYNE COUNTY
ONTARIO COUNTY
Sacred Grove
Joseph Smith Sr. Frame Home
WAYNE COUNTY
ONTARIO COUNTY
Canandaigua Road
FARMINGTON (TOWNSHIP)
MANCHESTER (TOWNSHIP)
Stafford Road
Hill Cumorah
Miles
0 ½ 1
Kilometers
0 1 2

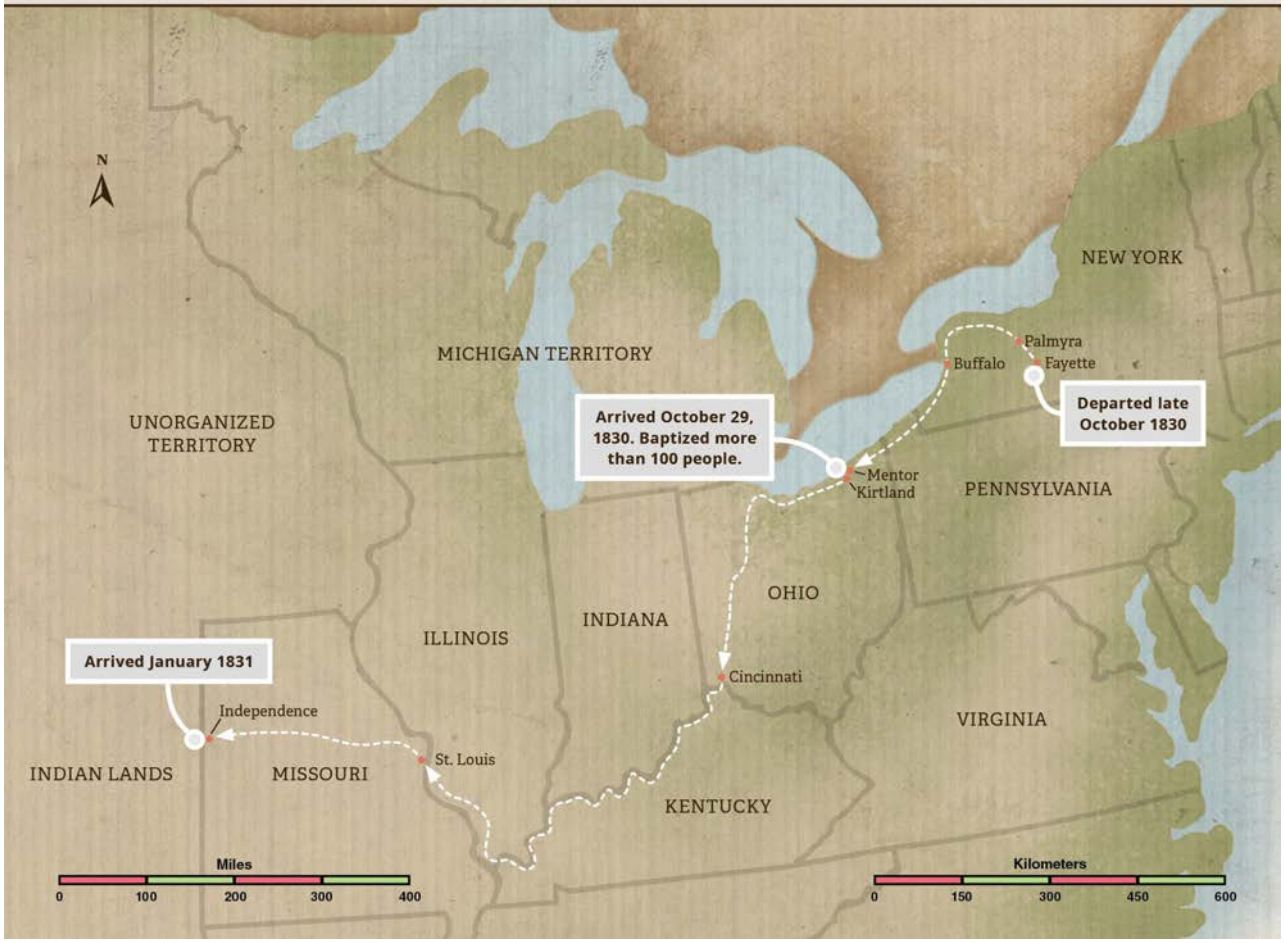
THE NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, AND OHIO AREA OF THE UNITED STATES

MAP 5



MISSION TO THE LAMANITES, 1830–1831

MAP 6




KIRTLAND, OHIO, 1830–1838
MAP 7
East Branch Chagrin River
Morley Farm
to Willoughby
to Mentor
to Painesville
Whitney Home
Whitney Store
Johnson Inn
Tannery
N
Ashery
Sawmill
Joseph Smith Jr. Home
Joseph Smith Jr. Variety Store
Cemetery
Printing Office
Kirtland Temple
Bank
to Chardon
Stoney Brook
Feet
0
500
1000
Meters
0
150
300

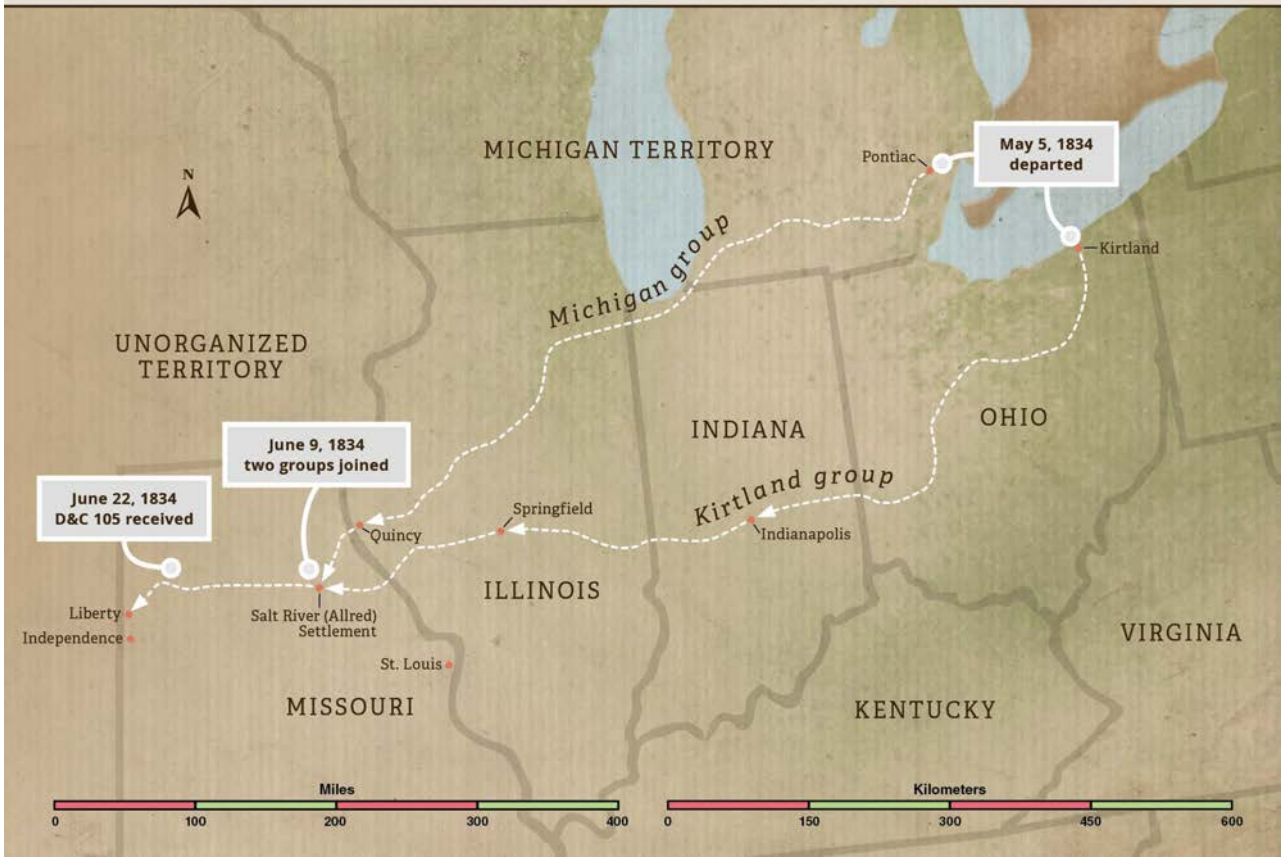
THE MISSOURI, ILLINOIS, AND IOWA AREA OF THE UNITED STATES

MAP 8



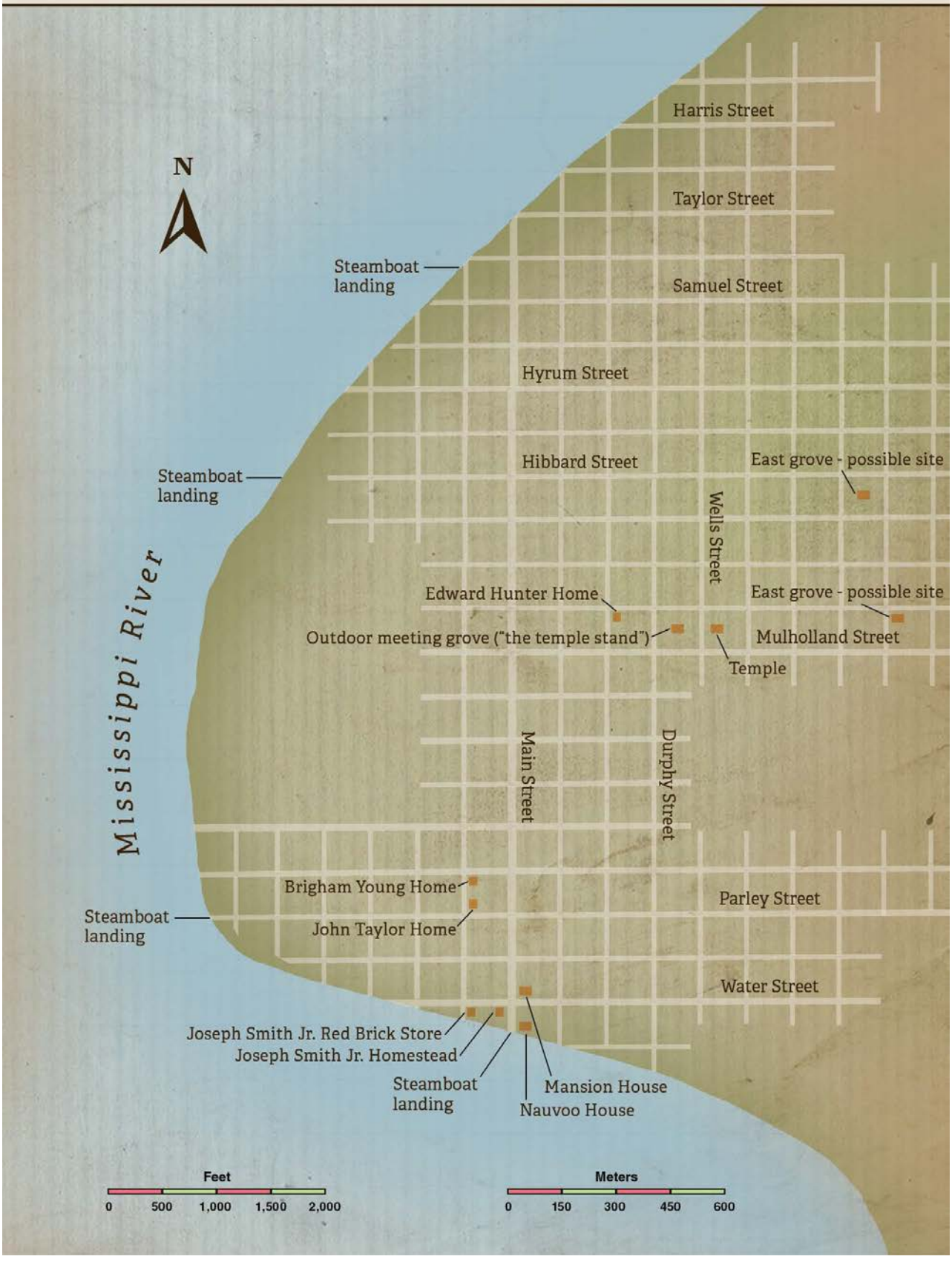
ZION'S CAMP ROUTE, 1834

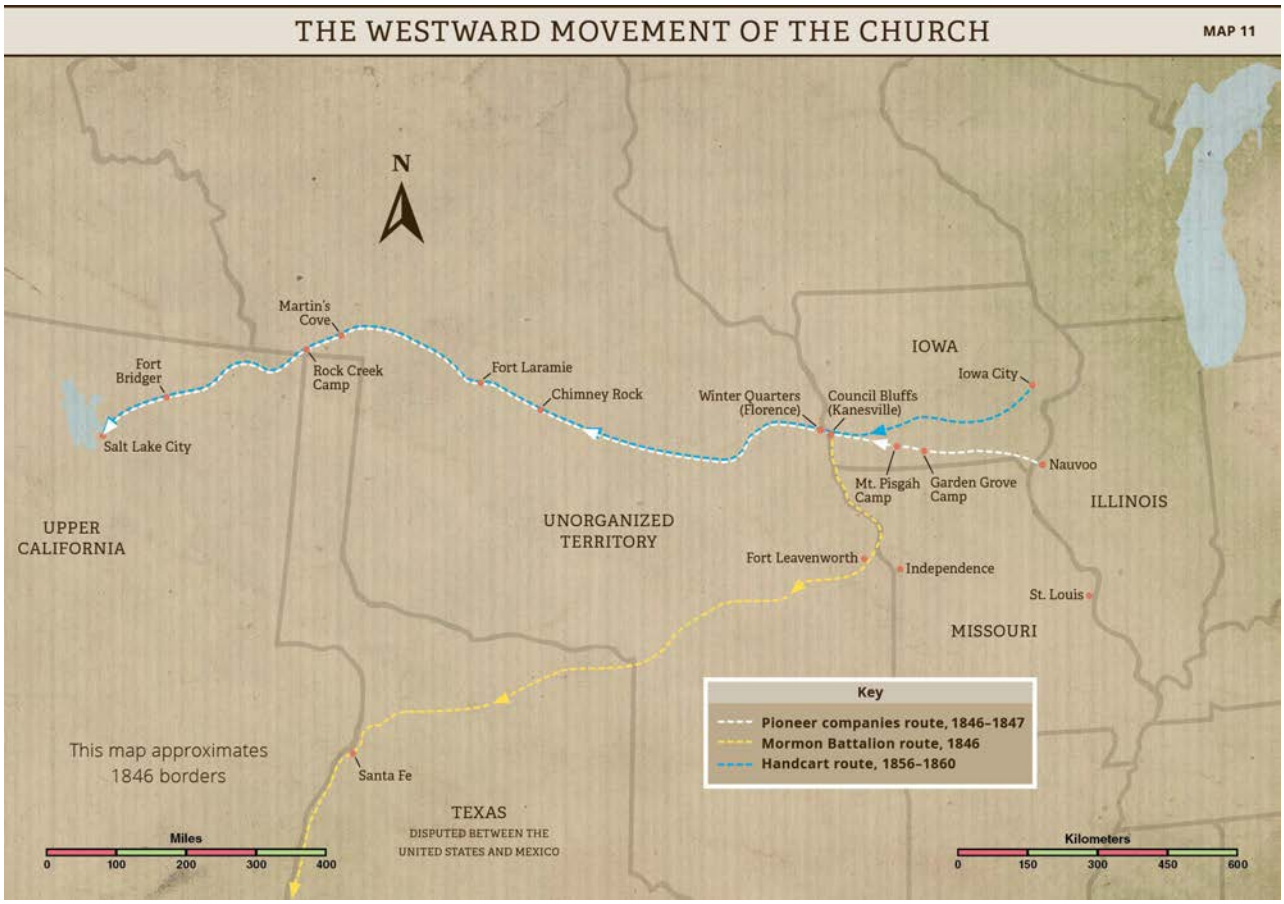
MAP 9



NAUVOO, ILLINOIS, 1839–1846

MAP 10




THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT OF THE CHURCH
MAP 11
N
Martin's Cove
Fort Bridger
Rock Creek Camp
Fort Laramie
Chimney Rock
Winter Quarters (Florence)
Council Bluffs (Kanesville)
Iowa City
IOWA
Salt Lake City
Nauvoo
Mt. Pisgah Camp
Garden Grove Camp
ILLINOIS
UPPER CALIFORNIA
UNORGANIZED TERRITORY
Fort Leavenworth
Independence
St. Louis
MISSOURI
Key
Pioneer companies route, 1846–1847
Mormon Battalion route, 1846
Handcart route, 1856–1860
This map approximates 1846 borders
Santa Fe
TEXAS
DISPUTED BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO
Miles
0 100 200 300 400
Kilometers
0 150 300 450 600

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants; Doctrine and Covenants 2

Introduction and Timeline

"The Doctrine and Covenants is a collection of divine revelations and inspired declarations given for the establishment and regulation of the kingdom of God on the earth in the last days" (introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants, paragraph 1). These revelations were received through the Prophet Joseph Smith and some of his successors and "contain an invitation to all people everywhere to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to them for their temporal well-being and their everlasting salvation" (introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants, paragraph 1).

The earliest dated section in the Doctrine and Covenants consists of words spoken to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni in 1823, when the Smith family lived near Palmyra, New York. During that visit, Moroni shared several important prophecies from the Old and New Testaments, including one from Malachi about the promised mission of the prophet Elijah in the latter days. That prophecy, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 2, is essential to our understanding of Heavenly Father's plan to redeem His children.

Late 1816

The Smith family moved from Vermont to Palmyra, New York.

Spring 1820

God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith.

September 21–22, 1823

The angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith (Doctrine and Covenants 2).

November 19, 1823

Joseph Smith's older brother Alvin died.

January 18, 1827

Joseph Smith and Emma Hale were married.

Think about times in your life when you needed guidance from Heavenly Father. As you study the introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants and the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants, look for truths that can help you to receive divine direction and help for your life.

Doctrine and Covenants: Additional Historical Background

The Lord gave divine guidance to the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding the Restoration of the gospel, the organization of the Church, and the needs and responsibilities of specific individuals. Many of these revelations received by the Prophet were written down by scribes, typically on loose sheets of paper, and were later copied into bound record books.

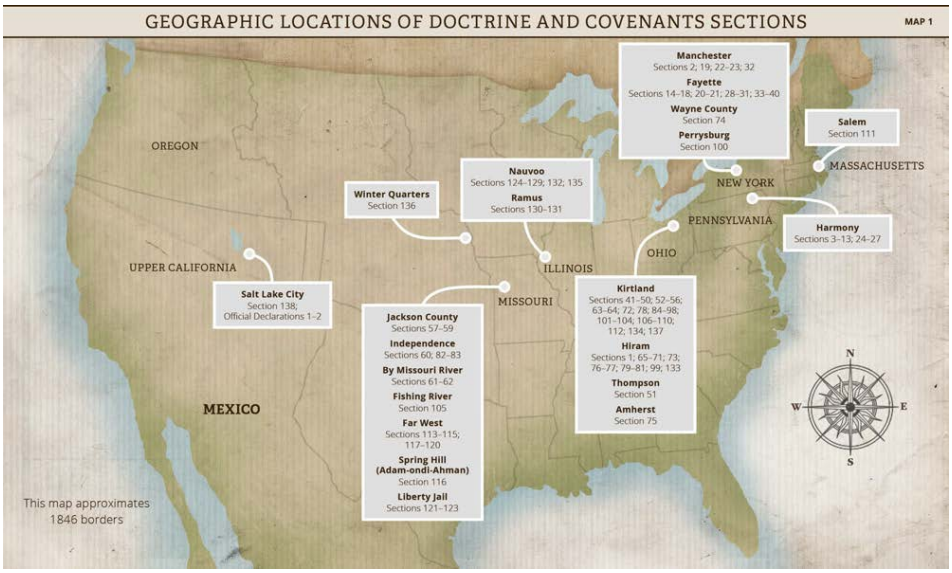
In November 1831 the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders met in a conference of elders in Hiram, Ohio. During this conference, Church leaders decided to compile and publish a number of the revelations that the Prophet had received into a volume titled the Book of Commandments. William W. Phelps had been called as "a printer unto the church" (D&C 57:11), and copies of the revelations were delivered to him in Independence, Missouri, for printing. The

publication was nearly complete in July 1833 when a mob attacked Phelps's print shop and destroyed the building, the printing press, and most of the printed sheets of revelations. Several individuals, including two young women—Mary Elizabeth Rollins and her sister Caroline—were able to save some of the printed pages, and though incomplete, a small number of copies of the book were eventually bound.

In 1835 a second compilation of the revelations Joseph Smith had received was published and was called the Doctrine and Covenants. This edition contained 103 revelations and a preface. Also included were the Lectures on Faith, seven theological lectures delivered to the School of the Elders during the winter of 1834–1835. This first edition was organized into two parts: part one (doctrine)—the Lectures on Faith; part two (the covenants and commandments)—the revelations that had been received to that point. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2016], 382–96.) The Lectures on Faith were omitted in the 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants and subsequent editions because they were theological lectures or lessons that were not given or presented as revelations to the Church.

As later editions of the Doctrine and Covenants were printed, new revelations were added, and these editions included slight changes to how the revelations were organized. In 1981 the Church published a new English-language edition of the "triple combination" (the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price) with expanded footnotes and cross-references and a new index. At that time the Prophet Joseph Smith's 1836 vision of the celestial kingdom and President Joseph F. Smith's 1918 vision of the redemption of the dead were added to the Doctrine and Covenants as sections 137 and 138. Two official declarations were also officially added: (1) the Manifesto, issued by President Wilford Woodruff, announcing that the practice of plural marriage in the Church was to be discontinued, and (2) an announcement by the First Presidency of a revelation received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. The introduction, which had been titled Explanatory Introduction since the 1921 edition, was also revised in the 1981 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. This revised introduction gave more information regarding the Prophet Joseph Smith and the nature and purpose of the Doctrine and Covenants.

On March 1, 2013, the First Presidency announced an updated edition of the English scriptures. Along with minor spelling corrections to the text, most of the adjustments that were made in this edition of the scriptures are in the study helps and in the section headings of the Doctrine and Covenants. Also in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Explanatory Introduction was renamed Introduction and a few more details were provided about previous editions along with reasons for revising the Doctrine and Covenants into a new edition.



Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants

The Doctrine and Covenants contains revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors

Read the introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants, looking for phrases describing what the Doctrine and Covenants is and why we should study it.

Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants. "A collection of divine revelations"

The Doctrine and Covenants contains many of the divine revelations the Prophet Joseph Smith received. These revelations were given by the spirit of prophecy and revelation through visions (see D&C 76; 137; 138), heavenly visitations (see D&C 2; 13; 27; 110), the Urim and Thummim (see D&C 3; 6–7; 11; 14–17), and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Several of the revelations came as the result of questions the Prophet asked as he worked on an inspired translation of the Bible (see D&C 35; 73; 76–77; 86; 91; 132). Other revelations came during the translation of the Book of Mormon and because of questions about Church structure and the building up of Zion.



Near this monument in Sharon, Vermont, stood the home where the Prophet Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) described the value of this modern book of scripture:

"The Doctrine and Covenants is unique among our books of scripture. It is the constitution of the Church. While the Doctrine and Covenants includes writings and statements of various origins, it is primarily a book of revelation given through the Prophet of this dispensation.

"These revelations open with a thundering declaration of the encompassing purposes of God in the restoration of His great latter-day work. …

"From that majestic opening there unfolds a wondrous doctrinal panorama that comes from the fountain of eternal truth. Some is direct revelation, with the Lord dictating to His prophet. Some is the language of Joseph Smith, written or spoken as he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost. Also included is his narrative of events that occurred in various circumstances. All brought together, they constitute in very substantial measure the doctrine and the practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. …

"The variety of matters the book deals with is amazing. They include principles and procedures concerning the governance of the Church. Unique and remarkable rules of health, with promises both physical and spiritual, are set forth. The covenant of the eternal priesthood is described in a manner not found elsewhere in scripture. The privileges and blessings—and the limitations and opportunities—of the three degrees of glory are announced, building on Paul's brief mention of a glory of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars. Repentance is proclaimed in language clear and compelling. The correct mode of baptism is given. The nature of the Godhead, which has troubled theologians for centuries, is described in language understandable to all. The Lord's law of finance is pronounced, mandating how

funds for the operation of the Church are to be acquired and disbursed. Work for the dead is revealed to bless the sons and daughters of God of all generations" ("The Order and Will of God," *Ensign,* Jan. 1989, 2, 4).

The Doctrine and Covenants is one of the standard works accepted as scripture by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The revelations and inspired writings contained in the Doctrine and Covenants constitute a powerful testament of the ongoing work to bring salvation to all of God's children. **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) explained that the Doctrine and Covenants works in conjunction with the Book of Mormon to bring people to Christ and into His kingdom:

"These two great books of latter-day scripture are bound together as revelations from Israel's God for the purpose of gathering and preparing His people for the second coming of the Lord. …

"Each of these two great latter-day scriptures bears powerful and eloquent witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Virtually every page of both the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon teaches about the Master—His great love for His children and His atoning sacrifice—and teaches us how to live so that we can return to Him and our Heavenly Father.

"Each of these two great latter-day books of scripture contains the knowledge and the power to help us live better lives in a time of great wickedness and evil. Those who carefully and prayerfully search the pages of these books will find comfort, counsel, guidance, and the quiet power to improve their lives.

"The Doctrine and Covenants is the binding link between the Book of Mormon and the continuing work of the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors.

"In the Doctrine and Covenants we learn of temple work, eternal families, the degrees of glory, Church organization, and many other great truths of the Restoration. …

"The Book of Mormon is the 'keystone' of our religion, and the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone, with continuing latter-day revelation. The Lord has placed His stamp of approval on both the keystone and the capstone" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 132–33).

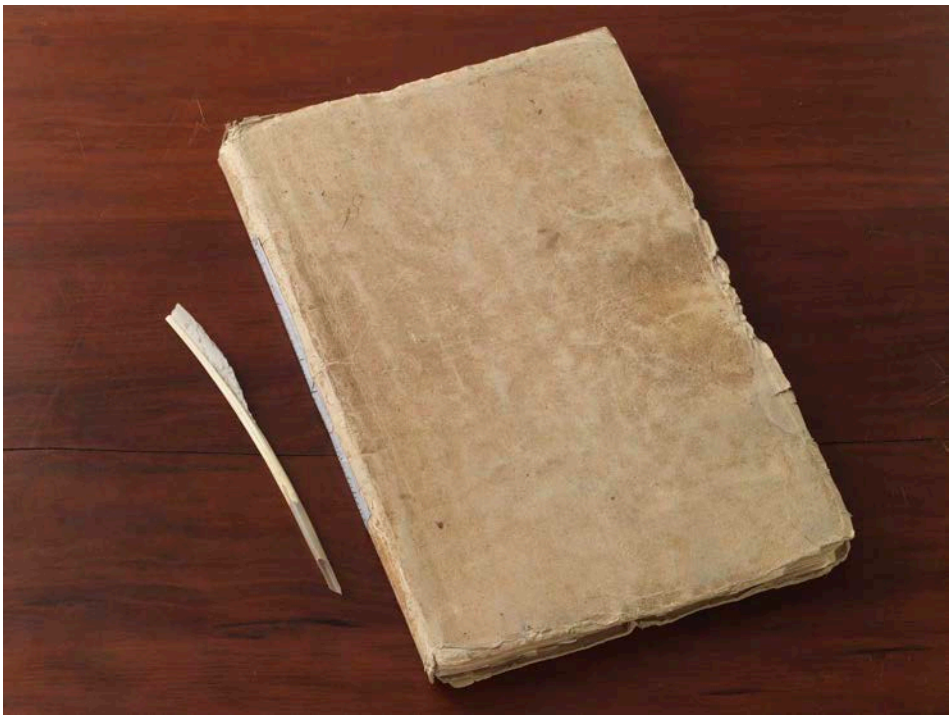
Based on paragraphs 1–3 of the introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants, what do we "hear" as we study the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants?

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) described how the revelations given in our dispensation increase what we know about the gospel of Jesus Christ: "I say to my brethren that the book of Doctrine and Covenants contains some of the most glorious principles ever revealed to the world, some that have been revealed in greater fulness than they were ever revealed before to the world; and this, in fulfilment of the promise of the ancient prophets that in the latter times the Lord would reveal things to the world that had been kept hidden from the foundation

thereof; and the Lord has revealed them through the Prophet Joseph Smith" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 44).

According to paragraph 6 of the introduction, what circumstances brought about the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants? What can we learn about receiving revelation for ourselves based on those circumstances?

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) noted that most scripture was originally given to people anciently. In contrast, the Doctrine and Covenants contains the word of God given specifically to God's children in our dispensation. He testified that the "Doctrine and Covenants contains the word of God to those who dwell here now. It is our book. It belongs to the Latter-day Saints. More precious than gold, the Prophet [Joseph Smith] says we should treasure it more than the riches of the whole earth" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:199).



Revelation Book 1, into which John Whitmer transcribed a selection of early revelations the Prophet Joseph Smith had received

Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants. Testimony of the Twelve Apostles

When Church leaders decided at the November 1831 conference to compile the revelations and organize them for publication, the Prophet Joseph Smith prepared a statement of testimony regarding the divine origin of the revelations (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 110–14). Those who were present indicated their

willingness to bear testimony of the truthfulness of the revelations. It may be that this testimony was going to be published in the back of the Book of Commandments much like the testimonies of the Three and the Eight Witnesses were included at the end of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. However, the statement of testimony does not appear in the existing copies of the Book of Commandments. This may be because the publication was cut short when the print shop was destroyed. The testimony of the Twelve Apostles was included in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

What did the Twelve Apostles indicate was the source of their witness of the truthfulness of the Doctrine and Covenants? How can you obtain a similar testimony of these revelations?

Doctrine and Covenants 2: Additional Historical Background

On September 21, 1823, approximately three years after receiving the First Vision, 17-year-old Joseph Smith prayed for forgiveness of his sins as he sought to know his standing before God. In response to this prayer, a heavenly messenger named Moroni appeared and declared that God had a work for Joseph to do (see Joseph Smith—History 1:29–33). After speaking of the coming forth of an ancient record written on golden plates, Moroni quoted a number of scriptures from the Old and New Testaments, including a variation of Malachi's prophecy about the return of Elijah (see Malachi 4:5–6). The Prophet Joseph Smith included this variation of Malachi's prophecy in his official history, which he began preparing in 1838. Excerpts from that account were later included in the Pearl of Great Price (see Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39) and were included in the Doctrine and Covenants beginning with the 1876 edition. The importance of this prophecy is evident by how often it appears in the standard works (see Malachi 4:4–6; Luke 1:17; 3 Nephi 25:5–6; D&C 2; Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39). Chronologically, Doctrine and Covenants 2 is the earliest section of the Doctrine and Covenants.



Doctrine and Covenants 2

An angel appears to Joseph Smith in response to his prayer

Read Doctrine and Covenants 2, looking for the mission that Elijah would perform in the latter days.

Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–3. Elijah the prophet

The Old Testament prophet Elijah played a prominent role in the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he is mentioned by name in several sections of the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 2:1; 27:9; 35:4; 110:13–16; 128:17; 133:55;

138:46–48). **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained who Elijah was and why he returned in our day:

"Elijah was an Old Testament prophet through whom mighty miracles were performed. He sealed the heavens, and no rain fell in ancient Israel for 3½ years. He multiplied a widow's meal and oil. He raised a young boy from the dead, and he called down fire from heaven in a challenge to the prophets of Baal. (See 1 Kings 17–18.) At the conclusion of Elijah's mortal ministry, he 'went up by a whirlwind into heaven' (2 Kings 2:11) and was translated.

" 'We learn from latter-day revelation that Elijah held the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood and was the last prophet to do so before the time of Jesus Christ' (Bible Dictionary, 'Elijah'). …

"Elijah appeared with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:3) and conferred this authority upon Peter, James, and John. Elijah appeared again with Moses and others on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple and conferred the same keys upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery" ("The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 24).



Reconstructed log home of the Smith family in Palmyra Township, New York, where the angel Moroni appeared to the young Joseph Smith

Doctrine and Covenants 2:1. "I will reveal unto you the Priesthood"

By the time Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had already received the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John (sometime during May–June 1829). The promise that the Lord would "reveal … the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah" (D&C 2:1) referred to the keys of the sealing power of the priesthood that were committed to Joseph and Oliver by Elijah when he visited the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 110:13–16).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained how Elijah's visit was needed to help us receive all of the blessings of the priesthood:

"The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven. …

"… What is this office and work of Elijah? It is one of the greatest and most important subjects that God has revealed. He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children. …

"Again: The doctrine or sealing power of Elijah is as follows:—If you have power to seal on earth and in heaven, then we should be wise. The first thing you do, go and seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, and yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 311–12).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained how Elijah's visit in 1836 made great blessings possible for God's children through the power of the priesthood:

"Elijah's mission was the sealing power. He held the keys by which the parents could be sealed together and children sealed to parents. He bestowed these keys upon the Prophet Joseph Smith. And that applies to the dead as well as the living since the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"… But what was the nature of his mission to the earth in these latter days? It was to restore power and authority which once was given to men on the earth and which is essential to the complete salvation and exaltation of man in the kingdom of God. In other words, Elijah came to restore to the earth, by conferring on mortal prophets duly commissioned of the Lord, the fulness of the power of priesthood. This priesthood holds the keys of binding and sealing on earth and in heaven of all the ordinances and principles pertaining to the salvation of man, that they may thus become valid in the celestial kingdom of God" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 2:117).

How can you and your family be blessed because of the restoration of priesthood keys through the prophet Elijah?

Doctrine and Covenants 2:1. "Great and dreadful day"

The "great and dreadful day" spoken of in Doctrine and Covenants 2:1 refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It will be a time of joy and rejoicing for those who have prepared for His coming (see Malachi 4:2–3; D&C 101:32–35), but it will be a dreadful time of destruction to the wicked (see Malachi 4:1; D&C 29:9; 101:24–25).



Attic room of the reconstructed log home where the angel Moroni appeared to the young Joseph Smith

Doctrine and Covenants 2:2. Who are the fathers and the children spoken of in this prophecy?

Doctrine and Covenants 2:2 teaches that both children and fathers will be influenced by Elijah's promised visit in the latter days. Commenting on the prophecy that Elijah "shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers" (D&C 2:2), **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "Who are the fathers? They are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made. What are the promises? They are the promises of a continuation of the family unit in eternity" (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 267; see also D&C 27:10).

Latter-day revelation helps us understand that Church members are the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob either by lineage or by adoption (see Abraham 2:9–10). The promises given by covenant to these ancient patriarchs are also available to Latter-day Saints. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the promises found in the covenant that God made with Abraham and others:

"The covenant God made with Abraham and later reaffirmed with Isaac and Jacob is of transcendent significance. It contained several promises, including:

"• Jesus the Christ would be born through Abraham's lineage.

"• Abraham's posterity would be numerous, entitled to an eternal increase, and also entitled to bear the priesthood.

"• Abraham would become a father of many nations.

"• Certain lands would be inherited by his posterity.

"• All nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed.

"• And that covenant would be everlasting—even through 'a thousand generations' [Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Chronicles 16:15; Psalm 105:8].

"Some of these promises have been fulfilled; others are still pending. …

"… We have received, as did they of old, the holy priesthood and the everlasting gospel. We have the right to receive the fulness of the gospel, enjoy the blessings of the priesthood, and qualify for God's greatest blessing—that of eternal life.

"Some of us are the literal seed of Abraham; others are gathered into his family by adoption. The Lord makes no distinction. Together we receive these promised blessings—if we seek the Lord and obey His commandments" ("Covenants," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 87–88).

A different use of the word *fathers* is also found in Doctrine and Covenants 2:2, where the prophecy states that "the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers." According to **President Joseph Fielding Smith**, the phrase "their fathers" refers to "our dead ancestors who died without the privilege of receiving the Gospel, but who received the promise that the time would come when that privilege would be granted them. The children are those now living who are preparing genealogical data and who are performing the vicarious ordinances in the Temples" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 221).

Doctrine and Covenants 2:2. "The hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers"



The Angel Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith, **by Tom Lovell. Moroni appeared to the young Joseph Smith in September 1823.**

God's plan to redeem the dead was not restored all at once but was given step by step to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors. Moroni's prophecy to Joseph Smith in 1823 was the first teaching on this subject given in this dispensation. That this instruction was received so early in the process of the Restoration emphasizes the importance of the doctrine of the family in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained the role of family in redeeming the dead: "The turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers is placing or planting in the hearts of the children that feeling and desire which will inspire them to search out the records of the dead. Moreover the planting of the desire and inspiration in their hearts is necessary. This they must have in order that they might go into the house of the Lord and perform the necessary labor for their fathers, who died without a knowledge of the gospel, or without the privilege of receiving the fulness of the gospel" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 2:127–28).

From what President Joseph Fielding Smith taught, what does the turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers inspire us to do? Consider sharing with a family member an experience when you felt the desire to search out the records of your ancestors so that they could receive the blessings of the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 2:2. The influence of Elijah's promised visit

The visit of the prophet Elijah in 1836 in the Kirtland Temple initiated a spiritual influence upon people across the earth. **President Russell M. Nelson** described the effect as "the Spirit of Elijah":

"Elijah's return to earth occurred at the first temple built in this dispensation, where he and other heavenly messengers, under direction of the Lord, entrusted special keys of priesthood authority to the restored Church:

"• Moses committed the keys of the gathering of Israel;

"• Elias committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham; and

"• Elijah came to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to the fathers.

"With that, natural affection between generations began to be enriched. This restoration was accompanied by what is sometimes called the Spirit of Elijah—a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family. Hence, people throughout the world, regardless of religious affiliation, are gathering records of deceased relatives at an ever-increasing rate" ("A New Harvest Time," *Ensign,* May 1998, 34).



The prophet Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836.

Doctrine and Covenants 2:3. "The whole earth would be utterly wasted"

In the Lord's plan of redemption, one of the earth's purposes is to be the final celestial home for those who have made and kept their covenants with Heavenly Father (see D&C 88:17–20). It will be a place where families can live together forever. The sealing power of the priesthood restored by Elijah makes possible the welding together of husbands and wives and parents and children—a work essential for exaltation to the living and the dead. Without the sealing power, God's children could not receive the full blessings of exaltation and this purpose of the earth's creation would not have been fulfilled.

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: "Why would the earth be wasted? Simply because if there is not a welding link between the fathers and the children—which is the work for the dead—then we will all stand rejected; the whole work of God will fail and be utterly wasted" (*Teachings: Joseph Fielding Smith,* 219).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles further clarified that an essential step in the salvation of God's children was the restoration of the sealing power:

"Without that link no family ties would exist in the eternities, and indeed the family of man would have been left in eternity with 'neither root [ancestors] nor branch [descendants].'

"Inasmuch as … a sealed, united, celestially saved family of God is the ultimate purpose of mortality, any failure here would have been a curse indeed, rendering the entire plan of salvation 'utterly wasted' " (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 297–98).

Make a plan to participate in family history and temple work. Consider what you might do to find names of ancestors who need temple ordinances performed in their behalf.

CHAPTER 2

Doctrine and Covenants 1

Introduction and Timeline

By November 1831, the Lord had given more than 60 revelations through the Prophet Joseph Smith for the benefit of the Church and individual members. To make these revelations more accessible to Church members, Church leaders decided to publish them as a volume to be called the Book of Commandments. On November 1, 1831, the Prophet convened a conference of elders at the home of John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson in Hiram, Ohio, during which a committee of elders consisting of Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, and William E. McLellin attempted unsuccessfully to write a preface for the Book of Commandments (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents Volume 2, July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 104). After this attempt, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 1. In it the Lord declared, "This [revelation] is … my preface unto the book of my commandments" (D&C 1:6). He also declared that all people would hear His "voice of warning" (D&C 1:4) and that those who refused to heed His voice and the words of His servants would be cut off from among God's people. The Lord testified that the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith are true and commanded His people to search them.

September 1831

Joseph and Emma Smith moved from Kirtland to Hiram, Ohio.

November 1831

A conference of elders voted to publish 10,000 copies of the Book of Commandments.

November 1, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 1 was received.

November 20, 1831

Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer left for Missouri with the manuscript of the Book of Commandments for printing.

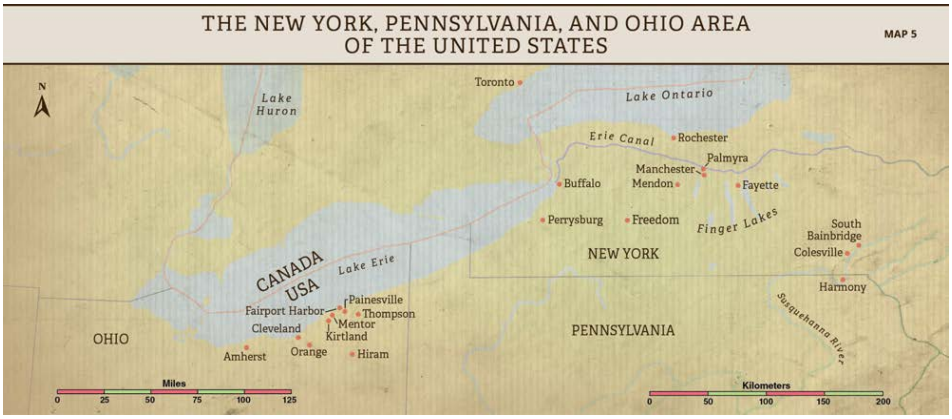
In what ways have you seen wickedness increasing on the earth? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 1, look for what the Lord has done in these last days to warn and protect His people against the rising tide of wickedness.

Doctrine and Covenants 1: Additional Historical Background

On November 1, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith convened a special conference of 10 elders in Hiram, Ohio, to discuss the collection and publication of the revelations that he had thus far received. The proposed publication would give Church members access to the Lord's revelations and would stand as a testimony to all the world that God once again had begun to reveal His mind and will to His children on earth.

During the conference the attendees decided to print 10,000 copies of the compiled revelations (this number was later reduced to 3,000 copies) in a single volume that would be titled the Book of Commandments. A committee of elders was asked to write a preface for the publication. When the committee presented its draft of the preface, the assembled group rejected the attempt and asked the Prophet to petition the Lord for direction. "After [Joseph Smith] and the elders bowed in prayer, [Joseph], who was 'sitting by a window,' dictated the preface 'by the Spirit,' while [Sidney] Rigdon served as scribe. 'Joseph would deliver a few sentences and Sidney would write them down,' [recalled William E. McLellin], 'then read them aloud, and if correct, then Joseph would proceed and deliver more'" (in *The Joseph*

Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2, July 1831–January 1833, 104). This revelation was published as the preface to the 1833 Book of Commandments and is now section 1 of our present-day Doctrine and Covenants.



Doctrine and Covenants 1:1–23

The Lord's voice of warning is to all people

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:1–10, looking for who the Lord declared would be warned and how His warning would be made known.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:1. "Hearken, O ye people of my church"

The Lord began His revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 1 by commanding His people to hearken. The word *hearken* is found 69 times throughout the Doctrine and Covenants. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that "the Hebrew language of the Old Testament in most instances uses the same term for both *hearkening* (to the Lord) and *obedience* (to His word)" ("Listen to Learn," *Ensign,* May 1991, 24). It is only by hearkening to, or obeying, the Lord that we can escape the judgments that will come upon the world.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:2. "The voice of the Lord is unto all men"

The Lord taught that His words and warning are not only intended for the people of His Church but for all people. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained how the Lord's voice of warning will be raised to all people:

"I do not understand … that it is necessary that every heart be penetrated and every ear hear in this life. But if they have not heard, if this opportunity has not come to them through the preaching of the Elders and through the things that have been published in the word of the Lord that has gone forth by revelation, the opportunity is going to come to them and they must hear it in the spirit world.

"And so the Lord in his kindness and mercy intends to bring these truths of this restored Gospel to every soul living or dead. In this manner every heart shall be penetrated and every ear shall hear" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1931, 16).

Doctrine and Covenants 1:8–9. Seal the "unbelieving and rebellious"

Those who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, receive the saving ordinances, and remain obedient to the commandments will obtain eternal life (see D&C 14:7; 20:25, 29). The wicked who refuse to believe or who choose to rebel against the light of the gospel they have received will suffer the penalty for their disobedience (see D&C 133:71–72).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:11–23, looking for what the Lord's warning is and why it is given.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:14. "Give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles"

The Lord warned that those who do not heed His voice and the words of His prophets and apostles will be "cut off" from God's people. To be "cut off" is to be separated from God's power, influence, and blessings and ultimately from His presence. **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency testified of the blessing of heeding the counsel of prophets: "Every time in my life when I have chosen to delay following inspired counsel or decided that I was an exception, I came to know that I had put myself in harm's way. Every time that I have listened to the counsel of prophets, felt it confirmed in prayer, and then followed it, I have found that I moved toward safety" ("Finding Safety in Counsel," *Ensign,* May 1997, 25).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught of the blessings that come to us when we promptly heed prophetic counsel: "It is no small thing … to have a prophet of God in our midst. Great and wonderful are the blessings that come into our lives as we listen to the word of the Lord given to us through him. … When we hear the counsel of the Lord expressed through the words of the President of the Church, our response should be positive and prompt. History has shown that there is safety, peace, prosperity, and happiness in responding to prophetic counsel as did Nephi of old: 'I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded' (1 Ne. 3:7)" ("His Word Ye Shall Receive," *Ensign,* May 2001, 65).

Sister Carol F. McConkie, counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, taught the importance of heeding prophetic teachings even when it may seem inconvenient or unpopular:

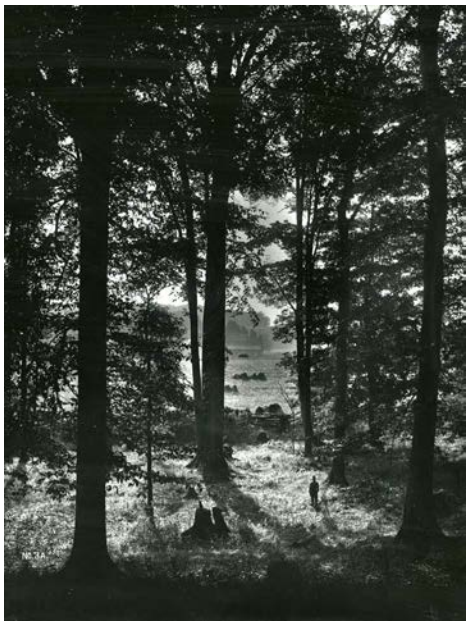
"Our Father in Heaven loves all of His children and desires that they know and understand His plan of happiness. Therefore, He calls prophets, those who have been ordained with power and authority to act in God's name for the salvation of His children. …

"We heed prophetic word even when it may seem unreasonable, inconvenient, and uncomfortable. According to the world's standards, following the prophet may be unpopular, politically incorrect, or socially unacceptable. But following the prophet is always right. …

"When we heed the words of the prophets, we build our homes and our lives upon an eternally sure foundation, 'the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God' [Helaman 5:12]" ("Live according to the Words of the Prophets," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 77–79).

Doctrine and Covenants 1:16. "Every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god"

As recorded in this inspired preface to the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord described some of the unrighteous and apostate conditions that exist in the world because "every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god" (D&C 1:16). **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles illustrated how people today do that:



The Sacred Grove, near Palmyra, New York, where the young Joseph Smith saw God the Father and Jesus Christ in the spring of 1820 (photograph ca. 1926)
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

"The societies in which many of us live have for more than a generation failed to foster moral discipline. They have taught that truth is relative and that everyone decides for himself or herself what is right. Concepts such as sin and wrong have been condemned as 'value judgments.' As the Lord describes it, 'Every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god' (D&C 1:16).

"As a consequence, self-discipline has eroded and societies are left to try to maintain order and civility by compulsion" ("Moral Discipline," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 106).

Doctrine and Covenants 1:16. "Babylon the great"

The Lord referred to the wicked world as "Babylon the great" (D&C 1:16). Because of the worldliness and corruption of ancient Babylon, and because it was a place to which the children of Israel were carried away and held captive, Babylon is often used figuratively in the scriptures to represent the sin and wickedness of the world and the spiritual captivity it can impose upon God's children (see D&C 133:14).

Elder David R. Stone of the Seventy described Babylon and its pervasive influence today:

"There is no particular city today which personifies Babylon. Babylon was, in the time of ancient Israel, a city which had become sensual, decadent, and corrupt. The principal building in the city was a temple to a false god, which we often refer to as Bel. …

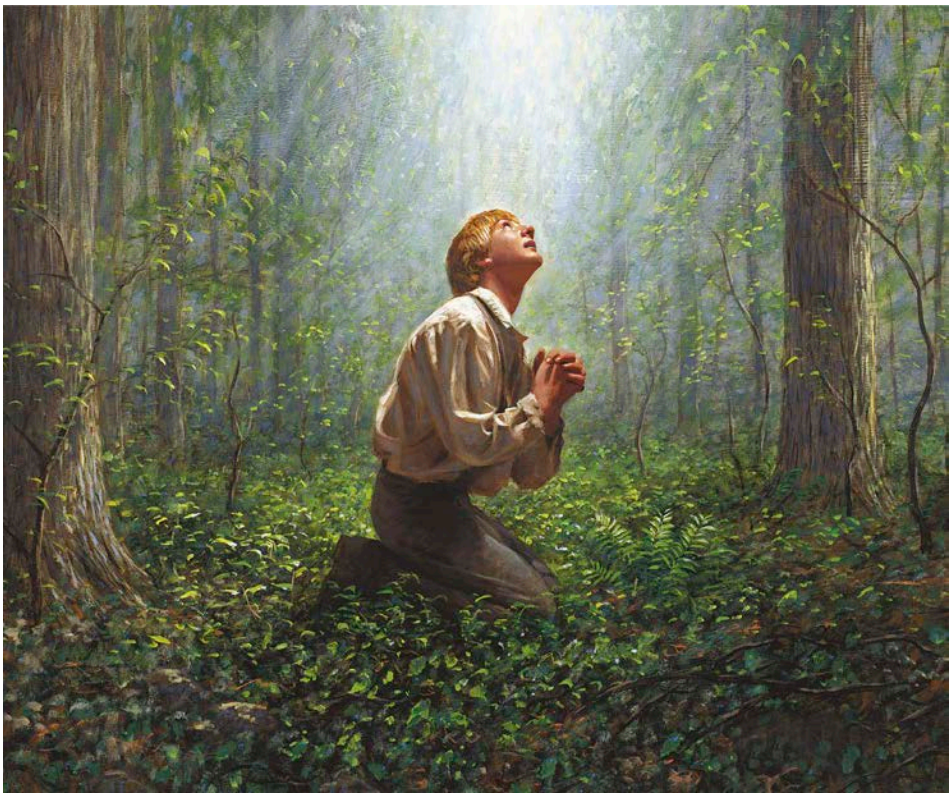
"However, that sensuality, corruption, and decadence, and the worshipping of false gods are to be seen in many cities, great and small, scattered across the globe. …

"Too many of the people of the world have come to resemble the Babylon of old by walking in their own ways, and following a god 'whose image is in the likeness of the world' [D&C 1:16]" ("Zion in the Midst of Babylon," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2006, 90–91).

Think about the challenges you face as you strive to give heed to the words of the Lord's prophets and apostles while living in an unrighteous world.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:17. Preparing the world for "the calamity which should come"

With divine foresight, God called the Prophet Joseph Smith to help prepare the world for "the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth" (D&C 1:17). **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that by heeding the words of the prophets we can avoid the calamity of the last days: "If we listen to the prophets of this day, poverty would be replaced with loving care for the poor and needy. Many serious and deadly health problems would be avoided through compliance with the Word of Wisdom and the laws of sexual purity. Payment of tithing would bless us and we would have sufficient for our needs. If we follow the counsel given by the prophets, we can have a life in mortality where we do not bring upon ourselves unnecessary pain and self-destruction. This does not mean we will not have challenges. We will. This does not mean we will not be tested. We will, for this is part of our purpose on earth. But if we will listen to the counsel of our prophet, we will become stronger and be able to withstand the tests of mortality. We will have hope and joy" ("Hear the Prophet's Voice and Obey," *Ensign,* May 1995, 17).



***I Saw a Light,* by Jon McNaughton. Depiction of the First Vision, when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to the young Joseph Smith as he prayed**

What counsel and warnings have prophets and apostles given recently?

Doctrine and Covenants 1:24–33

The Lord gave Joseph Smith power to translate the Book of Mormon and establish His true Church

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:24–33, looking for several ways you can be blessed by studying the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:24. "Given unto my servants in their weakness"

The Lord said He gave commandments and revelation to His servants "in their weakness, after the manner of their language" (D&C 1:24). In explaining the nature of revelation communicated by divine beings to mortal men and women, **President Brigham Young** (1801–1877) taught: "The revelations of God contain correct doctrine and principle so far as they go; but it is impossible for the poor, weak, low, grovelling, sinful inhabitants of the earth to receive a revelation from the Almighty in all its perfections. He has to speak to us in a manner to meet the extent of our capacities" ("Discourse," *Deseret News,* Aug. 1, 1855, 162).

Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy explained that the Prophet Joseph Smith "seemed to regard the manuscript revelations as his best efforts to capture the voice of the Lord condescending to communicate in what Joseph called the 'crooked, broken, scattered, and imperfect language' of men" ("The Joseph Smith Papers: The Manuscript Revelation Books," *Ensign,* July 2009, 49).

Some of the early members of the Church criticized the language of the revelations, not understanding that the truthfulness of the teachings contained in them did not refer to spelling, punctuation, or grammar. As the revelations were prepared for publication, Joseph Smith, and others under his direction, made changes and corrections to some of the texts in an effort to clarify the revelations' wording and intent.

As early as November 1831, a Church conference resolved that "Joseph Smith Jr correct those errors or mistakes which he may discover by the holy Spirit while reviewing the revelations [and] commandments [and] also the fulness of the scriptures" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 123).

The Prophet Joseph Smith, however, understood that the Lord's revelations are subject to being amended or expanded as the Lord continues to reveal His truth (see Gerrit Dirkmaat, "Great and Marvelous Are the Revelations of God," *Ensign,* Jan. 2013, 47).

Doctrine and Covenants 1:29. The Lord made possible the translation of the Book of Mormon

Joseph Smith received from the angel Moroni the ancient record referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 1:29 as "the record of the Nephites." At the time the Book of Mormon came forth, the young Prophet did not know any language other than English. Therefore, his ability to translate the Book of Mormon came as a merciful gift given through the power of God (see also D&C 5:4; 135:3).



The Hill Cumorah (background), near Palmyra, New York, where Joseph Smith obtained the ancient Book of Mormon plates (photograph ca. 1907)
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Doctrine and Covenants 1:30. The Church will come forth "out of obscurity"

The Lord gave power to His servants to establish His Church and to "bring it forth out of obscurity" (D&C 1:30). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught what this expression means:

"The past obscurity of the Church is giving way to visibility. Obscurity denotes that which is 'generally unknown' and 'withdrawn from the centers of activity': hence, the obscure is often misunderstood.

"The Lord described how He will bring His latter-day work 'forth out of obscurity and out of darkness.' (D&C 1:30; see also 1 Ne. 22:12; 2 Ne. 1:23; 27:29.) Thus, as foreseen, Christ and His work are becoming a light which can no longer be hidden. (See D&C 14:9.)" ("Out of Obscurity," *Ensign,* Nov. 1984, 8).

Doctrine and Covenants 1:30. "The only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth"

The Lord plainly testified that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30). **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency explained one reason why it is the only true Church:

"As we sustain [the prophet and other general authorities], we have seen and felt evidence that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is both true and living. …

"This is the true Church, the only true Church, because in it are the keys of the priesthood. Only in this Church has the Lord lodged the power to seal on earth and to seal in heaven as He did in the time of the Apostle Peter. Those keys were restored to Joseph Smith, who then was authorized to confer them upon the members of the Quorum of the Twelve" ("The True and Living Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2008, 20).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles further explained how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is both true and living: "The Lord has declared that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is 'the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth' (D&C 1:30). This restored Church is true because it is the Savior's Church; He is 'the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14:6). And it is a living church because of the workings and gifts of the Holy Ghost. How blessed we are to live at a time when the priesthood is upon the earth and we can receive the Holy Ghost" ("Receive the Holy Ghost," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 97).

Because the Church is a living church, guided and directed by the Lord through the Holy Ghost, it continues to grow and adapt to changing circumstances and conditions in the world through ongoing revelation from God to His prophets. The Lord's testimony declaring The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be the only true and living church does not mean that other churches do not possess some truth. **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"This is not to say that the churches, all of them, are without some truth. They have some truth—some of them very much of it. They have a form of godliness. Often the clergy and adherents are not without dedication, and many of them practice remarkably well the virtues of Christianity. They are, nonetheless, incomplete. By his declaration, '… they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.' [Joseph Smith—History 1:19.] …

"Now we do not say [that other churches] are wrong so much as we say they are incomplete. The fullness of the gospel has been restored. The power and the authority to act for Him is present with us. The power and the authority of the priesthood rests upon this church" ("The Only True and Living Church," *Ensign,* Dec. 1971, 40–41).

What experiences have helped you come to know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true and living Church?

Doctrine and Covenants 1:31–33. "He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord"

In Doctrine and Covenants 1:31–33, the Lord unequivocally declared how He views sin. Mercifully, He added to His declaration the promise of forgiveness for those who repent and obey His commandments. **Elder Richard G. Scott** (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how obedience to the commandments aids in forgiveness of sins: "That scripture [D&C 1:31–32]

emphasizes that the Lord cannot abide sin but He will forgive the repentant sinner because of His perfect love. It also teaches that not only is it important to keep a commandment you have broken, but by obeying *all* of the commandments you will obtain additional power and support in the process of repentance" ("To Be Free of Heavy Burdens," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 87).

Doctrine and Covenants 1:34–39

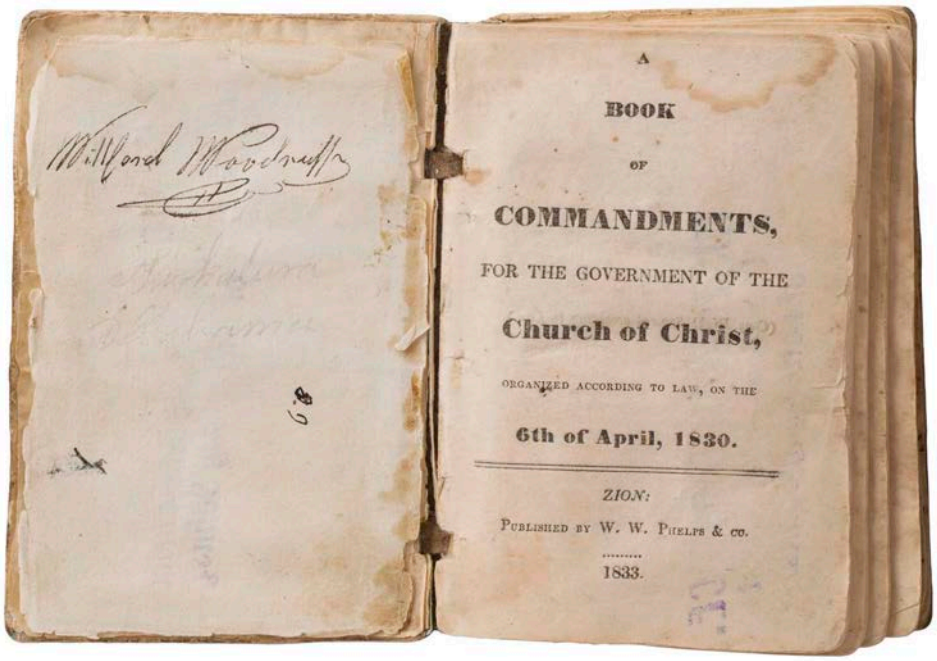
The Lord's words and revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants are true and "shall all be fulfilled"

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:34–39, looking for why the Lord commands His people to search the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:37. "Search these commandments, for they are true"

The Lord bore witness of the truthfulness of the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants and exhorted His Saints to "search these commandments" (D&C 1:37). **President Brigham Young** testified: "The Book of Doctrine and Covenants is given for the Latter-day Saints expressly for their everyday walk and actions" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 120).

How might *searching* the revelations and commandments contained in the Doctrine and Covenants be different from merely reading them?



A copy of an 1833 Book of Commandments owned by President Wilford Woodruff

Doctrine and Covenants 1:38. "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants"

The Lord reveals His words and warnings through His chosen and called servants. When prophets speak as authorized servants of the Lord, it is as though the Lord Himself is speaking. **Elder M. Russell Ballard** taught: "I have discovered in my ministry that those who have become lost [and] confused are typically those who have most often … forgotten that when the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve speak with a united voice, it is the voice of the Lord for that time. The Lord reminds us, 'Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same' [D&C 1:38]" ("Stay in the Boat and Hold On!" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 90).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson explained how the voice of the Lord is made known to His prophets and apostles:

"The President of the Church may announce or interpret doctrines based on revelation to him (see, for example, D&C 138). Doctrinal exposition may also come through the combined council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see, for example, Official Declaration 2). Council deliberations will often include a weighing of canonized scriptures, the teachings of Church leaders, and past practice. But in the end … the objective is not simply consensus among council members but revelation from God. It is a process involving both reason and faith for obtaining the mind and will of the Lord.

"At the same time it should be remembered that not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. It is commonly understood in the Church that a statement made by one leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion, not meant to be official or binding for the whole Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that 'a prophet [is] a prophet only when he [is] acting as such' [Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 5:265]" ("The Doctrine of Christ," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 88).

Ponder how searching the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and heeding the words of the Lord given through His servants can help you to live righteously in an increasingly wicked world. Prayerfully set a goal regarding what you can do to improve your study of the Lord's revelations in the scriptures and through His chosen prophets.

CHAPTER 3

Doctrine and Covenants 3; 10

Introduction and Timeline

In the summer of 1828, Martin Harris left Harmony, Pennsylvania, with 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript to show to members of his family living in Palmyra, New York. When Martin did not return to Harmony at the appointed time, Joseph Smith traveled to his parents' home in Manchester, New York, where he learned that Martin had lost the manuscript pages. Joseph was distraught and left the next day for his home in Harmony. After arriving there in July 1828, he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 3. In this revelation the Lord rebuked Joseph and told him that he had lost the privilege of translating for a season, but the Lord also reassured him, saying, "Thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work" (D&C 3:10). Further, the Lord explained His purpose for bringing forth the Book of Mormon and declared that His work would prevail despite the wickedness of men.

After Joseph Smith went through "a season" of repentance (D&C 3:14), the Book of Mormon plates, which Moroni had taken from him at the time the manuscript was lost, were returned to him and he was again given the gift to translate. Around April 1829, after resuming the translation, Joseph received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 10 (portions of this revelation may have been received as early as the summer of 1828). In this revelation, the Lord commanded that Joseph not retranslate the lost manuscript pages. The Prophet learned that inspired preparations had been made anciently to compensate for the lost manuscript and to preserve the message of the Book of Mormon.

June 14, 1828

Martin Harris took the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Palmyra, New York.

July 1828

Joseph Smith traveled to Manchester, New York, and learned that the manuscript had been lost.

July 1828

Joseph Smith returned to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and received Doctrine and Covenants 3.

September 22, 1828

Having lost the golden plates and Urim and Thummim after his transgression involving the manuscript, Joseph Smith received them again from Moroni.

April 1829

Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony to assist with the Book of Mormon translation.

April 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 10 was received (portions may have been received as early as summer 1828).

Have you faced a decision or a situation in which your desires or the desires of others were different from the Lord's counsel and direction on the matter? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 3 and 10, look for principles that can help you trust and rely on the Lord's counsel more than your own wisdom and the influence of others.

Doctrine and Covenants 3: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith obtained the golden plates in September 1827 while he and his wife, Emma Hale Smith, were living in his parents' home near Palmyra, New York. In December 1827, increasing persecution, including attempts to steal the plates, caused Joseph and Emma to relocate to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where Emma's parents lived. Martin Harris, a prosperous farmer and businessman in

Palmyra, was an early supporter of the Prophet and provided financial help to assist with the move.

In February 1828, Martin Harris traveled to Harmony and received a copy of some of the ancient characters that Joseph had transcribed from the golden plates, along with the Prophet's translation of those characters. Martin went to New York City to meet with scholars Professor Charles Anthon and Dr. Samuel Mitchell (or Mitchill), who had some knowledge of ancient languages and civilizations (see Joseph Smith—History 1:63–65). Martin later served as a scribe for the Prophet from April to June 1828 as Joseph translated the first portion of the Book of Mormon. During this time Martin's wife, Lucy, had grown increasingly skeptical about her husband's support of Joseph and about Martin's interest and financial involvement in the work of translating the plates. To pacify her concerns, Martin requested that Joseph ask the Lord's permission for Martin to take 116 pages of the translated manuscript to show his wife and other family members as evidence.

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave the following account: "I did enquire, and the answer was that he must not. However he was not satisfied with this answer, and desired that I should enquire again. I did so, and the answer was as before. Still he could not be contented but insisted that I should enquire once more. After much solicitation I again enquired of the Lord, and permission was granted him to have the writings on certain conditions" (Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 9, josephsmithpapers.org). Joseph had Martin Harris promise that he would show the manuscript only to his wife; his brother, Preserved Harris; his parents, Nathan and Rhoda Harris; and his wife's sister, Mary Harris Cobb (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 6, footnote 25).

Martin Harris went home to Palmyra, New York, with the 116-page manuscript. The day after Martin's departure, Emma Smith gave birth to a son, who died shortly thereafter. Emma nearly died herself, and Joseph stayed at her bedside for several weeks. By early July 1828, Martin had been gone for three weeks and they had heard nothing from him. Emma, who was slowly recovering, persuaded Joseph to go to New York and find out why Martin had not sent any word. Joseph traveled to his parents' home and sent for Martin.



The infant son of Joseph and Emma Smith was buried in the McKune Cemetary, near their home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, in June 1828 (photograph ca. 1897–1927).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet Joseph Smith's mother, recorded that, expecting Martin to arrive for breakfast, the family set the table and waited, but he took all morning to arrive. When he finally came to the house, he sat down at the table and "took up his knife and fork as if to use them but dropped them from his hands." When asked if he was all right, Martin Harris "cried out in a tone of anguish, 'Oh! I have lost my soul. I have lost my soul.'

"Joseph, who had smothered his fears till now, sprang from the table, exclaiming, 'Oh! Martin, have you lost that manuscript! Have you broken your oath and brought down condemnation upon my head, as well as your own?'

"'Yes,' replied Martin, 'it is gone and I know not where.'"

Overwhelmed with fear and self-condemnation, Joseph exclaimed, "'All is lost! [All] is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned. It is me that tempted the wrath of God by asking him to that which I had no right to ask, as I was differently instructed by the angel'—and he wept and groaned, walking the floor continually.

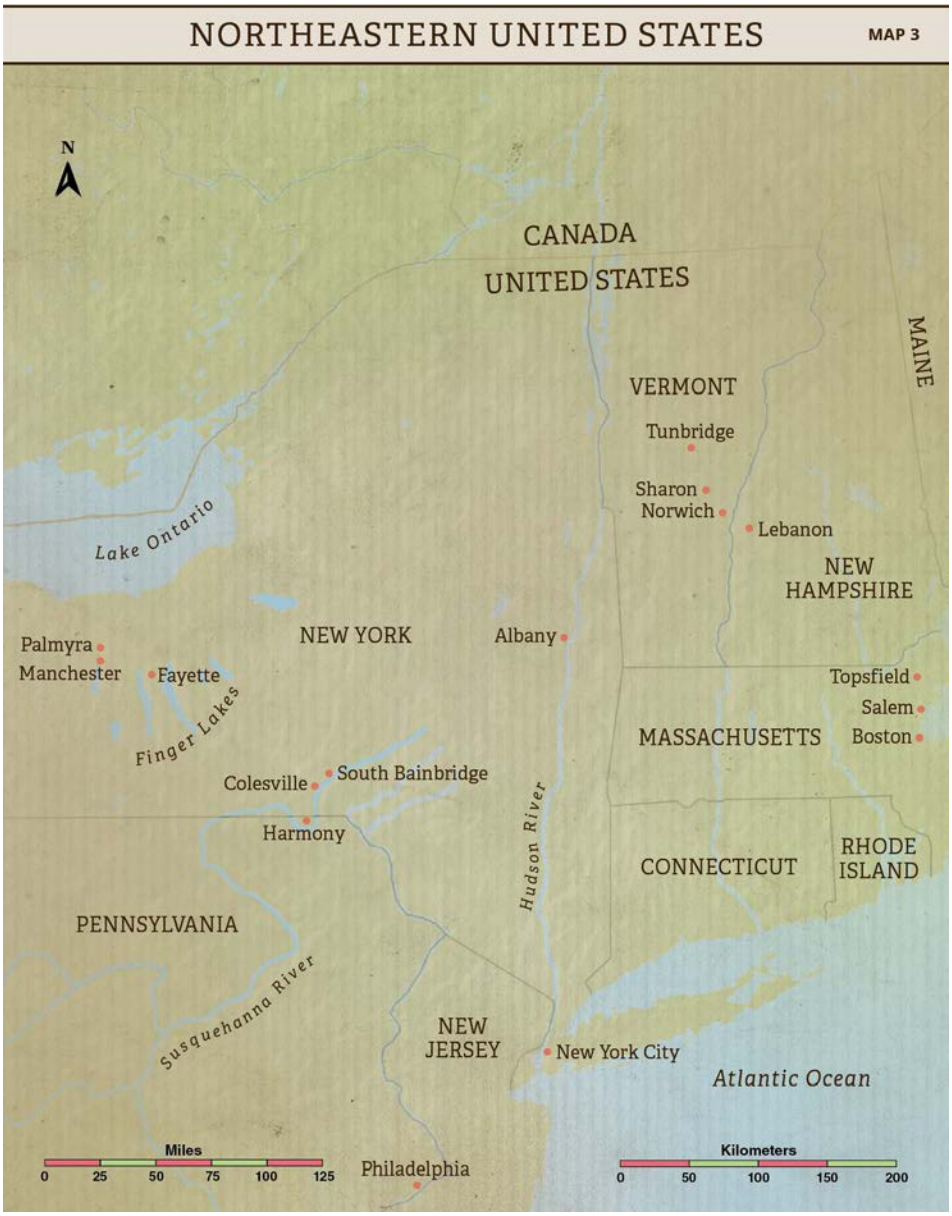
"At last he told Martin to go back to his house and search again.

"'No,' said Mr. Harris, 'it is all in vain, for I have looked in every place in the house. I have even ripped open beds and pillows [looking for the manuscript], and I know it is not there.'

"'Then must I,' said Joseph, 'return to my wife with such a tale as this? I dare not do it … , and how shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the … Angel of the Most High?'" ("Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,"

book 7, pages 5–6, josephsmithpapers.org; punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and paragraphing standardized).

After returning to his home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, without the manuscript pages, Joseph Smith poured out his soul to God for forgiveness. The heavenly messenger Moroni appeared to Joseph and gave him the interpreters, or Urim and Thummim, that Joseph had used while translating. The Urim and Thummim had been taken from Joseph because he had "wearied the Lord in asking for the privilege of letting Martin Harris take the writings" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 10, josephsmithpapers.org). After Moroni appeared and returned the Urim and Thummim, Joseph received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 3.





Doctrine and Covenants 3

The Lord declares that His work cannot be frustrated and rebukes Joseph Smith

The Lord began this revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith by addressing how the loss of the manuscript would affect the work of God. Read Doctrine and Covenants 3:1–11, looking for the Lord's counsel to Joseph Smith that may have comforted him concerning the loss of the 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon translation.

Doctrine and Covenants 3:1–3. "The purposes of God cannot be frustrated"

Joseph Smith likely viewed the loss of the 116 manuscript pages as a major stumbling block to the Lord's plan to bring forth the Book of Mormon. However,

the Lord reassured His prophet that nothing could frustrate or destroy the purposes and work of God. An important attribute of God's character is His omniscience, including His foreknowledge. There is nothing that man or Satan can do that will surprise God or prevent Him from accomplishing His purposes. He knows all things because all things are present before Him, including "past, present, and future" (D&C 130:7; see also D&C 38:2; 88:41). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught why God's work cannot be frustrated: "Man's successes and failures were known from the beginning by the Lord and were taken into account by Him in the unfolding of His plan of salvation. (See 1 Ne. 9:6.) His purposes will be fully achieved" ("Shine as Lights in the World," *Ensign,* May 1983, 11).

How might knowing that God's work cannot be frustrated have strengthened Joseph Smith during this difficult time? How can knowing this truth help you?

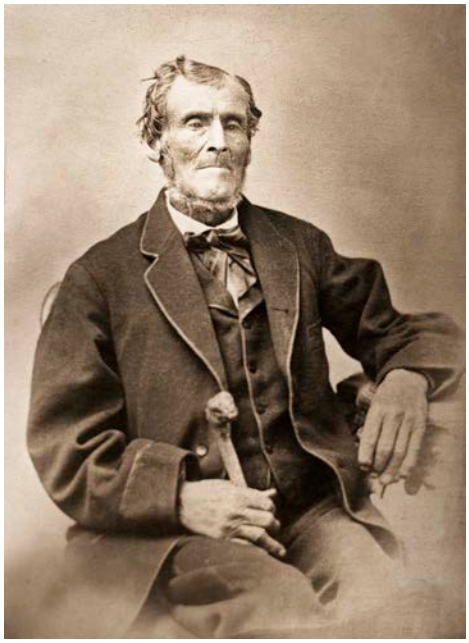
Doctrine and Covenants 3:2. "God doth not walk in crooked paths" and "his course is one eternal round"

To clarify why "the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught" (D&C 3:1), the Lord provided important details about His nature. The path that God follows is not crooked. It is straight, meaning that He is unchangeable and His course is constant over time. Because God does not vary "to the right hand nor to the left" (D&C 3:2), we can trust Him and rely upon His words and His promises.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified what is meant by God's course being "one eternal round" (D&C 3:2): "God governs by law—wholly, completely, invaryingly, and always. He has ordained that identical results always flow from the same causes. There is no respect of persons with him, and he is a Being 'with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' (Jas. 1:17; D. & C. 3:1–2.) Hence, the Lord's 'course is *one eternal round,* the same today as yesterday, and forever.' (D. & C. 35:1)" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 545–46).

Doctrine and Covenants 3:4–8, 15. "You should not have feared man more than God"

Joseph Smith must have had difficulty disregarding Martin Harris's persistent requests for permission to take the manuscript pages of the translation of the Book of Mormon. Martin was more than 20 years older than Joseph and had been one of the first to believe him and seek to assist in the work. He had supported the Prophet financially and given much of his time to assist in the work of translation. Nevertheless, the Lord reproved Joseph for succumbing to Martin's persuasions and explained that he should have feared God and trusted in His power for support. **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what it can mean to fear God:



Martin Harris served as a scribe during the translation of the Book of Mormon for a time.
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

"There are many places in the scriptures that counsel mankind to fear God. In our day we generally interpret the word *fear* as 'respect' or 'reverence' or 'love'; that is, the fear of God means the love of God or respect for Him and His law. That may often be a correct reading, but I wonder if sometimes *fear* doesn't really mean *fear,* as when the prophets speak of fearing to offend God by breaking His commandments. …

"I submit that fear of the Lord, or what Paul calls 'godly fear' (Hebrews 12:28), should be part of our reverence for Him. We should so love and reverence Him that we fear doing anything wrong in His sight, whatever may be the opinions of or pressure from others" ("A Sense of the Sacred" [Brigham Young University fireside, Nov. 7, 2004], 8; speeches.byu.edu).

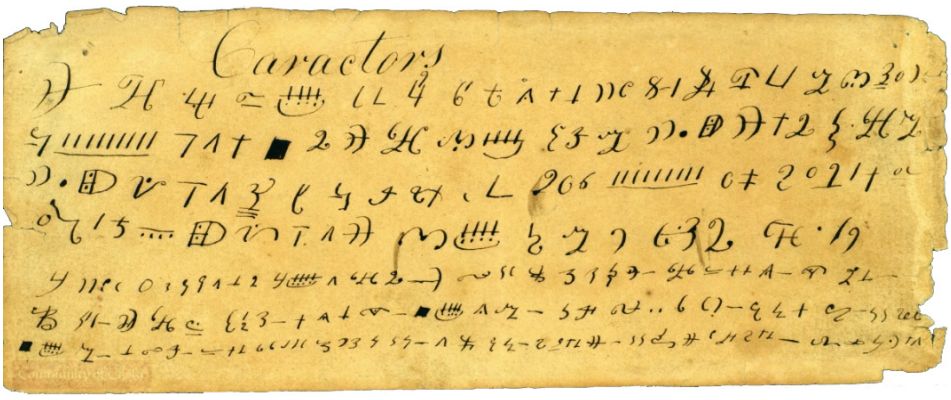
According to Doctrine and Covenants 3:8, what blessings did the Lord tell Joseph Smith that he would have received had he trusted the Lord's counsel? What can you do now to qualify for these same blessings?

Doctrine and Covenants 3:9–11. "God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done"

The Prophet's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote that Joseph blamed himself when he learned that Martin Harris had lost the manuscript. She described Joseph's suffering: "He wept and groaned, walking the floor continually. … Sobs and groans and the most bitter lamentations filled the house. Joseph in particular was more distressed than the rest for he knew definitely and by sorrowful experience the consequence of what would seem to others to be a very trifling neglect of duty. He continued tracing backwards and forwards, weeping and grieving like a tender

infant until about sunset. We persuaded him to take a little nourishment" ("Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," book 7, pages 6–7, josephsmithpapers.org; punctuation, spelling, and capitalization standardized).

Joseph Smith's despair continued until Moroni visited him in Harmony, Pennsylvania, and Joseph received the following revelation from the Lord: "Remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done … and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work" (D&C 3:10).



Characters copied from the Book of Mormon plates

Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy gave the following description of Joseph's experience:

"Young Joseph Smith was disciplined with a four-year probation before obtaining the golden plates, 'because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord' [in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others (2012), 83]. Later, when Joseph lost the 116 manuscript pages, he was disciplined again. Though Joseph was truly remorseful, the Lord still withdrew his privileges for a short season because 'whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven' (D&C 95:1).

"Joseph said, 'The angel was rejoiced when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim and said that God was pleased with my faithfulness and humility, and loved me for *my penitence* and diligence in prayer' [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 71; emphasis added]. Because the Lord wanted to teach Joseph a heart-changing lesson, He required a heartrending sacrifice of him—sacrifice being an essential part of discipline" ("The Righteous Judge," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2016, 97).

There are many examples in modern revelation of the Lord chastening individuals or calling them to repent (see D&C 19:13–15; 30:1–3; 64:15–17; 112:1–3, 10–16.) The passage in Doctrine and Covenants 3:6–11 is evidence that the Prophet Joseph Smith was not exempt from being corrected by the Lord for his mistakes and weaknesses. Nevertheless, because he repented, Joseph Smith was still called by the Lord to do His work.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us that Church leaders are not perfect, yet we can trust that they are inspired and that the Lord works through them:



Charles H. Anthon, of Columbia University, New York, examined the characters copied from the Book of Mormon plates.

"The Church of Jesus Christ has always been led by living prophets and apostles. Though mortal and subject to human imperfection, the Lord's servants are inspired to help us avoid obstacles that are spiritually life threatening and to help us pass safely through mortality to our final, ultimate, heavenly destination.

"During my nearly 40 years of close association, I have been a personal witness as both quiet inspiration and profound revelation have moved to action the prophets and apostles, the other General Authorities, and the auxiliary leaders. While neither perfect nor infallible, these good men and women have been perfectly dedicated to leading the work of the Lord forward as He has directed. …

"Too many people think Church leaders and members should be perfect or nearly perfect. They forget that the Lord's grace is sufficient to accomplish His work through mortals. …

"Focusing on how the Lord inspires His chosen leaders and how He moves the Saints to do remarkable and extraordinary things despite their humanity is one way that we hold on to the gospel of Jesus Christ" ("God Is at the Helm," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 24–25).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 3:12–15, looking for the Lord's explanation of what led to the loss of the Book of Mormon manuscript.

Doctrine and Covenants 3:12–13. "The hands of a wicked man"

Martin Harris's violation of the covenant that he made to only show the manuscript to five specified individuals brought about a stern rebuke from the Lord, who referred to Martin as "a wicked man" (D&C 3:12). Because Martin had chosen to rely upon his own wisdom and judgment, he lost the Book of Mormon manuscript pages and Joseph Smith lost the privilege to translate "for a season" (D&C 3:14). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) taught that Martin's "wickedness consisted in his selfish desire to gratify his own wish contrary to the will of the Lord, after he had been denied this request before it was granted" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:28).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 3:16–20, and notice that the Lord reassured Joseph that His work in bringing forth the Book of Mormon would go forward regardless of Joseph and Martin's transgressions. As you read, look for the Lord's purposes in bringing forth the Book of Mormon.

Doctrine and Covenants 3:16–20. "For this very purpose are these plates preserved"

Book of Mormon prophets, such as Nephi, Jacob, and Moroni, described the Lord's purposes for bringing forth this sacred record (see the title page of the Book of Mormon; 2 Nephi 33:4–5; Jacob 4:3–4; Ether 8:26). The Prophet Joseph Smith had not yet translated any of these passages when he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 3, and verses 16–20 would have expanded his understanding of the purposes and destiny of the Book of Mormon.

In what ways has the Book of Mormon helped you receive some of the same blessings promised to the Lamanites that are listed in Doctrine and Covenants 3:20?

Doctrine and Covenants 10: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 10 in Harmony, Pennsylvania, but it is not known exactly when. The Prophet may have received portions of this revelation as early as July 1828, after the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 3 was received. However, the revelation seems to have been recorded the following spring, in April 1829 (see Doctrine and Covenants 10, section heading).

Some time following the loss of the 116 manuscript pages, the golden plates and the Urim and Thummim were returned to the Prophet, along with the Lord's assurance that the gift to translate was "now restored unto [him] again" (D&C 10:3). By March 1829, the Prophet resumed the Book of Mormon translation, with his wife, Emma, assisting at times as his scribe, but the translation proceeded slowly until Oliver Cowdery arrived on April 5 and began serving as Joseph's scribe the next day.

With Oliver's help, Joseph apparently began translating in the book of Mosiah, where he had been translating before the loss of the manuscript. As he neared the end of translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph wondered if he should return to the beginning of the record and retranslate the portion that had been lost. In response, the Lord taught the Prophet of Satan's strategy to destroy God's work and told him not to retranslate that portion of the plates but to translate the small plates of Nephi instead. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 38–39.) The small plates were a spiritual record, focusing primarily upon preaching, revelation, and prophecy (see Jacob 1:4). The Lord explained that the small plates covered the same time period as the lost portion but in many ways "do throw greater views" upon His gospel (D&C 10:45).

Doctrine and Covenants 10:1–29

The Lord reveals Satan's plan to destroy Joseph Smith and the work of God

Read Doctrine and Covenants 10:1–5, looking for the counsel the Lord gave the Prophet Joseph Smith when he was allowed to begin translating again.

Doctrine and Covenants 10:1–4. "Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength"

Until around March 1829, because the 116 manuscript pages had been lost, the Prophet Joseph Smith no longer had any transcribed pages to indicate progress on the Book of Mormon translation, even though he had been given the plates in September 1827. Although the translation of the Book of Mormon was a task of the highest importance, the Lord did not require the Prophet to labor beyond the strength and means that God had provided to him. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** explained how the Lord's mortal servants should labor in the work:

"The Lord wants us to be *diligent* but *prudent.* We are not to give our cross a hurried heft merely to see if we can lift it and then put it down—we are to carry it for the balance of our lives. And pace matters very much. …

"Running faster than we have strength 'is not requisite.' Doing things diligently but 'in wisdom and order' is, in fact, necessary if one is to 'win the prize." [Mosiah 4:27.] This balance between pace and diligence is a high and demanding exercise in the use of our time, talent, and agency. …

"… When our pace exceeds our strength and means, the result is prostration instead of sustained dedication. Directions on such matters can be and are given to us through the process of private inspiration. …

"Pace, which requires diligent, sustained effort, is not the way of those who fling themselves into a single task and quickly become depleted and, therefore, cannot help again for a season" (*Notwithstanding My Weakness* [1981], 4, 6–7).

Doctrine and Covenants 10:5. "Pray always, … that you may conquer Satan"

The bitter experience of losing the Book of Mormon manuscript pages led the Prophet Joseph Smith to rely more diligently upon the guidance and direction he received from God. He was reminded to "pray always" in order to escape the destructive influence of Satan and his servants (D&C 10:5). **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency highlighted one reason why the Lord gave the commandment to pray always:

"You may have wondered, as have I, why He used the word *always,* given the nature of mortality as it weighs upon us. You know from experience how hard it is to think of anything consciously all the time. Even in service to God, you will not be consciously praying always. So why does the Master exhort us to 'pray always'?

"I am not wise enough to know all of His purposes in giving us a covenant to always remember Him and in warning us to pray always lest we be overcome. But I

know one. It is because He knows perfectly the powerful forces that influence us and also what it means to be human. …

"… He knows what it is like to have the cares of life press upon us. … And He knows that both the trials we face and our human powers to deal with them ebb and flow.

"He knows the mistake we can so easily make: to underestimate the forces working for us and to rely too much on our human powers. And so He offers us the covenant to 'always remember Him' and the warning to 'pray always' so that we will place our reliance on Him, our only safety. It is not hard to know what to do. The very difficulty of remembering always and praying always is a needed spur to try harder. The danger lies in delay or drift" ("Always," *Ensign,* Oct. 1999, 8–9).

How can praying always help you overcome Satan's influence in your life? What experiences have strengthened your belief that prayer can bring spiritual protection?

President Eyring further explained one way we can pray continually throughout our day: "The Lord hears the prayers of your heart. The feelings in your heart of love for our Heavenly Father and for His Beloved Son can be so constant that your prayers will ascend always" ("Always," 12).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 10:6–19, looking for what the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith about the devil's plan to destroy God's work.

Doctrine and Covenants 10:6–19. "The devil has sought to lay a cunning plan, that he may destroy this work"

Satan seeks to thwart the Lord's work (see Matthew 4:1–11; Moses 1:12–23; 4:6; Joseph Smith—History 1:15). The loss of the Book of Mormon manuscript pages and the plot of wicked men to entrap the Prophet Joseph Smith if he were to retranslate the same material were some of Satan's many attempts to prevent the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. (For a summary of what Joseph Smith learned about Satan's plan for the lost 116 manuscript pages, read the section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 10.)

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught the following about Satan and his ultimate goal: "Satan … has a plan. It is a cunning, evil, subtle plan of destruction. It is his objective to take captive the children of Father in Heaven and with every possible means frustrate the great plan of happiness" ("The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign,* Nov. 1996, 73).

Satan seeks to destroy our souls by endeavoring to turn our hearts away from the Lord's work, the Lord's servants, and that which is good. Read Doctrine and Covenants 10:20–29, looking for what Satan does to fight against God's work and lead souls to destruction.

Doctrine and Covenants 10:20–29. "He stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work"

Satan influenced corrupt men to persecute the Prophet Joseph Smith and try to destroy the Book of Mormon. He deceived and flattered the wicked and told them that "it is no sin to lie" and destroy that which is good (D&C 10:25). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught, "The devil has great power to deceive; he will so transform things as to make one gape at those who are doing the will of God" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 72).

There continues to be those today who are stirred up to anger against God's work. **Elder Neil L. Andersen** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cautioned members of the Church:

"No one of us is immune from the influences of the world. The Lord's counsel keeps us on guard. …

"As we follow the Savior, without question there will be challenges that confront us. Approached with faith, these refining experiences bring a deeper conversion of the Savior's reality. Approached in a worldly way, these same experiences cloud our view and weaken our resolve. Some we love and admire slip from the strait and narrow path and '[walk] no more with him' [John 6:66]. …

"Will we be astonished at times to see the anger a few feel toward the Lord's Church and their efforts to steal the struggling faith of the weak? Yes. But this will not deter the growth or destiny of the Church, nor need it impede the spiritual progress of each of us as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ" ("Never Leave Him," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 39, 41).

What are some indications that Satan's influence is affecting a person's heart? How can knowing Satan's objectives and methods help you avoid being deceived?

Doctrine and Covenants 10:30–70

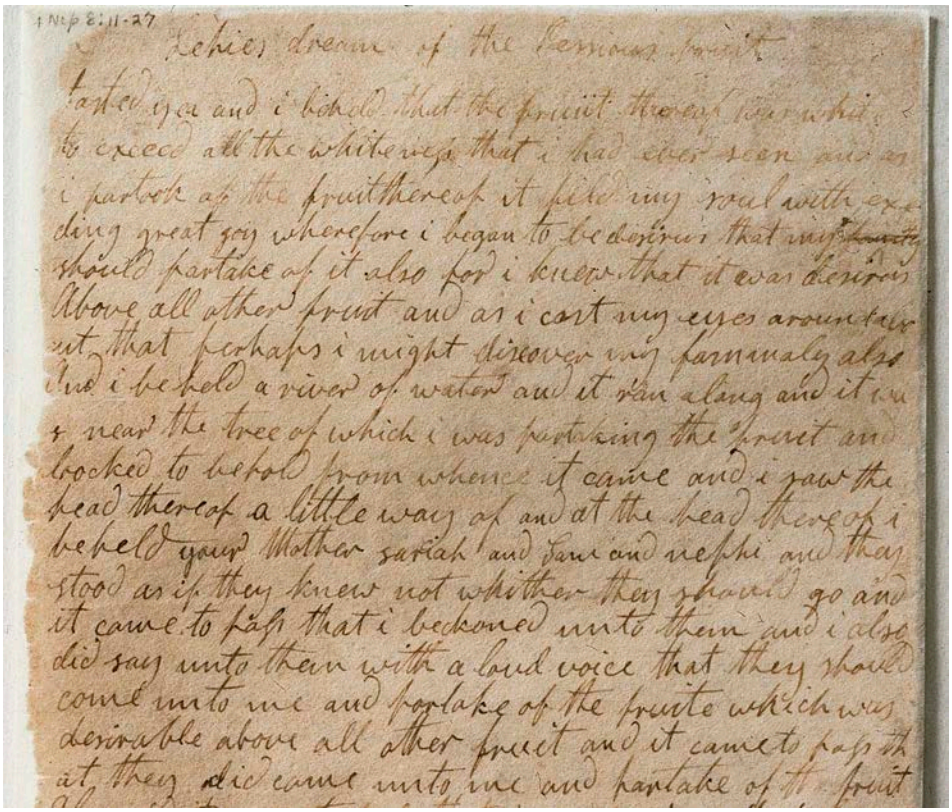
Joseph Smith learns of God's plan to thwart Satan's efforts to destroy the work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 10:30–52, looking for what the Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith to do to overthrow Satan's plan to prevent the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Doctrine and Covenants 10:30–37. "You shall not translate again those words"

The Lord knew that wicked individuals desired to publish a version of the stolen manuscript with altered wording. That version would contradict whatever the Prophet Joseph Smith would publish if he retranslated the lost portion. Therefore, the Lord commanded that Joseph not retranslate that part of the plates. The Prophet's enemies never published the 116 manuscript pages, and the pages have never been found. Later, when the first edition of the Book of Mormon was published, Joseph Smith included a preface wherein he quoted a portion of Doctrine and Covenants 10 and publicly exposed the plan of the wicked to publish

words that would "read contrary from that which [Joseph] translated and caused to be written" (D&C 10:11).



Part of a page of the original Book of Mormon manuscript

Doctrine and Covenants 10:38–45. "My wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil"

The lost 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon came from the Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the large plates of Nephi and included the book of Lehi (see 1 Nephi 1:16; 19:1) and possibly the first part of the book of Mosiah. After the loss of the manuscript, the Prophet did not retranslate these portions of the plates but continued to translate the remainder of Mormon's abridgement of the large plates. The Lord, however, instructed Joseph to translate the engravings that were on the small plates of Nephi that covered the same time period as the book of Lehi (see D&C 10:41).

When the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi described the Lord's command for him to create a second set of plates, he wrote that it was "for a wise purpose in him, which purpose I know not. But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works" (1 Nephi 9:5–6; see also 1 Nephi 19:1–5; 2 Nephi 5:29–33; Words of Mormon 1:6–7).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how Nephi's second record is an example of God's infinite wisdom and how it blesses us today:

"At least six times in the Book of Mormon, the phrase 'for a wise purpose' is used in reference to the making, writing, and preserving of the small plates of Nephi (see 1 Ne. 9:5; [Words of Mormon] 1:7; Alma 37:2, 12, 14, 18). We know one such wise purpose—the most obvious one—was to compensate for the future loss of 116 pages of manuscript translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith from the first part of the Book of Mormon (see D&C 3; 10).

"But it strikes me that there is a 'wiser purpose' than that, or perhaps more accurately, a 'wiser purpose' *in* that. The key to such a suggestion is in D&C 10:45. As the Lord instructs Joseph Smith on the procedure for translating and inserting the material from the small plates into what had been begun as the translation of the abridged large plates, he says, 'Behold, there are many things engraven upon the [small] plates of Nephi which do throw *greater views* upon my gospel' (emphasis added).

"So clearly this was not a *quid pro quo* in the development of the final Book of Mormon product. It was not tit for tat, this for that—116 pages of manuscript for 142 pages of printed text. Not so. We got back more than we lost. And it was known from the beginning that it would be so. We do not know exactly what we have missed in the 116 pages, but we do know that what we received on the small plates was the personal declarations of the three great witnesses [Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah], three of the great doctrinal voices of the Book of Mormon, testifying that Jesus is the Christ" ("For a Wise Purpose," *Ensign,* Jan. 1996, 13–14).

Doctrine and Covenants 10:46–52. Answering the prayers of the Nephite disciples

Several of the Nephite prophets and disciples prayed that their record would be preserved and that through it the gospel would eventually come to the Lamanites and their posterity (see 2 Nephi 26:15; Enos 1:13, 16–17; Mosiah 12:8; 3 Nephi 5:14; Mormon 8:25–26; 9:34–37). The prayers of these prophets were answered by the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in the latter days.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 10:53–70, looking for what the Savior promised to do for God's children in the latter days.

Doctrine and Covenants 10:53–56, 67. "My church"

Doctrine and Covenants 10:53–56 contains one of the earliest indications from the Lord that He was preparing to establish His Church again on the earth (see also D&C 5:14; 6:1; 11:16). The Lord promised that those who belong to His Church "need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven" (D&C 10:55). Some suppose that membership in the Lord's restored Church guarantees salvation. To understand the Lord's doctrine on this point, we need to understand what belonging to the Lord's Church means. The Lord stated that those who belong to the Church are not just those who are baptized and have their names on the records of the Church but those who "repenteth and cometh unto me" (D&C 10:67). The Lord also added that those members of His Church who endure to the end will prevail against the gates of hell (see D&C 10:69).

Doctrine and Covenants 10:57–70. "Bring to light the true points of my doctrine"

Through the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 10, Jesus Christ testifies of His divinity as the Son of God, our Lord, and the Redeemer of the World (see D&C 10:57, 70). Through the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Lord promised that "the true points of [His] doctrine" would be brought to light (D&C 10:62). One of His purposes in revealing His doctrine through the Book of Mormon is to help God's children understand His word clearly so that they might avoid contention and the tendency to "wrest" or distort His word and misinterpret the scriptures (see D&C 10:63).

The Lord's declaration that the Book of Mormon would "bring to light the true points of [His] doctrine" (D&C 10:62) and put down contention is fulfillment of the prophecy given by Joseph in Egypt concerning the writings of the fruit of his loins that would come forth in the latter days (see 2 Nephi 3:12). During the Great Apostasy, the priesthood was taken from the earth and many plain and precious truths were taken away or kept back from the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:26–29). Consequently, the world was left without a fulness of truth and the divine revelation needed to understand and apply the word of God. This lack of light and truth led to disagreements and contention over the doctrines of God and allowed Satan to stir up contention in the hearts of men. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon in these last days reestablishes, clarifies, and witnesses anew of the fulness of God's truth.

Consider what you read in Doctrine and Covenants 10:53–70 about the Lord's Church and His doctrine. What can you do to make sure that you understand the true points of doctrine and receive the blessings the Lord has promised to those who belong to His Church?

CHAPTER 4

Doctrine and Covenants 5; 17

Introduction and Timeline

Several months after Martin Harris lost the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript, he desired further proof of the reality of the golden plates. His wife was speaking out against the Prophet Joseph Smith, accusing him of defrauding her husband and others with his claims of having the ancient record. In March 1829, Martin returned to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to ask if he could see the plates. Joseph learned through the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 5 that the Lord would call three witnesses who would view the plates and testify of them to the world. The Lord promised Martin that if he humbled himself, he would be allowed to view the plates.

In June 1829, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 17, the Lord said that Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris could view the plates and other sacred items according to their faith. After gaining their witness of the plates, they were to "testify of them, by the power of God" (D&C 17:3).

Early 1829

The translation of the Book of Mormon plates proceeded slowly.

March 1829

Martin Harris requested to see the plates; **Doctrine and Covenants 5 was received.**

April–May 1829

Oliver Cowdery assisted as scribe as Joseph Smith translated the plates.

June 1829

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery moved for a time to Fayette, New York.

June 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 17 was received.

June 1829

Moroni visited Joseph Smith and the Three Witnesses and showed them the plates.

About July 1, 1829

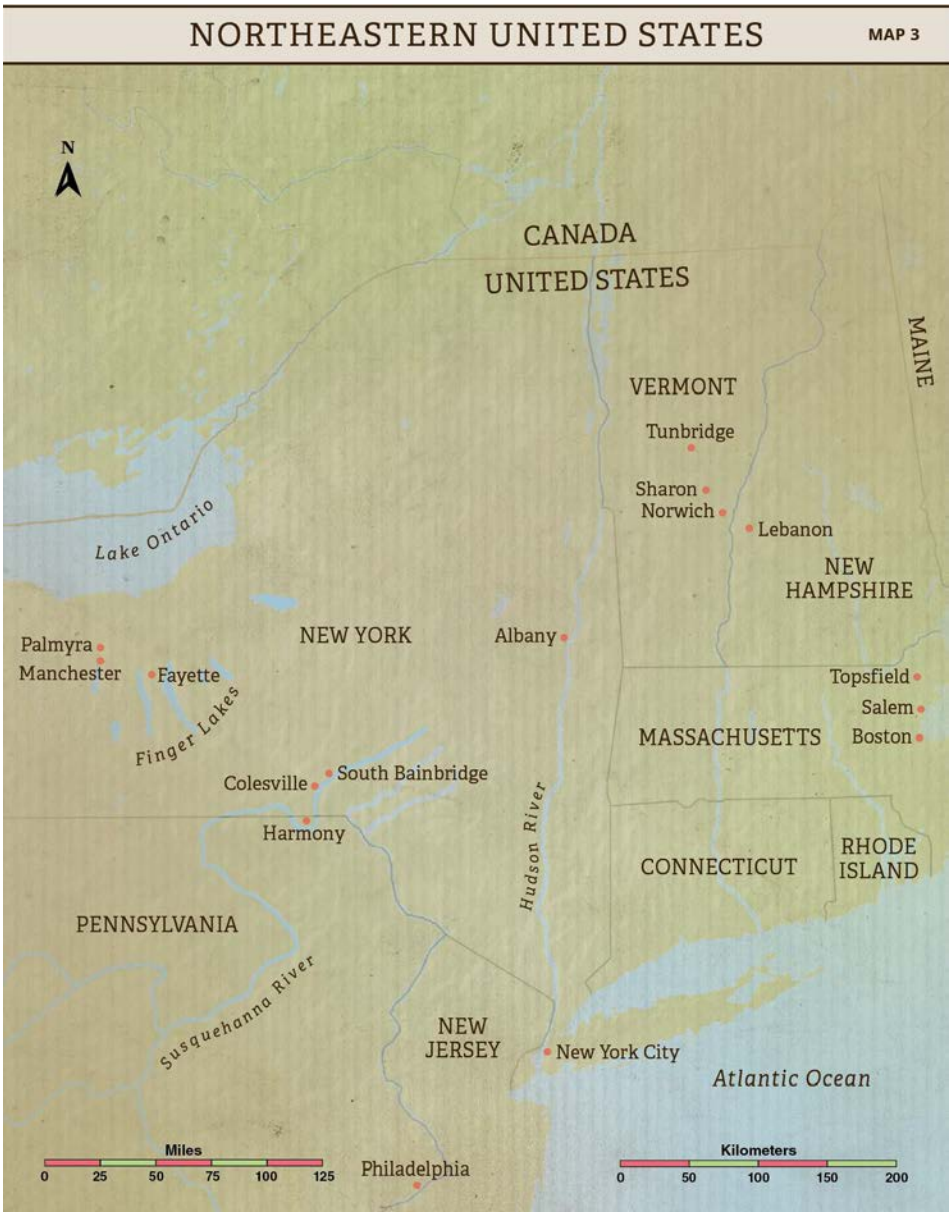
Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery completed the translation of the Book of Mormon.

How would you respond if someone asked why you believe the Book of Mormon is true? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 5 and 17, look for principles concerning how the Lord manifests the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon to the world and what we should do as we receive our own witness of its truthfulness.

Doctrine and Covenants 5: Additional Historical Background

In the months following the loss of the 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon translation, Martin Harris's wife, Lucy, worked to stir up opposition against the Prophet Joseph Smith. She was upset about the time and money her husband had dedicated to the translation of the Book of Mormon. She was also angry with the Prophet for having denied her earlier requests to see the golden plates. She filed a legal complaint against Joseph and gathered a number of people who were willing to testify that he had lied about the plates' existence. In addition to threatening a lawsuit against Joseph, these people warned Martin that if he did not join them in testifying of Joseph Smith's alleged deception and fraud, Martin would be found complicit with Joseph and would join him in jail.

At this time Martin had never seen the Book of Mormon plates himself, although he had acted as a scribe for Joseph. After traveling to Joseph and Emma's home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, Martin expressed his desire to receive a further witness of the plates' reality. He may have believed that if he could see the plates himself, he would be prepared to testify in court of their existence and clear his and Joseph Smith's names of fraud. After Joseph listened to Martin's request to see the plates, he inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 5 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 14–15).



Doctrine and Covenants 5:1–22

The Lord will bring forth His word in the last days through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and three witnesses will testify of it

Read Doctrine and Covenants 5:1–10, looking for reasons why the Lord has not chosen to allow the world to have access to or view the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.

Doctrine and Covenants 5:1–3. Martin Harris desires a witness of the plates

Martin Harris had received several evidences that the Prophet Joseph Smith actually possessed the golden plates. Earlier he had served as Joseph's scribe as the Prophet translated from the plates. Seeking to verify their authenticity, Martin had shown a copy of engravings found on the plates to scholars in New York. He had also brought the 116 translated manuscript pages home to show to his wife and a few others to prove that he was involved in an important work. Nonetheless, when he arrived again in Harmony, Pennsylvania, in March 1829, Martin confided to Emma's father, Isaac Hale, that he desired a "greater witness" of the plates (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 15).



A replica of the Book of Mormon plates

Doctrine and Covenants 5:1–3. "You should stand as a witness of these things"

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith that his role was to bear witness of the Book of Mormon and his sacred calling by testifying to the world, rather than by making the plates available for all to see. Because Joseph Smith was the prophet and seer chosen to translate the plates by the gift and power of God, his testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon stands as a preeminent witness of the reality of the Restoration of the gospel.

The Prophet fulfilled this commandment of the Lord even to the last hours of his mortal life. **Elder Jeffery R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recounted:

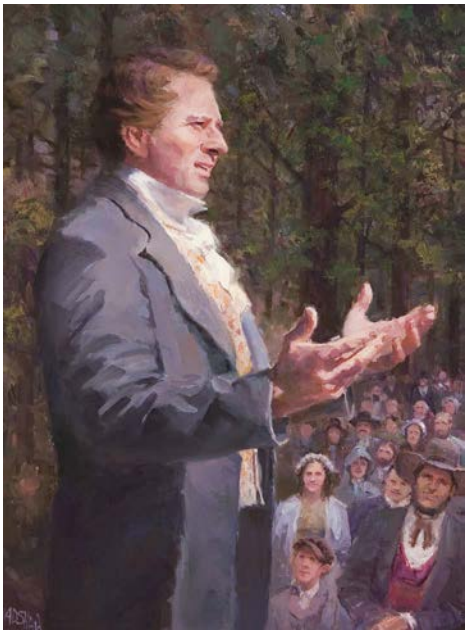
"Incarcerated in [Carthage Jail], Joseph the Prophet turned to the guards who held him captive and bore a powerful testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Shortly thereafter pistol and ball would take the lives of these two testators [Joseph and his brother Hyrum].

"As one of a thousand elements of my own testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon, I submit this as yet one more evidence of its truthfulness. In this their greatest—and last—hour of need, I ask you: would these men blaspheme before God by continuing to fix their lives, their honor, and their own search for eternal salvation on a book (and by implication a church and a ministry) they had fictitiously created out of whole cloth?

"… Tell me whether in this hour of death these two men would enter the presence of their Eternal Judge quoting from and finding solace in a book which, if *not* the very word of God, would brand them as imposters and charlatans until the end of time? *They would not do that!* They were willing to die rather than deny the divine origin and the eternal truthfulness of the Book of Mormon" ("Safety for the Soul," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 89).

Doctrine and Covenants 5:6–10. "This generation shall have my word through you"

The Lord promised that after the Book or Mormon plates were translated, the Prophet Joseph Smith would be ordained to deliver the word of the Lord in this "generation" (D&C 5:8, 10), or dispensation. A dispensation is a period of time during which the Lord reveals, or "dispenses," the fulness of His gospel, priesthood authority, and ordinances.



***Joseph in the Grove,* by A. D. Shaw**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized the Prophet Joseph Smith's important role in this dispensation: "The Lord said to Joseph Smith: 'This generation shall have my word through you' (D&C 5:10). What this means is that if we are going to receive the knowledge of God, the knowledge of truth, the knowledge of salvation, and know the things that we must do to work out our salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord, this must come in and through Joseph Smith and in no other way. He is the agent, the representative, the instrumentality that the Lord has appointed

to give the truth about himself and his laws to all men in all the world in this age" (*Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie,* ed. Mark L. McConkie [1989], 19).

Doctrine and Covenants 5:6–7. Physical evidence will not lead individuals to believe

The "things" (D&C 5:2) that the Lord had committed to the Prophet Joseph Smith included the golden plates (see D&C 5:1). Simply seeing and examining the plates would not have converted people to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Signs do not produce faith (see the commentary in this manual for D&C 63:7–11). Laman and Lemuel, for example, saw an angel but did not experience a change of heart (see 1 Nephi 3:28–31). A testimony of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon does not come from seeing the plates but rather from being willing to believe the Lord's words found in the book. **Elder Neil L. Andersen** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from heaven that comes as we choose to believe and as we seek it and hold on to it. … The future of your faith is not by chance, but by choice" ("Faith Is Not by Chance, but by Choice," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 65). By repeating the phrase "my words," as recorded in D&C 5:6–7, the Lord invited us to focus on the teachings and doctrine of the Book of Mormon to gain a witness of the truth rather than focusing on the plates.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 5:11–22, looking for reasons why three servants would be allowed to view the Book of Mormon plates.

Doctrine and Covenants 5:11–18. Three servants to testify of the Book of Mormon

Through inspiration from the Lord, the Prophet Joseph Smith called Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer to serve as the three "servants" (D&C 5:11) referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 5:11–18. These three men would hear God's voice declaring that the plates had been "translated by the gift and power of God," and an angel would show them the plates ("The Testimony of Three Witnesses," Book of Mormon). When the Eight Witnesses later saw the plates, they did not hear God's voice or see an angel. Therefore, the Lord's statement regarding the Three Witnesses that "to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony" (D&C 5:14) may refer to the uniqueness of their experience. To read more about the Three Witnesses' experience, see the commentary in this chapter for Doctrine and Covenants 17.

While the Lord promised to show the golden plates to three witnesses, how did He intend for all others to learn the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon? How have the Lord's words recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 5:16 been fulfilled in your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 5:16. "Them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit"

While the Lord promised to show the Book of Mormon plates to three witnesses (D&C 5:11–13), He also promised that whoever would believe His words would

receive his or her own spiritual manifestation. **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about the reality of this spiritual witness: "As you seek a personal witness—your personal revelation—you will discover that Heavenly Father has provided a special way for you to know the truth for yourself: through the third member of the Godhead, a personage of spirit we know as the Holy Ghost" ("Eternal Life—to Know Our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 82).

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 5:16, the Lord also stated that receiving a spiritual witness has a transforming effect on the believer. This is one reason why it would not be sufficient to simply see the plates. The process of reading the book, believing in the words, and receiving a spiritual manifestation of the truth causes a change—a spiritual rebirth—in the reader.



As we prayerfully study the Book of Mormon, we can receive a witness of its truthfulness through the Holy Ghost.

Doctrine and Covenants 5:21–22. "Yield to the persuasions of men no more"

The Lord chastened the Prophet Joseph Smith on this and other occasions (see D&C 3:3–9; 64:5–7). These revelations show that the Lord's chosen servants are imperfect people who are nevertheless striving to do the Lord's will. The only perfect, blameless person to have lived on the earth is Jesus Christ; all others have sinned, are in need of divine mercy, and must repent (see Romans 3:23). This is one reason why we must build our spiritual foundation upon Jesus Christ (see Helaman 5:12) and follow Him by upholding His chosen servants "by the prayer of faith" (D&C 43:12).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) stated:

"We recognize that our forebears were human. They doubtless made mistakes. …

"There was only one perfect man who ever walked the earth. The Lord has used imperfect people in the process of building his perfect society. If some of them occasionally stumbled, or if their characters may have been slightly flawed in one way or another, the wonder is the greater that they accomplished so much" ("The Continuing Pursuit of Truth," *Ensign,* Apr. 1986, 5).

Doctrine and Covenants 5:23–35

The Lord tells Martin Harris that he may be called as one of the Three Witnesses if he repents

Read Doctrine and Covenants 5:23–35, looking for what the Lord required of Martin Harris in order for him to qualify as one of the witnesses.

Doctrine and Covenants 5:23–28. The role of humility

The Lord promised Martin Harris that he could become a witness of the Book of Mormon plates, or "these things" (D&C 5:2, 11), if he would humble himself, acknowledge the wrongs he had committed, and be willing to bear testimony to the world of the things he would see. Even after having the harsh experience of losing the 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon, Martin found it difficult to humbly trust that God was working through His servant Joseph Smith (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 14–15.

Humility is required of all those who seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ. **Elder Marlin K. Jensen** of the Seventy explained: "Through this process [becoming like a child], we will eventually acquire the childlike attributes of meekness, humility, patience, love, and spiritual submissiveness. True humility will inevitably lead us to say to God, 'Thy will be done.' And because what we *are* does affect what we *do,* our submissiveness will be reflected in our reverence, gratitude, and willingness to accept callings, counsel, and correction" ("To Walk Humbly with God," *Ensign,* May 2001, 10).

Think about how the truths taught in Doctrine and Covenants 5:24, 28 can help you develop greater humility. Why do we need humility in order to gain a witness of the truth and to become a disciple of Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 5:30–34. The Lord will provide means to complete the translation

The Prophet Joseph Smith had made very little progress on the work of the translation since the Book of Mormon plates had been returned to him following the loss of the 116 manuscript pages. It is possible that during this time, both Emma Smith and her brother Reuben Hale assisted Joseph as scribes (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 4). When the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 5 was given in March 1829, the Lord indicated that Joseph should "stop for a season" (D&C 5:30) and wait until

He would "provide means" to complete the translation of the Book of Mormon (D&C 5:34). This seems to have been fulfilled when Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania, a few weeks after Joseph received this revelation (see commentary in this manual for Doctrine and Covenants 6).



The Book of Mormon plates were sometimes locked in this wooden box to keep them secure.

Doctrine and Covenants 17: Additional Historical Background

In March 1829, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that He would permit three servants to view the Book of Mormon plates and to thereby become witnesses who would bear testimony to the world (see D&C 5:11–15). Later, while finishing the translation of the small plates near the end of his work on the Book of Mormon, Joseph was again reminded of the Lord's plan to appoint three witnesses to view the plates (see 2 Nephi 27:12–14; Ether 5:2–4). The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded, "Almost immediately after we had made this discovery, it occurred to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and … Martin Harris (who had [come] to enquire after our progress in the work) that they would have me enquire of the Lord, to know if they might not obtain of him [the privilege] to be these three special witnesses; and finally they became so very solicitous, and [urged] me so much, that at length I complied, and through the Urim and Thummim, I obtained of the Lord for them the following Revelation [D&C 17]" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 314; spelling standardized).

Doctrine and Covenants 17

The Lord commands the Three Witnesses to testify of the plates

Read Doctrine and Covenants 17:1–9, looking for what the Three Witnesses were commanded to do after viewing the Book of Mormon plates.

Doctrine and Covenants 17:1–2. "You shall have a view of the plates"

The promise that three witnesses would be permitted to see the Book of Mormon plates and other sacred items depended upon them having faith like that "had by the prophets of old" (D&C 17:2). Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were eventually given the privilege of seeing the golden plates, the breastplate, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, and the "miraculous directors," or Liahona (D&C 17:1; see also Alma 37:38–39). David Whitmer later testified, "We not only saw the plates of the B[ook] of M[ormon] but also the Brass plates, the Plates of the Book of ether *[sic]*, the Plates containing the Record of the wickedness of the people of the world, and many other plates" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 380). In addition to seeing the golden plates, viewing the other ancient items would have given the Three Witnesses an assurance that the events and people described within the Book of Mormon were real.



Joseph Smith and the Three Witnesses were shown the Book of Mormon plates by the angel Moroni somewhere near this farm of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York.

Doctrine and Covenants 17:3–7. The vision received by the Three Witnesses

The sacred experience promised by the Lord occurred near the end of June 1829 as the Prophet Joseph Smith was completing the work of translation at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. The Prophet recorded the following:

"Not many days after the above commandment [D&C 17] was given, we four, viz. [namely], Martin Harris, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and myself, agreed to retire into the woods and try to obtain, by fervent and humble prayer, the fulfilment of the promises given in this revelation [to see the plates and other items]. … We accordingly made choice of a piece of woods convenient to Mr. Whitmer's [house], to which we retired, and having knelt down, we began to pray in much faith to Almighty God to bestow upon us a realization of those promises. According to previous arrangement, I commenced by vocal prayer to our Heavenly Father and was followed by each of the rest in succession; we did not yet, however, obtain any answer or manifestation of the divine favor in our behalf.

"We again observed the same order of prayer, each calling on and praying fervently to God in rotation, but with the same result as before. Upon this our second failure, Martin Harris proposed that he would withdraw himself from us, believing, as he expressed himself, that his presence was the cause of our not obtaining what we wished for. He accordingly withdrew from us, and we knelt down again and had not been many minutes engaged in prayer when presently we beheld a light above us in the air of exceeding brightness, and behold, an angel stood before us. In his hands he held the plates which we had been praying for these to have a view of; he turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them and discern the engravings thereon distinctly. He addressed himself to David Whitmer, and said, 'David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps his commandments,' when immediately afterwards we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, 'These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God; the translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear'.

"I now left David and Oliver and went in pursuit of Martin Harris, who I found at a considerable distance fervently engaged in prayer. He soon told me, however, that he had not yet prevailed with the Lord, and earnestly requested me to join him in prayer, that he also might realize the same blessings which we had just received. We accordingly joined in prayer, and ultimately obtained our desires, for before we had yet finished, the same vision was opened to our view; at least it was again [opened] to me, and I once more beheld … and heard the same things; whilst at the same moment, Martin Harris cried out, apparently in an ecstasy of joy ''Tis enough, 'tis enough; mine eyes have beheld, mine eyes have beheld,' and jumping up he shouted, Hosanna, blessing God; and otherwise rejoiced exceedingly" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: 1832–1834,* 316, 318, 320; punctuation, spelling, and capitalization standardized).

Following that experience, a statement was written and signed by each of the witnesses. That statement, known as "The Testimony of the Three Witnesses," was published in the first printed edition of the Book of Mormon and in all subsequent editions published by the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 17:4–5. "Ye shall testify that you have seen them"



A monument in Richmond, Missouri, honoring the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

After seeing the golden plates, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris shared the burden of testifying to the world of the reality of the plates and the divinity of the Book of Mormon. Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet Joseph Smith's mother, gave the following account describing Joseph's feelings upon returning to the Whitmer home after the vision: "[When] they returned to the house it was between 3 and 4 o'clock. Mrs. Whitmer & Mr. Smith [Joseph Smith Sr.] and myself were sitting in a bedroom. I sat on the bedside. When Joseph came in he threw himself down beside me. 'Father!—Mother!—' said he, 'you do not know how happy I am. The Lord has caused the plates to be shown to 3 more besides me who have also seen an angel and will have to testify to the truth of what I have said, for they know for themselves that I do not go about to deceive the people. And I do feel as if I was relieved of a dreadful burden, which was almost too much for me to endure, but they will now have to bear a part, and it does rejoice my soul, that I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the world' " ("Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," book 8, page 11, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling and punctuation standardized).

Why do you think the Prophet was so relieved that three additional people had seen the Book of Mormon plates?

As recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Lord prophesied that besides Joseph Smith and the Three Witnesses, "there is none other which shall view [the book], save it be a few according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men" (2 Nephi 27:13; see also verse 12). This refers to the Eight Witnesses who both saw and handled the golden plates (see "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses," Book of Mormon). In all, there were 12 eyewitnesses of the Book of Mormon plates (Joseph Smith, the Three Witnesses, and the Eight Witnesses) who were given the commandment to declare their witness to the world.

Additional individuals felt the plates, when the plates were covered by a cloth, or felt their weight in a cloth sack. Mary Whitmer, the wife of Peter Whitmer Sr., had a remarkable experience during this time. She and her husband carried the increased burden of hosting the Smiths and Oliver Cowdery in their home while the Prophet

completed the translation of the Book of Mormon. Their son, David, remembered that although his mother did not complain, she felt overwhelmed. "David later related what happened one day as his mother went to the barn to milk the cows: 'She was met out near the yard by the same old man [seen earlier by David] (judging by her description of him) who said to her: "You have been very faithful and diligent in your labors, but you are tired because of the increase of your toil; it is proper therefore that you should receive a witness that your faith may be strengthened." Thereupon he showed her the plates'" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times* [Church Educational System manual, 2000], 57–58).



Joseph Smith showed the Book of Mormon plates to the Eight Witnesses somewhere on or near his father's farm in Palmyra, New York. The Sacred Grove is shown in the background (photograph ca. 1907).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Doctrine and Covenants 17:6. The Lord's testimony of the Book of Mormon

In addition to the testimonies offered by the special witnesses of the Book of Mormon, the Lord Himself gave a definitive confirmation that it is true. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** explained:

"One of the most solemn oaths ever given to man is found in these words of the Lord relative to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. 'He [meaning Joseph Smith] has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him,' saith the Lord, 'and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true.' (D&C 17:6.)

"This is God's testimony of the Book of Mormon. In it Deity himself has laid his godhood on the line. Either the book is true or God ceases to be God. There neither is nor can be any more formal or powerful language known to men or gods" ("The Doctrine of the Priesthood," *Ensign,* May 1982, 33).

Doctrine and Covenants 17:7–9. "That I might bring about my righteous purposes"

The commandment given to the Three Witnesses to testify was essential in the Restoration of the gospel. If they were to ever deny their witness, it may have given people reason to disbelieve the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

In speaking of the Three Witnesses, **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "Each of the three had ample reason and opportunity to renounce his testimony if it had been false, or to equivocate on details if any had been inaccurate. As is well known, because of disagreements or jealousies involving other leaders of the Church, each one of these three witnesses was excommunicated from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by about eight years after the publication of their testimony. All three went their separate ways, with no common interest to support a collusive effort. Yet to the end of their lives—periods ranging from 12 to 50 years after their excommunications—not one of these witnesses deviated from his published testimony or said anything that cast any shadow on its truthfulness" ("The Witness: Martin Harris," *Ensign,* May 1999, 36).

The Lord promised His grace to the Three Witnesses since they would face great opposition to their testimonies. **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency testified: "The Three Witnesses never denied their testimony of the Book of Mormon. They could not because they knew it was true. They made sacrifices and faced difficulties beyond what most people ever know. … That they continued to affirm what they saw and heard in that marvelous experience, during long periods of estrangement from the Church and from Joseph, makes their testimony more powerful" ("An Enduring Testimony of the Mission of the Prophet Joseph," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2003, 90).

Think about what you have learned regarding the importance of the Book of Mormon witnesses. What will you do to strengthen your own witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon? What are some ways that you can testify of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon to others?

CHAPTER 5

Doctrine and Covenants 6; 8–9

Introduction and Timeline

Without a regular scribe, the translation of the Book of Mormon proceeded sporadically until March 1829, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was commanded to stop and wait for help (see D&C 5:30–34). In fulfillment of the Lord's promise to "provide means" (D&C 5:34), Oliver Cowdery arrived at the Prophet's home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, and offered his help. With renewed effort, Joseph Smith began translating again on April 7, 1829, with Oliver assisting as a scribe. Later that month, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 6. In this revelation Oliver received counsel and confirmation concerning his role in the Lord's work.

As the translation of the Book of Mormon proceeded, Oliver desired to translate. In a revelation received in April 1829 and recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 8, the Lord promised Oliver the gift of revelation and the ability to translate ancient records.

Oliver began his attempt to translate but was unable to continue. At Oliver's request, Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 9, in which the Lord explained why Oliver struggled to translate and also provided principles regarding revelation.

Late 1828

Oliver Cowdery learned about Joseph Smith while living in Manchester, New York.

April 1829

Oliver Cowdery traveled to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to meet Joseph Smith.

April 1829

The translation of the Book of Mormon proceeded in earnest with Oliver Cowdery acting as scribe.

April 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 6 and 8 were received.

April 1829

Oliver Cowdery attempted to translate.

April 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 9 was received.

Think about some of the significant decisions you are currently facing or may face in the future. Why would it be important for you to seek Heavenly Father's guidance as you make these decisions? As you study sections 6, 8, and 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants, look for truths that will help you to recognize and receive revelation from Heavenly Father through the Holy Ghost.

Doctrine and Covenants 6: Additional Historical Background

In early 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, were living in a small house near Emma's parents' home in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Joseph continued to translate the Book of Mormon plates during this time with assistance from Emma, but the work progressed slowly. In March, Joseph petitioned the Lord for help, and in response the Lord promised, "I will provide means whereby thou mayest accomplish the thing which I have commanded thee" (D&C 5:34). Soon afterward, Oliver Cowdery arrived and became Joseph's full-time scribe.

Oliver Cowdery was a schoolteacher who was boarding in the home of the Prophet Joseph Smith's parents, Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, during the winter

of 1828–29. While in the Palmyra, New York, area, Oliver heard talk about the golden plates. He asked the Smith family about what he had heard, and after earning Joseph Smith Sr.'s trust, he learned more about Joseph Smith Jr.'s efforts to translate the plates. The Prophet Joseph Smith later recorded that the "Lord appeared unto a young man by the name of Oliver Cowd[e]ry and showed unto him the plates in a vision. … Therefore he was desirous to come and write for me" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1:Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 16; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized).

Oliver Cowdery firmly believed that it was the Lord's will that he go to Joseph Smith and help him, so he traveled with Joseph Smith's brother Samuel to Harmony, Pennsylvania, arriving on April 5, 1829. Joseph and Oliver began translating on April 7, 1829. Not long after they began working together, the Prophet received instructions from the Lord providing direction to Oliver and clarifying his role in assisting Joseph.



Doctrine and Covenants 6:1–24

The Lord teaches Oliver Cowdery concerning his role in God's work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 6:1–13, looking for the counsel and promises the Lord gave to Oliver Cowdery.

Doctrine and Covenants 6:6. "Seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion"

The Lord invited the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to "keep [His] commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" (D&C 6:6). This is the first mention of Zion in the Doctrine and Covenants. To "bring

forth and establish the cause of Zion" could be understood as the work of restoring the gospel of Jesus Christ, organizing the Church of Jesus Christ anew in our day, and preaching the gospel in order to gather others to Zion.

How do you think the Lord's counsel recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 6:7 prepared the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to bring forth and establish Zion? How can the Lord's counsel in this verse to "seek not for riches" relate to you?

Doctrine and Covenants 6:7, 11. "The mysteries of God"

The Lord promised Oliver Cowdery that if he would seek for wisdom, "the mysteries of God [would] be unfolded unto [him]" (D&C 6:7). In the scriptures, the phrase "mysteries of God" refers to "spiritual truths known only by revelation. God reveals His mysteries to those who are obedient to the gospel" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Mysteries of God," scriptures.lds.org). While these truths are largely unknown and not understood and appreciated by the world, followers of Jesus Christ can gain knowledge and understanding of gospel truths through a study of the scriptures and the words of living prophets and from personal revelation received through the Holy Ghost. The Doctrine and Covenants encourages readers to seek for greater spiritual understanding of the mysteries of God by keeping the commandments and asking God in faith (see D&C 8:11; 42:61, 65; 63:23; 76:5–10, 114–17).

Doctrine and Covenants 6:10–12. Oliver Cowdery's gift

The gift possessed by Oliver Cowdery that is described in Doctrine and Covenants 6:10–12 is the gift of revelation (see D&C 8:2–5). All of Heavenly Father's children can receive spiritual guidance when they pray and seek His help. Those who are baptized, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and diligently keep the commandments can receive the gift of revelation.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–24, looking for what the Lord taught Oliver Cowdery about receiving revelation.

Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–17. "As often as thou hast inquired"

Oliver Cowdery was among the first individuals to ask God about the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith. As each of us must do, Oliver needed to learn how to recognize the manifestations of the Spirit. From the Lord's words contained in Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–15, Oliver learned that he had received divine guidance as often as he had prayed. The Lord reminded Oliver that in response to his prayers the Spirit had instructed him and enlightened his mind (see D&C 6:14–15). The Lord also pointed out that the witness of the truthfulness of the restored gospel that Oliver had received in this way had led him from Palmyra to Harmony and to the work he was now engaged in. By reminding Oliver of previous revelatory experiences, the Lord helped increase Oliver's capacity to recognize revelation through the Spirit in the future.

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"One of the great lessons that each of us needs to learn is to ask. Why does the Lord want us to pray to Him and to ask? Because that is how revelation is received. …

"If you feel that God has not answered your prayers, ponder these scriptures [D&C 6:14–15]—then carefully look for evidence in your own life that He may have already answered you" ("How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 45, 47).

What truths can you learn about revelation from Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–17?

Doctrine and Covenants 6:18–19. "Stand by my servant Joseph"

Through the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 6, the Lord assured Oliver Cowdery that Joseph Smith was His servant. Oliver learned that he had a duty to "stand by," or be loyal to and supportive of, the Lord's servant (D&C 6:18) and to patiently receive "admonition," or correction, from him (D&C 6:19). In his close working association with the Prophet, Oliver was also counseled by the Lord to "admonish" Joseph when needed (D&C 6:19). The Prophet had human frailties and never claimed to be infallible. Near the end of his life, Joseph Smith declared, "I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 522). However, when describing the frailties of his youth, the Prophet gave this insight into his character: "No one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature" (Joseph Smith—History 1:28).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed: "Joseph Smith was a mortal man striving to fulfill an overwhelming, divinely-appointed mission against all odds. The wonder is not that he ever displayed human failings, but that he succeeded in his mission. His fruits are undeniable and undeniably good" ("The Prophet Joseph Smith" [Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Sept. 24, 2013], byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches).

Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–24. "Did I not speak peace to your mind … ?"

Revelation can be received in various ways. As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–24, the Lord helped Oliver Cowdery recognize that he had been spiritually guided by receiving a feeling of peace. **Elder Richard G. Scott** affirmed: "The feeling of peace is the most common confirming witness that I personally experience. When I have been very concerned about an important matter, struggling to resolve it without success, I continued those efforts in faith. Later, an all-pervading peace has come, settling my concerns, as He has promised" ("Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 10).



The frame home of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith in Manchester Township, New York, where Oliver Cowdery lived while teaching school in the area

When have you felt peace as a witness that something was true or that a decision you made was right?

Doctrine and Covenants 6:25–37

The Lord counsels Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to translate and to not doubt or fear

Read Doctrine and Covenants 6:25–37, looking for another gift that the Lord promised Oliver Cowdery.

Doctrine and Covenants 6:25–28. Two witnesses of the Restoration

A second gift promised to Oliver Cowdery was the gift and keys of translation. The Lord explained that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver would become two witnesses who could testify that His words had been brought to light. It is significant that Joseph had Oliver at his side as a witness when other important events of the Restoration occurred. For example, Oliver participated in the following:

1. The translation of the Book of Mormon and its publication (see Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note).

2. The restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood through John the Baptist (see D&C 13).
3. The restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood through Peter, James, and John (see Joseph Smith—History 1:72).
4. The organization of the Church with two elders to lead it (see D&C 20:2–3).
5. The restoration of priesthood keys through Moses, Elias, and Elijah (see D&C 110).

Doctrine and Covenants 6:32, 37. "Behold … my hands and feet"

It is not known whether Doctrine and Covenants 6:32, 37 refers to a literal or to a figurative experience. The Lord may have simply been reminding Oliver of an experience he had had earlier when he first heard about the Prophet Joseph Smith and the golden plates (see the commentary in the additional historical background for D&C 6 in this manual).

How might the Lord's words recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 6:32–37 have encouraged Oliver Cowdery and the Prophet Joseph Smith? How can these words encourage you as you seek to do the Lord's work?

Doctrine and Covenants 8: Additional Historical Background

While acting as scribe for the Prophet Joseph Smith during the translation of the Book of Mormon, "Oliver Cowdery became exceedingly anxious to have the power to translate bestowed upon him" (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 1:36). The Lord had promised Oliver that "even as you desire of me so it shall be unto you" and told him, "I grant unto you a gift, if you desire of me, to translate, even as my servant Joseph" (D&C 6:8, 25). Oliver's interest in translating may have also increased as he and Joseph became familiar with accounts in the Book of Mormon related to the gift of translation (see Mosiah 8:9–16). Under these circumstances, Oliver received through the Prophet Joseph Smith the instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 8.

Doctrine and Covenants 8

The Lord helps Oliver Cowdery understand the spirit of revelation

Read Doctrine and Covenants 8:1–5, looking for what the Lord told Oliver Cowdery about recognizing the manifestations of the Holy Ghost. What truths can we learn from these verses? How can the Lord's counsel recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 8:1 relate to you?

Doctrine and Covenants 8:1, 10–11. "Ask in faith, with an honest heart"

In a previous revelation, Oliver Cowdery had been promised the gift to translate (see D&C 6:25). This gift, however, required Oliver to "ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing" (D&C 8:1) in order to receive God's help to translate.

The promise of receiving knowledge and revelation from God extends to all who ask in faith with an honest heart, believing that they will receive. **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized the importance of asking God when we need knowledge and understanding:

"Today we live in a world in which people don't ask of God—they seem to want to ask of Google. Even when it comes to questions of faith, there are many who trust the Internet to provide accurate, fair, and balanced answers to their questions more than they trust the ultimate source of truth, our Heavenly Father. …

"… Today the Internet is full of those lying in wait to deceive the uninformed and inexperienced.

"In our search for gospel truth, we not only need to find reliable sources but we also need to give the Lord equal time in our daily pursuits. We need to study the scriptures and the words of the Lord's servants. We need to be living right before God—we need to be doing His will [see John 7:16–17]. And we can never overstate the importance of taking our spiritual concerns directly to God and trusting His inspiration and guidance" ("Women of Dedication, Faith, Determination, and Action" [address given at Brigham Young University Women's Conference, May 1, 2015], 5–6, womensconference.ce.byu.edu/transcripts).

According to Doctrine and Covenants 8:1 and Elder Ballard, what must we do to receive answers from God?

Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3. "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart"

One way that God reveals His will to His children is through "the spirit of revelation" (D&C 8:3). As The Lord explained to Oliver Cowdery through the Prophet Joseph Smith, this involves the mind (intellect) and the heart (feelings) (see D&C 8:2).

Revelation may come to either our heart or to our mind or to both. One way in which revelation can come to both our heart and mind is when inspired thoughts or ideas come into our mind and are confirmed to be true by the spiritual feelings that come into our heart. **Elder Richard G. Scott** explained additional ways the Spirit might communicate with our mind and heart:

"An impression to the *mind* is very specific. Detailed words can be heard or felt and written as though the instruction were being dictated.

"A communication to the *heart* is a more general impression. The Lord often begins by giving impressions. Where there is a recognition of their importance and they are obeyed, one gains more capacity to receive more detailed instruction to the *mind.* An impression to the heart, if followed, is fortified by a more specific instruction to the mind" ("Helping Others to Be Spiritually Led" [address to Church Educational System religious educators, Aug. 11, 1998]; see also *Teaching Seminary: Preservice Readings* [Church Educational System manual, 2004], 55).



View of the Harmony, Pennsylvania, area (photograph ca. 1897–1927)
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Doctrine and Covenants 8:3. Moses and the spirit of revelation

The Lord explained that "the spirit of revelation" promised to Oliver Cowdery, which the Prophet Joseph Smith had, is the same spirit that directed Moses as he led the children of Israel through the Red Sea (see D&C 8:3). **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained some ways in which Moses's example can help us to better understand the spirit of revelation:

"Why would the Lord use the example of crossing the Red Sea as the classic example of 'the spirit of revelation'? Why didn't He use the First Vision? … Or the vision of the brother of Jared? Well, He could have used any of these, but He didn't. Here He had another purpose in mind.

"First of all, revelation almost always comes in response to a question, usually an urgent question—not always, but usually. Moses' challenge was how to get himself and the children of Israel out of [the] horrible predicament they were in. …

"You will need information, too, but in matters of great consequence it is not likely to come unless you want it urgently, faithfully, humbly. Moroni calls it seeking 'with real intent' (Moroni 10:4). If you can seek that way, and stay in that mode, not much that the adversary can counter with will dissuade you from a righteous path.

"The Red Sea will open to the honest seeker of revelation. The adversary does have power to hedge up the way, to marshal Pharaoh's forces and dog our escape right to the water's edge, but he cannot conquer if we will it otherwise. That is lesson number one about crossing the Red Sea, your Red Seas, by the spirit of revelation.

"In the process of revelation and in making important decisions, fear almost always plays a destructive, sometimes paralyzing role. …

"That is exactly the problem that beset the children of Israel at the edge of the Red Sea. That is lesson number two. It has everything to do with holding fast to earlier illumination. The record says, 'And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid' (Exodus 14:10).

"… Our faith will be tested as we fight through self-doubts and second thoughts. Some days we will be miraculously led out of Egypt—seemingly free, seemingly on our way—only to come to yet another confrontation, like all that water lying before us. At those times we must resist the temptation to panic and to give up.

"'And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. … The Lord shall fight for you' (Exodus 14:13–14).

"Again, that is the second lesson of the spirit of revelation. After you have gotten the message, after you have paid the price to feel His love and hear the word of the Lord, go forward. Don't fear, don't vacillate, don't quibble, don't whine.

"The third lesson from the Lord's spirit of revelation in the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea is that, if God has told you something is right, if something is indeed true for you, He will provide the way for you to accomplish it" ("Remember How You Felt," *New Era,* Aug. 2004, 7–8).

Doctrine and Covenants 8:4–5. "This is thy gift; apply unto it"

Everyone who seeks to follow Jesus Christ can enjoy the gift of revelation that was promised to Oliver Cowdery (see D&C 6:10–12). The Lord taught that in order to receive this gift we must "apply unto it" (D&C 8:4). **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles discussed how we can "apply unto" the spirit of revelation:

"Sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives. …

"… In the scriptures, the influence of the Holy Ghost frequently is described as 'a still small voice' (1 Kings 19:12; 1 Nephi 17:45; see also 3 Nephi 11:3) and a 'voice of perfect mildness' (Helaman 5:30). Because the Spirit whispers to us gently and delicately, it is easy to understand why we should shun inappropriate media, pornography, and harmful, addictive substances and behaviors. These tools of the adversary can impair and eventually destroy our capacity to recognize and respond to the subtle messages from God delivered by the power of His Spirit. Each of us should consider seriously and ponder prayerfully how we can reject the devil's enticements and righteously 'apply unto it,' even the spirit of revelation, in our personal lives and families" ("The Spirit of Revelation," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 87–88).

What are some ways you could "apply unto" the spirit of revelation in your life?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 8:6–12, looking for the gift that Oliver Cowdery received that would help him assist the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Doctrine and Covenants 8:6–9. What was "the gift of Aaron"?

When the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 8 was first published in the 1833 Book of Commandments, Oliver Cowdery's gift was described as "the gift of working with the rod" (see "Book of Commandments, 1833," page 19, josephsmithpapers.org; see also Jeffrey G. Cannon, "Oliver Cowdery's Gift," footnote 9, in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 19, see also history.lds.org). This may have referred to an object that Oliver Cowdery used on occasion, known as a divining rod. However, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery left no account as to how such a "rod" may have been used. In the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the phrase "the gift of working with the rod" was changed to "the gift of Aaron" (see "Doctrine and Covenants, 1835," page 161 [section XXXIV, verse 3], josephsmithpapers.org; see also Melvin J. Petersen, "Preparing Early Revelations for Publication," *Ensign,* Feb. 1985, 20). This adjustment demonstrates that the central message is the gift of receiving revelation and also the divinely guided power to translate ancient records.

In the Bible we read of "people receiving spiritual manifestations by means of physical objects such as rods, a brass serpent on a pole … , an ephod (a part of the priestly clothing that included two precious stones), and the Urim and Thummim" (Richard E. Turley Jr., Robin S. Jensen, and Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Joseph the Seer," *Ensign,* Oct. 2015, 49). Biblical accounts of Moses and his brother Aaron describe their use of rods as instruments and outward manifestations of God's will and power (see Exodus 4:1–5, 17; 7:9–12; 14:15–18; Numbers 17:1–10). Hence, the phrase "the gift of Aaron" (D&C 8:6) may be a more general way of referring to Oliver's gift of "working with the rod" as well as confirming the link that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had with the roles held by Moses and Aaron. After recognizing Oliver's "gift of Aaron," the Lord again assured Oliver that the gift of translation would be added to the revelatory gifts he already possessed if he acted in faith and "trifle[d] not" with these sacred gifts (see D&C 8:8–11).



The interior of the reconstructed home of Joseph and Emma Smith in Harmony, Pennsylvania, where much of the Book of Mormon was translated

Doctrine and Covenants 9: Additional Historical Background

Like Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery only spoke English and could not translate an ancient record unless he had help through the power of God. Oliver Cowdery began his attempt to translate the Book of Mormon plates by the gift and power of God, but he "did not continue as [he had] commenced," and so the privilege was taken away from him (D&C 9:5). In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord promised Oliver that he would have a future opportunity to translate other records. The Lord counseled him to continue serving as scribe for the Prophet until the translation of the plates was completed.

Doctrine and Covenants 9

The Lord reveals principles regarding revelation

Read Doctrine and Covenants 9, looking for what Oliver Cowdery learned about his role in translating the plates. What truths can we learn from these verses?

Doctrine and Covenants 9:1–11. Oliver Cowdery's attempt to translate

We don't have many details about Oliver Cowdery's attempt to translate. He certainly had a great desire to translate the Book of Mormon record, but after he began, he was unable to continue. The Lord explained that Oliver "did not continue as [he had] commenced" (D&C 9:5) and said that if he had used the principles of receiving revelation, he "could have translated" (D&C 9:10). The Lord

suspended Oliver's opportunity to translate, but He told Oliver that there were "other records" that he would be allowed to help translate (D&C 9:2).



Joseph and Emma Smith's home in Harmony, Pennsylvania; the original home is the center portion (photograph ca. 1907).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Notice the reasons Oliver Cowdery was unable to translate (see D&C 9:5, 7, 11). How might those same issues cause us to miss opportunities for spiritual growth?

Doctrine and Covenants 9:2. "Other records have I"

Though the Lord informed Oliver Cowdery that He had "other records" that would need translating (D&C 9:2; see also D&C 6:26), we do not know if Oliver actually helped to translate any of them. However, Oliver did act as scribe for the Prophet Joseph Smith during the inspired translation of the Bible. Also, Joseph Smith later came into possession of some Egyptian artifacts that included papyri, and the Prophet's examination of the papyri led him to receive revelation about Abraham's life and teachings. While we do not know exactly how Joseph Smith translated the book of Abraham, we do know that Oliver assisted him as scribe.

What effort does the Lord require of us as we seek to receive revelation? Why do you think that the Lord sometimes requires us to put forth some effort in order to receive revelation?

Doctrine and Covenants 9:5–9. "You took no thought save it was to ask"

We receive personal revelation according to the Lord's will and timing. Some ways that we can prepare to receive personal revelation include gaining a righteous desire (see D&C 6:8, 20), asking in faith (see D&C 8:1), and obeying God's commandments (see D&C 63:23). Oliver Cowdery learned that before asking God for answers concerning an issue, he should "study it out in [his] mind" (D&C 9:8).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified the need that Oliver had to combine both study and faith: "The correct relationship between study and faith in the receipt of sacred knowledge is illustrated in Oliver Cowdery's attempt to translate ancient records. He failed because he 'took no thought,' but only asked God. (D&C 9:7.) The Lord told him he should have 'stud[ied] it out in [his] mind' and then asked if it was right. (D&C 9:8.) Only then would the Lord reveal whether the translation was correct or not. And only on receiving that revelation could the text be written, because 'you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.' (D&C 9:9.) In the acquisition of sacred knowledge, scholarship and reason are not alternatives to revelation. They are a means to an end, and the end is revelation from God" ("Alternate Voices," *Ensign,* May 1989, 30).

The process of obtaining personal revelation can often require effort and even struggle on our part. **Elder Richard G. Scott** taught why we need to do more than simply ask for answers: "I am convinced that there is no simple formula or technique that would immediately allow you to master the ability to be guided by the voice of the Spirit. Our Father expects you to learn how to obtain that divine help by exercising faith in Him and His Holy Son, Jesus Christ. Were you to receive inspired guidance just for the asking, you would become weak and ever more dependent on Them. They know that essential personal growth will come as you struggle to learn how to be led by the Spirit" ("To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 6–7).

According to Doctrine and Covenants 9:8–9, what is one way that we can recognize answers that come from God?

Doctrine and Covenants 9:8–9. "Your bosom shall burn within you … [or] you shall have a stupor of thought"

Through the Lord's counsel recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3, Oliver Cowdery learned that the Lord speaks to His children's minds and hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost. In Doctrine and Covenants 9:8–9, the Lord reminded Oliver that he could recognize revelation through his feelings and thoughts. The Lord taught him that if the translation was correct, he would "feel that it is right" (D&C 9:8). The Lord also used the phrase "your bosom shall burn within you" (D&C 9:8) to describe the workings of the Spirit.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks clarified how the Spirit may communicate with us through a burning in our bosom: "What does a 'burning in the bosom' mean? Does it need to be a feeling of caloric heat, like the burning produced by combustion? If that is the meaning, I have never had a burning in the bosom. Surely, the word 'burning' in

this scripture signifies a feeling of comfort and serenity. That is the witness many receive. That is the way revelation works" ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign,* Mar. 1997, 13).

It is important to remember that the Lord's statements "your bosom shall burn" (D&C 9:8) and "you shall have a stupor of thought" (D&C 9:9) were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery specifically to guide them as they translated the Book of Mormon. When we seek for spiritual guidance, it may be unwise to anticipate that the Holy Ghost will always communicate with us in this specific manner. The scriptures remind us that the Holy Ghost can communicate with us in a variety of ways (see D&C 6:23; 8:2–3; 9:8; 11:12–13; 85:6; 128:1).

Elder Richard G. Scott explained what is meant by the "stupor of thought" described in Doctrine and Covenants 9:9: "The Lord clarifies, 'But if [what you propose] be not right you … shall have a stupor of thought.' That, for me, is an unsettling, discomforting feeling" ("Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," 10).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught:

"In our day, as in times past, many people expect that if there be revelation it will come with awe-inspiring, earth-shaking display. …

"Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the constant flow of revealed communication" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 240–41).

Doctrine and Covenants 9:8–9. What if you do not feel that you have received an answer?

When we take important questions to the Lord in prayer, we have a promise from Him that "if it is right … you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings" (D&C 9:8–9). However, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether we have received an answer.

Elder Richard G. Scott taught what we should do when we don't feel that we have received an answer from God: "What do you do when you have prepared carefully, have prayed fervently, waited a reasonable time for a response, and still do not feel an answer? You may want to express thanks when that occurs, for it is an evidence of His trust. When you are living worthily and your choice is consistent with the Savior's teachings and you need to act, proceed with trust. As you are sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit, one of two things will certainly occur at the appropriate time: either the stupor of thought will come, indicating an improper choice, or the peace or the burning in the bosom will be felt, confirming that your choice was correct. When you are living righteously and are acting with trust, God will not let you proceed too far without a warning impression if you have made the wrong decision" ("Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," 10).

President Brigham Young gave the following insight: "If I ask him to give me wisdom concerning any requirement in life, or in regard to my own course, or that of my friends, my family, my children, or those that I preside over, and get no answer from him, and then do the very best that my judgment will teach me, he is bound to own and honor that transaction, and he will do so to all intents and purposes" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 46).

Ponder what you have learned from your study of Doctrine and Covenants 6; 8–9 about receiving personal revelation. Think about what you will do so that you can better receive and recognize revelation from Heavenly Father. Consider sharing what you have learned with a family member, friend, or classmate.

CHAPTER 6

Doctrine and Covenants 7; 13; 18

Introduction and Timeline

During the work of translating the Book of Mormon in April 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had a difference of opinion about whether the Apostle John had died or whether he continued to live on the earth. The Prophet Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord with the Urim and Thummim and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 7. "The revelation is a translated version of the record made on parchment by John" (D&C 7, section heading) and teaches that the Lord granted to John his desire to live and bring souls to Jesus Christ until the Second Coming.

While translating 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon plates, Joseph and Oliver learned about the authority to baptize for the remission of sins. On May 15, 1829, they retired to the woods near Joseph Smith's farm in Harmony, Pennsylvania, and prayed about this authority. In response to their prayer, John the Baptist appeared as a resurrected personage and conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood. The words spoken by John the Baptist are contained in Doctrine and Covenants 13.

In June 1829, as the translation of the Book of Mormon neared completion at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation containing instructions about building up Christ's Church. This revelation, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 18, called Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer to preach the gospel and appointed them to search out twelve men who would serve as Apostles. The revelation also detailed many duties of those who would be called as Apostles.

April 1829

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery continued translating the golden plates.

April 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 7 was received.

May 15, 1829

John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood (see Doctrine and Covenants 13).

May–June 1829

Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek Priesthood.

June 1829

The Three Witnesses were shown the golden plates.

June 1829

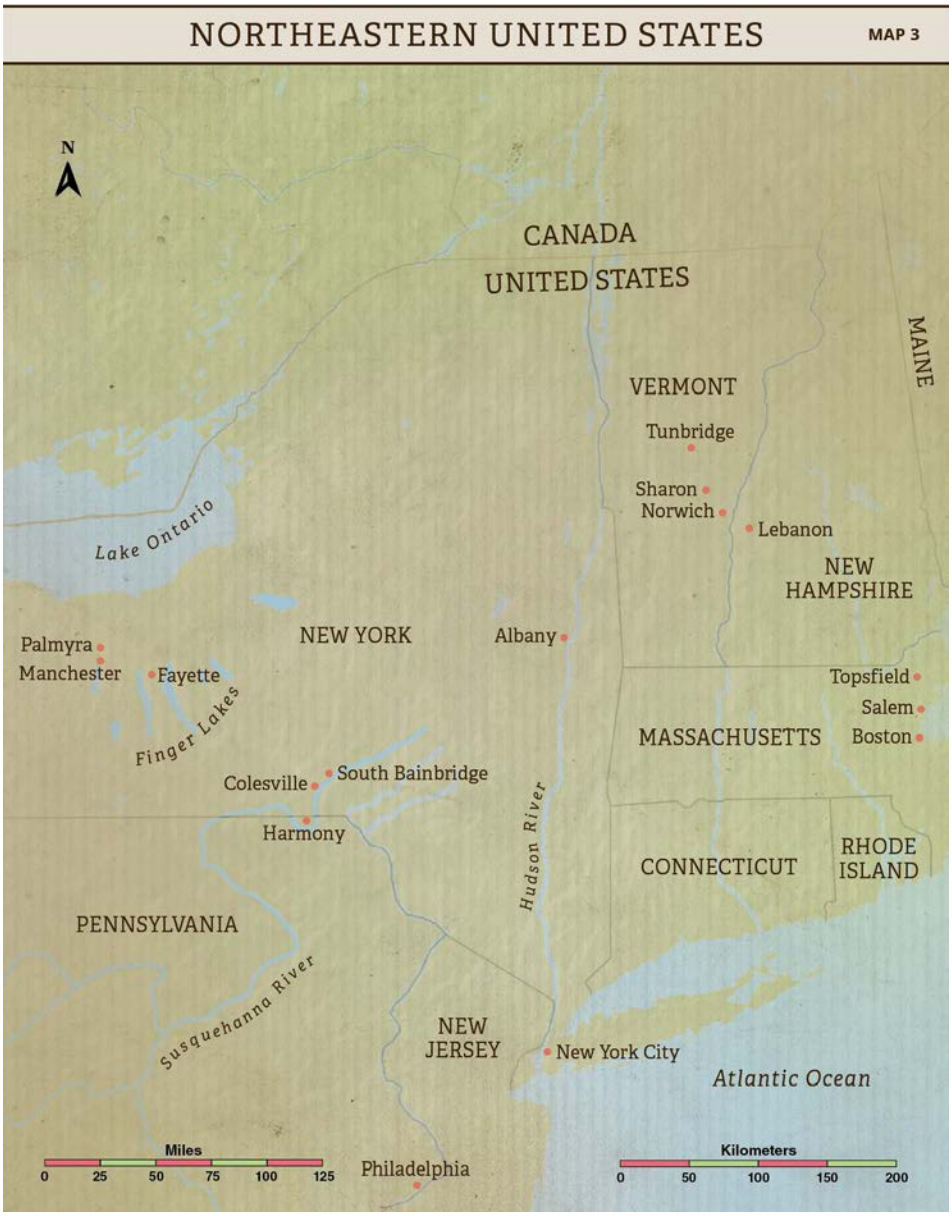
Doctrine and Covenants 18 was received.

Think about the importance of priesthood keys. What blessings have those keys unlocked in your life? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 7 and 13, look for what the Lord taught about priesthood keys and the blessings they make possible.

Doctrine and Covenants 7: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery's question of whether the Apostle John had died or whether he would continue on the earth until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ was likely based on John 21:18–23. In this passage the Lord prophesied of Peter's death, and then Peter asked the Savior what would happen to the Apostle John. The Lord responded, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John 21:23). The question about John's fate was common among Christians during Joseph Smith's time.

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery decided to settle their question by asking the Lord through the Urim and Thummim. After asking the Lord, Joseph received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 7. This revelation "is a translated version of the record made on parchment by John, and hidden up by himself" (D&C 7, section heading). We do not know whether Joseph Smith had the actual parchment in his possession. He may have seen the parchment in vision or received the translated words through the Urim and Thummim.



Doctrine and Covenants 7

John the Beloved is a translated being working to bring souls to Christ until the Second Coming

Read Doctrine and Covenants 7:1–8, looking for what the Apostles John and Peter desired from the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 7:1–3. "Thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory"

The Lord granted the Apostle John's request for power over death so that John might continue to live and bring souls unto Christ (see John 21:21–23). The Lord's blessing to John did not mean that John would never die; rather, it meant that he would not die until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27; 3 Nephi 28:7–8). In order for John to live on the earth until the Second Coming, his mortal body was changed to become a translated being. Translated beings are "persons who are changed so that they do not experience pain or death until their resurrection to immortality" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Translated Beings," scriptures.lds.org).



The reconstructed home of Joseph and Emma Smith in Harmony, Pennsylvania

Doctrine and Covenants 7:4–5. John desired to do a greater work

In response to Peter's question about the Apostle John's fate, the Savior explained that John had desired to remain upon the earth and continue his work. **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles used John's desire to illustrate the importance of preaching the gospel:

"The Apostle John asked the Lord if he, John, might remain on the earth beyond the normal span of life for no other purpose than to bring more souls unto God. In

granting that wish, the Savior said that this was 'a greater work' and a nobler 'desire' even than that of desiring to come into the presence of the Lord 'speedily' [see D&C 7].

"Like all prophets and apostles, the Prophet Joseph Smith understood the deep meaning of John's request when he said, 'After all that has been said, [our] greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel' [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 113]" ("Witnesses unto Me," *Ensign,* May 2001, 16).

Doctrine and Covenants 7:6. "He shall minister for those … who dwell on the earth"

Although we know that the Apostle John was permitted to tarry on the earth, we do not know much about his ministry as a translated being. We do know that John appeared with the resurrected Peter and John to confer the Melchizedek Priesthood on the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Also, according to John Whitmer's account of a conference of the Church in June 1831, in Kirtland, Ohio, "the Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph [Smith] in an unusual manner, and he prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been led away … , to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion" (in *History of the Church,* 1:176).

Doctrine and Covenants 7:7. "Unto you three I will give … the keys of this ministry"

The Lord promised Peter, James, and John that they would have the keys of the ministry for their dispensation until the Second Coming (see D&C 27:12–13; see also Matthew 17:1–9). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained what these keys are: "The keys of the ministry which John says … were given to Peter, James and himself, constituted the authority of Presidency of the Church in their dispensation" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:49). Peter, James, and John bestowed these same keys upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, giving them authority to preside and direct God's Church upon the earth in this last dispensation, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Doctrine and Covenants 13: Additional Historical Background

The miraculous work of translating the Book of Mormon plates progressed rapidly in April and May 1829. Oliver Cowdery described his feelings about the process: "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he [Joseph Smith] translated with the Urim and Thummim" (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note).

In May, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were translating "the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this [the American] continent" (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note). That account included 3 Nephi 9–28, in which baptism by proper authority is mentioned several

times. Joseph and Oliver desired to know more and went into the woods to ask the Lord in prayer for direction.

The Prophet recorded, "While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us" (Joseph Smith—History 1:68).

The angelic messenger was John the Baptist, now a glorified, resurrected being, and he instructed Joseph and Oliver to baptize each other. Accordingly, they went to the nearby Susquehanna River, where Joseph baptized Oliver, and then Oliver baptized Joseph. After being baptized, they ordained each other to the Aaronic Priesthood, as instructed by John the Baptist. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:70–72.)

John the Baptist also told Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood. He explained that in due time Joseph and Oliver would also receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:72.) Historical evidence suggests that Peter, James, and John appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery before June 1, 1829, and conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood upon them (see Larry C. Porter, "The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods," *Ensign,* Dec. 1996, 33).



The Aaronic Priesthood was restored by John the Baptist somewhere near Joseph Smith's home in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

Doctrine and Covenants 13

John the Baptist confers the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

Read Doctrine and Covenants 13, looking for the keys associated with the Aaronic Priesthood, which John the Baptist conferred upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

Doctrine and Covenants 13:1. An explanation of priesthood keys

The restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods occurred when heavenly messengers bestowed authority and keys upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (see D&C 13:1; 110:11–16; 128:20–21). **President Joseph F. Smith** (1838–1918) explained the difference between priesthood authority and priesthood keys:

"The Priesthood in general is the authority given to man to act for God. Every man ordained to any degree of the Priesthood has this authority delegated to him.

"But it is necessary that every act performed under this authority shall be done at the proper time and place, in the proper way, and after the proper order. The power of directing these labors constitutes the *keys* of the Priesthood" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 141)

Doctrine and Covenants 13:1. "The keys of the ministering of angels"

The Doctrine and Covenants illustrates that angels are the Lord's servants who deliver messages and minister to God's children on earth (see D&C 7:5–6; 20:5–10; 29:42; 43:25; 84:42; 103:19–20; 109:22). We learn from the Book of Mormon that "it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain" (Moroni 7:37). Angels can minister to men, women, and children (see Alma 32:23).

John the Baptist explained to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery that the Aaronic Priesthood "holds the keys of the ministering of angels" (D&C 13:1). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered the following insight:



***Upon You My Fellow Servants,* by Linda Curley Christensen. On May 15, 1829, the Aaronic Priesthood was restored by John the Baptist to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.**

"What does it mean that the Aaronic Priesthood holds 'the key of the ministering of angels' and of the 'gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins' [D&C 84:26–27]? The meaning is found in the ordinance of baptism and in the sacrament. Baptism is for the remission of sins, and the sacrament is a renewal of the covenants and blessings of baptism. Both should be preceded by repentance. When we keep the covenants made in these ordinances, we are promised that we will always have His Spirit to be with us. The ministering of angels is one of the manifestations of that Spirit. …

"… As a young holder of the Aaronic Priesthood, I did not think I would see an angel, and I wondered what such appearances had to do with the Aaronic Priesthood.

"But the ministering of angels can also be unseen. Angelic messages can be delivered by a voice or merely by thoughts or feelings communicated to the mind. …

"… Most angelic communications are felt or heard rather than seen. …

"In general, the blessings of spiritual companionship and communication are only available to those who are clean. As explained earlier, through the Aaronic Priesthood ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, we are cleansed of our sins and promised that if we keep our covenants we will always have His Spirit to be with us. I believe that promise not only refers to the Holy Ghost but also to the ministering of angels, for 'angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ' (2 Ne. 32:3). So it is that those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood open the door for all Church members who worthily partake of the sacrament to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord and the ministering of angels" ("The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 37–39).

What role do the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood play in helping us repent and receive a remission of sins? How does the Aaronic Priesthood help Church members receive the ministering of angels?

Doctrine and Covenants 13:1. The keys of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained what it means to hold the keys of the gospel of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins:

"Not one of [us] has lived without sin since [our] baptism. Without some provision for further cleansing after our baptism, each of us is lost to things spiritual. …

"We are commanded to repent of our sins and to come to the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and partake of the sacrament in compliance with its covenants. When we renew our baptismal covenants in this way, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. In this way we are made clean and can always have His Spirit to be with us. …

"We cannot overstate the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood in this. All of these vital steps pertaining to the remission of sins are performed through the saving

ordinance of baptism and the renewing ordinance of the sacrament. Both of these ordinances are officiated by holders of the Aaronic Priesthood under the direction of the bishopric, who exercise the keys of the gospel of repentance and of baptism and the remission of sins" ("The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament," 38).

In what ways has the Aaronic Priesthood helped you receive the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 13:1. What is meant by the sons of Levi offering "an offering unto the Lord in righteousness"?

In ancient times, God commanded His people to offer up animal sacrifices as part of their worship. The purpose of shedding the blood of an animal was to help people look forward in faith to the time when the blood of Jesus Christ would be shed to atone for their sins. From Moses's time to the death of Jesus Christ, the law of Moses dictated that animal sacrifices and burnt offerings be performed by priests officiating at the tabernacle or temple. These priests were descendants of Levi who were designated by the Lord to serve in the sanctuary (see Numbers 18:20–21). Thus the term "sons of Levi" refers to holders of the priesthood.

The scriptures describe a few important ways that Church members can make "an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" (D&C 13:1). The Book of Mormon teaches us to "come unto Christ … and offer [our] whole souls as an offering unto him" (Omni 1:26). Isaiah prophesied that in the last days, those who have been gathered by the Lord "shall bring all [their] brethren for an offering unto the Lord" (Isaiah 66:20), meaning those who are converted are to be brought to the temple. Additionally, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave the inspired instruction that Latter-day Saints should "offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and … present in his holy temple … a book containing the records of our dead" (D&C 128:24).

In regards to animal sacrifice, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) gave the following explanation:

"It is generally supposed that sacrifice was entirely done away when the Great Sacrifice [*i.e.,* the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus] was offered up, and that there will be no necessity for the ordinance of sacrifice in future: but those who assert this are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges and authority of the priesthood, or with the Prophets.

"The offering of sacrifice has ever been connected and forms a part of the duties of the Priesthood. It began with the Priesthood, and will be continued until after the coming of Christ, from generation to generation. …

"These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings. This ever did and ever will exist when the powers of the [Melchizedek] Priesthood are sufficiently manifest; else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the holy Prophets be brought to pass? It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will

be established again with all its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the Prophets; but those things which existed prior to Moses' day, namely, sacrifice, will be continued" (in *History of the Church,* 4:211–12).

President Joseph Fielding Smith provided further clarification about animal sacrifice in the last days: "The sacrifice of animals will be done to complete the restoration when the temple spoken of is built; at the beginning of the millennium, or in the restoration, blood sacrifices will be performed long enough to complete the fulness of the restoration in this dispensation. Afterwards sacrifice will be of some other character" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 3:94).

Doctrine and Covenants 18: Additional Historical Background

The Lord had revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, possibly as early as 1828, that His Church would be reestablished once again on the earth (see D&C 10:53–55). In June 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery continued the translation of the Book of Mormon in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York. During this time, Joseph and Oliver also sought to know how to exercise the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood that had been recently conferred upon them by heavenly messengers. While praying in a room of the Whitmer home, the word of the Lord came to them and directed them to exercise the priesthood to ordain elders, administer the sacrament, and bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. However, the Lord instructed them to wait to perform these ordinances until a group of believers could be assembled. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 326, 328.)

Meanwhile, as they awaited the Lord's command to organize the Church, the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery were nearing completion of the translation of the Book of Mormon, which included translating the books of 3 Nephi and Moroni. Both of these books contain instructions on priesthood ordinances and Church procedure, which likely inspired and guided them as they contemplated the time when the Lord would direct them to organize His Church anew upon the earth.

It was in the context of these events that the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 18. This revelation was addressed to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, giving direction about building up the Church. It also contains instructions to those who would be called as the Twelve Apostles.



***The Voice of Peter, James, and John,* by Linda Curley Christensen. The Melchizedek Priesthood was restored by Peter, James, and John to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.**

Doctrine and Covenants 18:1–25

The Lord gives instructions for building up His Church and calls Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer to preach repentance

Have you thought about how the Lord feels about you and values you? Read Doctrine and Covenants 18:1–25, looking for what the Lord taught Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer about the worth of a soul.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:1–5. "Rely upon the things which are written"

In June 1829, as the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were concluding the translation of the Book of Mormon, the Lord revealed direction concerning how to build up the Church in anticipation of the time when the Church would be formally organized (see D&C 18, section heading). To guide Oliver in this effort, the Lord counseled him to rely upon the things that were written in the Book of Mormon. Before the Church was organized, Oliver used the Book of Mormon to compile a list of essential ordinances and covenants into a document called "Articles of the Church of Christ." This document may have served to guide believers in the intervening months before the Church was formally organized on April 6, 1830. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 368–69.)

Doctrine and Covenants 18:9–16. Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer are called with the same calling as Paul

Soon after Moroni appeared to the Three Witnesses, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, two of those witnesses, were commanded to "cry repentance unto this

people" (D&C 18:14). The Lord said that they were "called even with that same calling with which [the Apostle Paul] was called" (D&C 18:9). As recorded in Acts 26:15–20, Paul explained to King Agrippa that the Lord had called him to be "a minister and a witness" of the things that he had seen (Acts 26:16). Paul said his calling was to preach "unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea" (Acts 26:20) as well as among the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light" (Acts 20:18). Following his conversion, Paul labored the remainder of his life to help others repent and become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ.



The restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood occurred in the wilderness between Harmony, Pennsylvania, and Colesville, New York (photograph ca. 1907).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Doctrine and Covenants 18:10. "The worth of souls is great in the sight of God"

Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer were reminded that preaching the gospel was essential because the souls of God's children are valuable (see D&C 18:10). **President Thomas S. Monson** gave the following account about the worth of a soul:

"In March of 1967, early in my service as a member of the Council of the Twelve, I was attending a conference of the Monument Park West Stake in Salt Lake City. My companion for the conference was a member of the General Church Welfare Committee, Paul C. Child. …

"When it was his opportunity to participate, President Child took in hand the Doctrine and Covenants and left the pulpit to stand among the priesthood brethren

to whom he was directing his message. He turned to section 18 and began to read [verses 10 and 15]. …

"President Child then raised his eyes from the scriptures and asked the brethren: 'What is the worth of a human soul?' He avoided calling on a bishop, a stake president, or a high councilor for a response. Instead, he selected the president of an elders quorum—a brother who had been a bit drowsy and had missed the significance of the question.

"The startled man responded, 'Brother Child, could you please repeat the question?'

"The question was repeated: 'What is the worth of a human soul?'

"… I prayed fervently for that quorum president. He remained silent for what seemed like an eternity and then declared, 'Brother Child, the worth of a human soul is its capacity to become as God.'

"All present pondered that reply. Brother Child returned to the stand, leaned over to me, and said, 'A profound reply; a profound reply!' He proceeded with his message, but I continued to reflect on that inspired response" ("My Brother's Keeper," *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 43).

President Monson later declared: "We have the responsibility to see individuals not as they are but rather as they can become. I would plead with you to think of them in this way" ("See Others as They May Become," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2012, 70).

Why is it important for you to remember how great your worth is to God? Why is it important to remember the worth of those around you?

Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16. What does it mean to cry repentance?

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that "crying repentance simply means helping people return to God" ("Preparing for Your Spiritual Destiny" [Brigham Young University fireside address, Jan. 10, 2010], 7, speeches.byu.edu).

When have you helped someone repent and come unto Christ? What did you do? How did you feel? What can you do in your life now to help someone repent and come unto Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 18:20. "Contend against … the church of the devil"

Doctrine and Covenants 18:20 should not be viewed as a command to quarrel or debate with others about the gospel. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught, "When we are commanded to 'contend against no church save it be the church of the devil,' we must understand that this is instruction to us to contend against all evil, that which is opposed to righteousness and truth" (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 1:83). It is not a call to oppose other churches or their members.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:21–25. All must take upon themselves the name of Christ

Through repentance, baptism, and enduring to the end, we demonstrate our desire to take Christ's name upon us. **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency explained what that means: "We promise to take His name upon us. That means we must see ourselves as His. We will put Him first in our lives. We will want what He wants rather than what we want or what the world teaches us to want" ("That We May Be One," *Ensign,* May 1998, 67).

For more information about taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:26–47

The Lord reveals the calling and mission of the Twelve Apostles

Read Doctrine and Covenants 18:26–47, looking for what the Lord said about the Twelve Apostles.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:27–32. "The Twelve shall … take upon them my name with full purpose of heart"

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was organized in February 1835. However, six years earlier, in June 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 18. This revelation contains instructions about the mission of the Twelve in anticipation of their call. It explains that the Twelve would need to declare the gospel unto Gentiles and Jews, to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, to provide essential ordinances, and to organize the work as directed by the Holy Ghost.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what it means for Apostles to take upon them the name of Christ: "Many scriptures that refer to 'the name of Jesus Christ' are obviously references to the authority of the Savior. This was surely the meaning conveyed when the seventy reported to Jesus that 'even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.' (Luke 10:17.) The Doctrine and Covenants employs this same meaning when it describes the Twelve Apostles of this dispensation as 'they who shall desire to take upon them my name with full purpose of heart.' (D&C 18:27.) The Twelve are later designated as 'special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world,' and as those who 'officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church.' (D&C 107:23, 33.)" ("Taking upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ," *Ensign,* May 1985, 81).

Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36. "You have heard my voice"

The Lord told the future Apostles that the words contained in Doctrine and Covenants 18 were not given by man but were given through His voice. **Elder Kim B. Clark** of the Seventy explained what we must do in order to hear the voice of the Lord: "If we will look to Christ and open our eyes and our ears, the Holy Ghost will bless us to see the Lord Jesus Christ working in our lives, strengthening our faith in Him with assurance and evidence. We increasingly will see all of our

brothers and sisters the way God sees them, with love and compassion. We will hear the Savior's voice in the scriptures, in the whisperings of the Spirit, and in the words of the living prophets" ("Eyes to See and Ears to Hear," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 125).



We can hear the Savior's voice speaking to us through the scriptures.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:37. "You shall search out the Twelve"

At the time that the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 18 was given, Martin Harris was not addressed in the Lord's instructions. However, Martin later joined with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer in selecting the Twelve Apostles. The Three Witnesses, who had received a special witness of the truthfulness of the Restoration, fulfilled their assignment to "search out the Twelve" (D&C 18:37), who were then ordained as Apostles. When the Apostles were called in February 1835, Oliver Cowdery stated that from the time this revelation was received in 1829, "our minds have been on a constant stretch to find who these Twelve were" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 70).

Doctrine and Covenants 18:44. "By your hands I will work a marvelous work"

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency taught how the Lord does His work through us:

"As we emulate [the Savior's] perfect example, our hands can become His hands; our eyes, His eyes; our heart, His heart. …

"… Let our hearts and hands be stretched out in compassion toward others, for everyone is walking his or her own difficult path. As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Master, we are called to support and heal rather than condemn. …

"… Let us commit to become His hands, that others through us may feel His loving embrace" ("You Are My Hands," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2010, 68–69, 75).

Ponder what you have learned about what the Lord sees as the worth of your soul and the souls of those around you. Set a goal to help another person come unto Christ by helping that person understand his or her worth. Consider sharing your plan with a family member or friend.

CHAPTER 7

Doctrine and Covenants 4; 11–12; 14–16

Introduction

In early 1829, Joseph Smith Sr. visited his son Joseph in Harmony, Pennsylvania. While there, Joseph Smith Sr. desired to know what he could do to assist in the Lord's work. The Prophet inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 4. In this revelation, the Lord identified attributes that qualify a person to assist in His work.

In May 1829, the Prophet's older brother Hyrum traveled to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to visit Joseph. At Hyrum's request, the Prophet asked the Lord to reveal His will concerning his brother. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 11, the Lord told Hyrum what he must do to help establish Zion.

Joseph Knight Sr. visited the Prophet Joseph Smith in May 1829. He expressed his desire to serve and assist in God's work. Doctrine and Covenants 12 contains the Lord's counsel to him.

After Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery moved to the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York, and resumed the Book of Mormon translation, the Prophet received revelations for three of Peter Whitmer Sr.'s sons: David, John, and Peter Whitmer Jr. In these revelations, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 14–16, the Lord emphasized the importance of declaring repentance in order to bring souls unto Him.

January 1829

Joseph Smith Sr. visited Joseph and Emma Smith in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

February 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 4 was received.

May 1829

Joseph and Emma Smith received visits from Hyrum Smith and Joseph Knight Sr.

May 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 11–12 were received.

About June 1, 1829

Joseph and Oliver moved to Fayette, New York, to continue the translation of the Book of Mormon.

June 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 14–16 were received.

Late June 1829

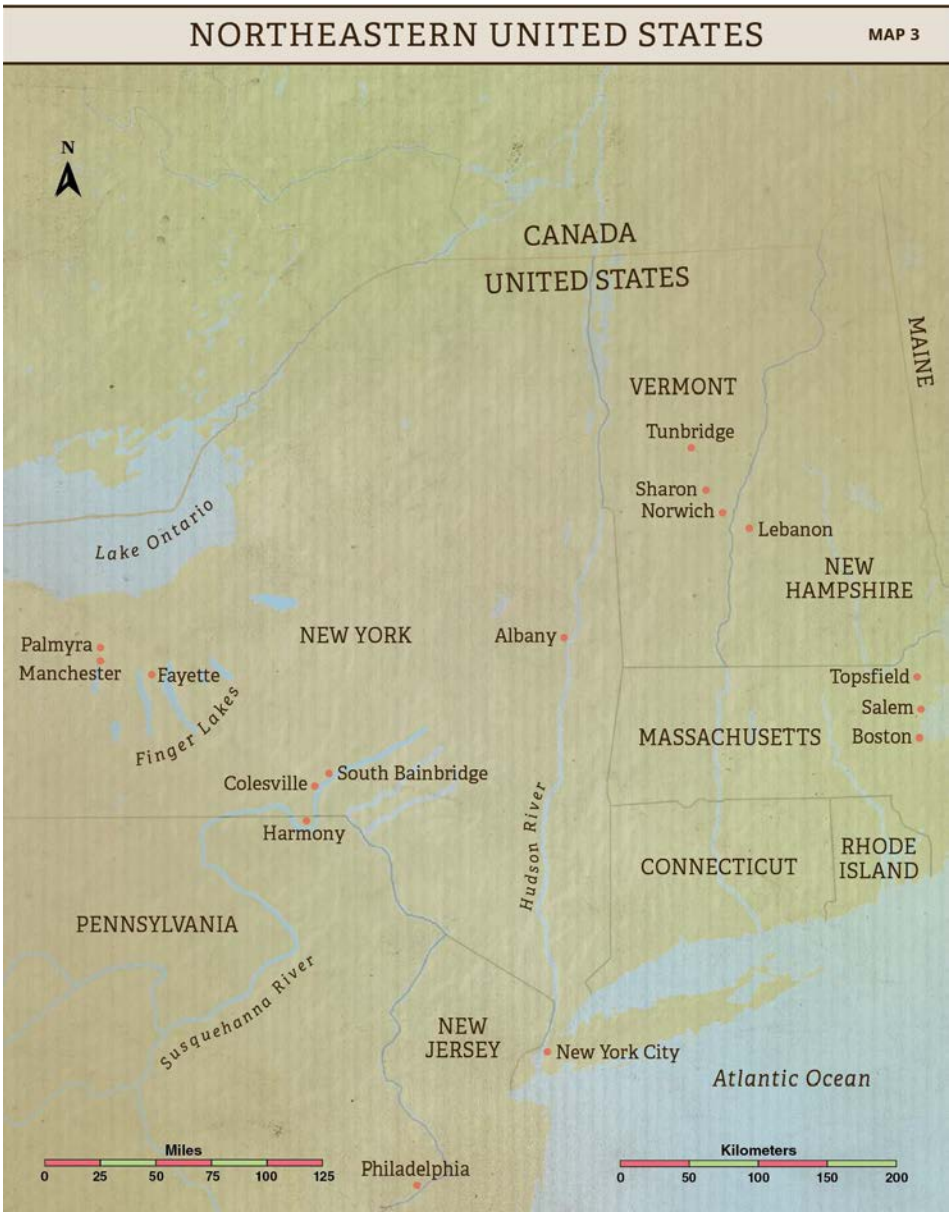
The Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses viewed the golden plates.

Have you ever wondered what God would have you do to assist in the work of salvation? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 4; 11–12; 14–16, look for truths that will help you prepare to serve the Lord and to help others come unto Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 4: Additional Historical Background

Joseph Smith Sr. was among the first to hear the accounts of the heavenly manifestations that had been given to his son Joseph. He became a steadfast believer in his son and a defender of Joseph's divinely appointed mission. In January 1829, Joseph Smith Sr. and his son Samuel traveled from their home near Palmyra, New York, to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to visit Joseph Smith Jr. and his wife, Emma. During this visit, Joseph Smith Sr. asked for a revelation concerning his possible role in God's work. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 5.) The

revelation that was given in response described the essential attributes a person must develop in order to be called to God's work. After returning to his home, Joseph Smith Sr. and his wife, Lucy, invited the school teacher Oliver Cowdery to board with them. When Oliver inquired about Joseph Smith Jr. and the rumors he'd heard about a "gold Bible," Joseph Smith Sr. was initially reluctant to provide details, knowing that many others in the community had ridiculed his son. However, he finally shared some of the facts regarding the Book of Mormon plates and Joseph's assignment to translate them. The call to the work that Joseph Smith Sr. received in Doctrine and Covenants 4 may have given him the courage to speak more openly with Oliver Cowdery about the plates. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 11, 13.)



Doctrine and Covenants 4

The Lord reveals to Joseph Smith Sr. what qualifies a person to assist in His work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 4, looking for the attributes that qualify a person to do the Lord's work.

Doctrine and Covenants 4:1. "A marvelous work is about to come forth"

Anciently, the Lord prophesied that there would be an apostasy in the last days. Therefore, He would "proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder" (Isaiah 29:14).

The wording in Doctrine and Covenants 4:1 indicates that at the time this revelation was given, Isaiah's prophecy had not yet been fulfilled. **President David O. McKay** (1873–1970) observed the following about this verse: "When this revelation was given to the Prophet Joseph, he was only 23 years of age. The Book of Mormon was not yet published; no man had been ordained to the priesthood. The Church was not organized; yet the statement was made and written without qualification that 'a marvelous work [was] about to come forth among the children of men'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 86). Several additional revelations were given before the organization of the Church that contain similar language as that found in Doctrine and Covenants 4:1 (see D&C 6:1; 11:1; 12:1; 14:1).

In what ways have you seen the restored gospel of Jesus Christ become "a marvelous work" in these latter days?



Joseph Smith Sr., the Prophet's father, was one of the first to learn about and accept the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 4:2–3. "Serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength"

While the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 4 was originally given to Joseph Smith Sr., it can be applied to any individual who desires to participate in God's work. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) wrote: "This revelation is very short, only seven verses, but it contains sufficient counsel and instruction for a lifetime of study. … Perhaps there is no other revelation in all our scriptures that embodies greater instruction pertaining to the manner of qualification of members of the Church for the service of God, and in such condensed form than this revelation. It is as broad, as high and as deep as eternity" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:35).

Those who desire to serve God are required to give great personal effort, as explained by **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"We learn from this command [in D&C 4:2] that it is not enough to serve God with all of our *might and strength.* He who looks into our hearts and knows our minds demands more than this. In order to stand blameless before God at the last day, we must also serve him with all our *heart and mind.*

"Service with all of our heart and mind is a high challenge for all of us. Such service must be free of selfish ambition. It must be motivated only by the pure love of Christ" ("Why Do We Serve?" *Ensign,* Nov. 1984, 15).

According to Doctrine and Covenants 4:2, what blessing does God promise to those who serve Him with all their heart, might, mind, and strength?

Doctrine and Covenants 4:4. "The field is white already to harvest"

During His mortal ministry, the Lord spoke to His disciples and compared people who were prepared to receive the gospel to grain in the field ready to be harvested: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). Grains such as wheat or barley change color as they grow. When the grain is young it is green, but as it matures it grows pale. When the grain is ready for harvesting, it can be described as "white." This metaphor was used by the Lord in several latter-day revelations to indicate that people were prepared to be taught the gospel and gathered to the Lord and His Church (see D&C 6:3; 11:3; 12:3; 14:3; 31:4; 33:3).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reminded Church leaders and members that the field is still ready to be harvested:

"I invite you to become a vast army with enthusiasm for this work and a great overarching desire to assist the missionaries in the tremendous responsibility they have to carry the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. 'The field is white [and] ready to harvest' (D&C 4:4). The Lord has repeatedly declared this. Shall we not take Him at His word?

"Before the Church was organized, there was missionary work. It has continued ever since, notwithstanding the difficulties of many of the seasons through which our people have passed. Let us, every one, resolve within ourselves to arise to a

new opportunity, a new sense of responsibility, a new shouldering of obligation to assist our Father in Heaven in His glorious work of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters throughout the earth" ("Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign,* May 1999, 110).

Doctrine and Covenants 4:4. "He that thrusteth in his sickle … bringeth salvation to his soul"

A sickle is a large curved knife used to harvest grain. A reaper uses a sickle by either drawing it toward him or her to catch and cut the crop or by swinging it against the base of the crop. Using this tool to harvest grain is a very labor intensive and slow process. This metaphor describes the diligent work required to bring people to Jesus Christ.



***Thrust in Your Sickle,* by Greg Newbold. A sickle is a farming tool with a curved blade used for cutting grain.**

Elder Kevin R. Duncan of the Seventy provided additional insight about how the metaphor of a sickle can apply to missionary work:

"The scriptures teach us to thrust in our sickle with all our might (see D&C 4:4). I used a sickle constantly on our farm. For me, I learned it wasn't enough to only swing a sickle hard. The sickle also had to be sharp in order to cut. If it was dull, I'd spend a lot of effort swinging it without much success.

"On the farm, we kept a file on hand to sharpen our sickle every day. In missionary work and indeed in all areas of life, we need to keep our spiritual sickles sharp so that we can achieve our own best potential. Reading scriptures daily, praying, and keeping all other commandments help us stay sharp and useful" ("Abandoned Seeds in Rocky Places," *New Era,* July 2014, 18).

In Doctrine and Covenants 4:4 the Lord promised that through our missionary labors, we bring salvation to our own souls. **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency explained how this can happen: "When you give your heart to inviting people to come unto Christ, your heart will be changed. … By helping others come unto Him, you will find that you have come unto Him yourself" ("Come unto Christ," *Ensign,* Mar. 2008, 52).

Doctrine and Covenants 4:5–6. "Faith, hope, charity and love … qualify him for the work"

The Lord does not require a person to be physically gifted or intellectually brilliant to help with His work. Rather, He asks that the person strive to develop the Christlike attributes listed in Doctrine and Covenants 4:5–6. **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency taught what happens as we develop these attributes: "If it is your great desire to cultivate Christlike attributes of 'faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility,

[and service]' [D&C 4:6], Heavenly Father will make you an instrument in His hands unto the salvation of many souls" ("Lord, Is It I?" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 58).

Doctrine and Covenants 4:7. "Ask, and ye shall receive"

Joseph Smith Sr. learned from the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 4 that the Lord is willing to provide spiritual guidance and help to those who are called to the work. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified the importance of acquiring Christlike attributes to help us obtain answers to our prayers:

"For each of you to receive revelation unique to your own needs and responsibilities, certain guidelines prevail. The Lord asks you to develop 'faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God.' Then with your firm 'faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence,' you may *ask,* and you will receive; you may *knock,* and it will be opened unto you. [D&C 4:5–6; emphasis added; see also verse 7.] …

"Every Latter–day Saint may merit personal revelation" ("Ask, Seek, Knock," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 83–84).

Select one of the attributes listed in Doctrine and Covenants 4:5–6. Make a plan regarding what you will do to further develop that attribute.

Doctrine and Covenants 11: Additional Historical Background

Joseph Smith's older brother Hyrum demonstrated his ongoing belief in Joseph's work when he visited the Prophet in May 1829 in Harmony, Pennsylvania. As he learned of the progress of the Book of Mormon translation and of the restoration of the priesthood, he wanted to know what the Lord would have him do to assist in the work. Joseph used the Urim and Thummim to obtain the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 11. Joseph baptized Hyrum a few weeks later, in June 1829, and Hyrum was privileged to become one of the Eight Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He also became one of the six original members of the restored Church of Jesus Christ when it was organized on April 6, 1830.

Doctrine and Covenants 11

The Lord reveals to Hyrum Smith what he must do to assist in the work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 11, looking for what Hyrum Smith was instructed to do before going out to preach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 11:2. God's word is "sharper than a two-edged sword"

The power of the word of God has been described as "sharper than a two-edged sword" in several passages in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 6:2; 11:2; 12:2; 14:2; 33:1). A weapon having two sharpened edges would be more effective at cutting than a sword with only one sharpened edge. God's word is described as being even sharper than such a weapon. Like "the still, small voice, which … pierceth all things" (D&C 85:6), the word of God can quickly enter the inner depths of a person's soul.

Elder Orson Pratt (1811–1831) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles further explained the imagery of the sword and how it illustrates the power of the word of God: "A message of simple truth, when sent from God—when published by divine authority, through divinely inspired men, penetrates the mind like a sharp two-edged sword, and cuts asunder the deeply-rooted prejudices, the iron-bound sinews of ancient error and tradition, made sacred by age and rendered popular by human wisdom. It severs with undeviating exactness between truth and falsehood—between the doctrine of Christ and the doctrines of men; it levels with the most perfect ease every argument that human learning may array against it. Opinions, creeds invented by uninspired men, and doctrines originated in schools of divinity, all vanish like the morning dew—all sink into insignificance when compared with a message direct from heaven" ("Divine Authority—or Was Joseph Smith Sent of God?" *Orson Pratt's Works on the Doctrines of the Gospel* [1945], 1:1).

Doctrine and Covenants 11:6–8. "You shall be the means of doing much good in this generation"

The Lord promised Hyrum Smith that if he kept the commandments, he would be the means of doing much good in his lifetime. **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pointed out some of Hyrum Smith's significant accomplishments:

"[Hyrum] assisted and served his brother, Joseph the Prophet, throughout the long and arduous process of the Restoration. Ultimately, he joined Joseph and other martyrs of past gospel dispensations. His blood was shed as his final testimony to the world. …

"Hyrum gave unfailing service to the Church. In 1829 he was among a handful of individuals who were allowed to view the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and for the rest of his life he testified to the divine nature of the Book of Mormon as one of the Eight Witnesses who 'had seen the plates with his eyes and handled them with his hands' [quoted in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* [1981], 158–59]. … At age thirty, he was the oldest of the six men chosen in 1830 to formally organize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter–day Saints. … As chairman of the temple committee, Hyrum rallied the Church to perform the seemingly impossible task of building the Kirtland Temple when most Church members literally had nothing to give to the cause. A few years later he repeated this service with the building of the Nauvoo Temple.

"Hyrum served in the Ohio bishopric, on the first high council, as Patriarch, counselor in the First Presidency, and finally as one of only two men ever to hold the office of Assistant President of the Church. …

"Clearly, Hyrum Smith was one of the firm pillars of the Restoration. But sadly, many Church members know little about him except that he was martyred with his brother in Carthage Jail. That is significant, but he did far more. Indeed, Joseph Smith himself once suggested that his followers would do well to pattern their lives after Hyrum's [see *History of the Church,* 5:108]" ("Hyrum Smith: 'Firm as the Pillars of Heaven,'" *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 6–7).

What are some things you can do to bring about "much good" in your life at this time?

Doctrine and Covenants 11:9. "Say nothing but repentance unto this generation"

The Lord's command to "say nothing but repentance unto this generation" (D&C 11:9) means to preach the reality of Jesus Christ and His Atonement and the salvation available to those who repent and are obedient to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. To "say nothing but repentance" does not mean we should not teach other doctrines and principles of the gospel. Rather, it means we confine our teaching to the gospel, which is the gospel of repentance and salvation through the mercy, grace, and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.



The Susquehanna River near the home of Joseph and Emma Smith in Harmony, Pennsylvania

Doctrine and Covenants 11:12–14. "Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good"

During the months before the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 11 was received, the Lord had instructed Oliver Cowdery concerning how to seek and recognize inspiration through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 6; 8–9). In this revelation the Lord added to that understanding by revealing additional insight about how to recognize the influence and direction of the Spirit. The Lord counseled Hyrum Smith to trust the Spirit and taught him that the Spirit "leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously" (D&C 11:12).

The Lord also built on His earlier instruction that the Spirit would reveal truth to our minds and our hearts (see D&C 8:2). In this revelation to Hyrum, the Lord explained that the Spirit "shall enlighten your mind" and "fill your soul with joy" (D&C 11:13). When the Spirit enlightens our minds, we see and understand truth more clearly (see D&C 76:12). The Lord taught Hyrum that this increased understanding is a means by which the Spirit would help him "know, all things whatsoever you desire of me" (D&C 11:14).

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why we should put our trust in the Spirit as we face challenges and seek direction in our lives: "Father in Heaven knew that you would face challenges and be required to make some decisions that would be beyond your own ability to decide correctly. In His plan of happiness, He included a provision for you to receive help with such challenges and decisions during your mortal life. That assistance will come to you through the Holy Ghost as spiritual guidance. It is a power, beyond your own capability, that a loving Heavenly Father wants you to use consistently for your peace and happiness" ("To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 6).

Think about times when you may have felt similar manifestations of the Spirit as described in Doctrine and Covenants 11:10–14. What could you do to better put your trust in the Spirit of the Lord?

Doctrine and Covenants 11:15–21. Wait … until you shall have my word, my rock, my church, and my gospel"

The Lord reminded Hyrum Smith that he was not yet called to preach the gospel (see D&C 11:15). Before that call was to come, the Lord taught Hyrum what he must do to be able to teach His gospel with power and with the Spirit. In May 1829 when this revelation was given, Hyrum had not yet been baptized, the Church was not organized, and he had not had the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred upon him. The Lord commanded him to wait to preach until he had obtained a greater understanding of the gospel and knew of a surety the Lord's doctrine. Hyrum was promised that in time, if he kept the commandments and appealed to the Spirit, He would have the Spirit and the power to help others come to a knowledge of the truth.

Doctrine and Covenants 11:20. "This is your work, to keep my commandments"

The Lord instructed Hyrum Smith four times in Doctrine and Covenants 11 to keep His commandments (see D&C 11:6, 9, 18, 20). **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught how the Lord's words to Hyrum relate to each of us:

"One of the most well-known and frequently cited passages of scripture is found in Moses 1:39. This verse clearly and concisely describes the work of the Eternal Father: 'For behold, this is *my work* and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (emphasis added).

"A companion scripture found in the Doctrine and Covenants describes with equal clarity and conciseness our primary work as the sons and daughters of the Eternal Father. Interestingly, this verse does not seem to be as well known and is not quoted with great frequency. "Behold, this is *your work,* to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind and strength" (D&C 11:20; emphasis added).

"Thus, the Father's work is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children. Our work is to keep His commandments with all of our might, mind, and strength" ("The Tender Mercies of the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2005, 101–2).

Doctrine and Covenants 11:21–22. "First seek to obtain my word"

The Lord did not ask Hyrum Smith to begin preaching the gospel. Rather, He commanded Hyrum to study the Bible and also the Book of Mormon when the translation was completed (see D&C 11:22). Then, the Lord said, Hyrum could go forward declaring His word with the promise of help from the Spirit. **President Henry B. Eyring** explained how a study of the scriptures will prepare a person to declare the gospel with God's power:

"The Holy Ghost will guide what we say if we study and ponder the scriptures every day. The words of the scriptures invite the Holy Spirit. The Lord said it this way: 'Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men' (D&C 11:21). With daily study of the scriptures, we can count on this blessing even in casual conversations or in a class when we may be asked by a teacher to respond to a question. We will experience the power the Lord promised: 'Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man' (D&C 84:85).

"We treasure the word of God not only by reading the words of the scriptures but by studying them. We may be nourished more by pondering a few words, allowing the Holy Ghost to make them treasures to us, than to pass quickly and superficially over whole chapters of scripture" ("Feed My Lambs," *Ensign,* Nov. 1997, 83–84).

What are some ways that you could demonstrate to the Lord that you sincerely desire to have the word of God in your life? When has God's word helped give you the courage and ability to share the gospel with others?

Doctrine and Covenants 12: Additional Historical Background

Joseph Knight Sr. and his family became acquainted with Joseph Smith in the latter part of 1826 when Joseph Knight hired Joseph and others to work at his farm and mill in Colesville, New York, which is about 115 miles southeast of Palmyra. While Joseph boarded with the Knight family, he told them that a heavenly personage had appeared to him and told him where an ancient record was buried. One of the sons, Newel Knight, wrote that the family was "very deeply impressed with the truthfulness of his statements concerning the Plates of the Book of Mormon which had been shown him by an Angel of the Lord" (quoted in William G. Hartley, "The Knight Family: Ever Faithful to the Prophet," *Ensign,* Jan. 1989, 43).

Later, while the Prophet Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon plates, Joseph Knight assisted him on a few occasions by giving provisions and a little money. It may have been during one of Joseph Knight's visits to bring supplies to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in Harmony, Pennsylvania, that the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 12 was received, probably in late May 1829.



The interior of the Joseph Knight Sr. home in Colesville (Ninevah), New York

Doctrine and Covenants 12

Joseph Knight Sr. is taught what is required to assist in the Lord's work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 12, looking for the similarities in the instruction given to Joseph Knight Sr. and the counsel given to others, such as Joseph Smith Sr. (see D&C 4), Oliver Cowdery

(see D&C 6), and Hyrum Smith (see D&C 11). Consider why the messages given to these individuals were so similar.

Doctrine and Covenants 12:1–9. Instructions for those who are called to assist in God's work

The repetition of instructions found in Doctrine and Covenants 12 and other sections of the Doctrine and Covenants illustrates that the principles governing the work of salvation apply to all who seek to assist in the work (see D&C 4; 6; 11; 12; 14).

Doctrine and Covenants 12:8. "No one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love"

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 12, the Lord told Joseph Knight Sr. that it is essential to obtain Christlike attributes in order to assist in His work. **President Russell M. Nelson** described the process by which a person can obtain these attributes: "The attributes by which we shall be judged one day are all spiritual. These include love, virtue, integrity, compassion, and service to others. Your spirit, coupled with and housed in your body, is able to develop and manifest these attributes in ways that are vital to your eternal progression. Spiritual progress is attained through the steps of faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end, including the endowment and sealing ordinances of the holy temple" ("Thanks Be to God," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 79).

Doctrine and Covenants 14–16: Additional Historical Background

Shortly after his arrival in Harmony, Pennsylvania, Oliver Cowdery sent a letter to his friend David Whitmer in Fayette, New York, explaining that he was serving as a scribe to Joseph Smith, who was translating the Book of Mormon plates. Oliver continued to correspond with the Whitmer family over the ensuing months and testified of the truthfulness of the plates.

When persecution began to intensify in Harmony for the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, the Prophet asked Oliver to write to David Whitmer again, asking if they could come and finish the translation of the Book of Mormon in his home. In response, David's father, Peter Whitmer Sr., invited Joseph and Oliver to stay with them as long as they needed to in order to finish the translation.

David Whitmer wanted to go immediately with a wagon to pick up the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery, but he needed to plow and prepare the soil on the farm before he could go. "At the end of a day of plowing he found he had accomplished in one day what normally would have taken two days to do. David's father was likewise impressed with this apparent miracle. Peter Whitmer, Sr., said, 'There must be an overruling hand in this, and I think you would better go down to Pennsylvania as soon as your plaster of paris is sown.' (Plaster of paris was used to reduce the acidity of the soil.) The next day David went to the fields to sow the plaster, but to his surprise he found the work had been done. His sister, who lived near the field,

said that her children had called her to watch three strangers the day before spread the plaster with remarkable skill. She assumed they were men David had hired.

"Grateful for this divine intervention, David Whitmer hurried off on the three-day journey to Harmony. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery met him as he approached the town. Although David had not told them exactly when he was coming, Joseph had seen in vision the details of David's trip to Harmony" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual,* 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 56–57).

David transported Joseph and Oliver to Fayette, New York, arriving in the early part of June 1829. Joseph Smith later wrote that "David, John, and Peter Whitmer Jr became our zealous friends and assistants in the work" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 308). These three brothers, "each having received a testimony as to the genuineness of the work, became deeply concerned over the matter of their individual duty" (D&C 14, section heading). In response to their inquiry, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation for each of the brothers (see D&C 14–16).

Doctrine and Covenants 14–16

The Lord reveals His will to David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and Peter Whitmer Jr.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 14, looking for the blessing that was promised to David Whitmer that would help him as he fulfilled his responsibility to declare repentance to others.

Doctrine and Covenants 14:7. "If you keep my commandments and endure to the end"

The Lord's counsel to "keep my commandments and endure to the end" (D&C 14:7) could be considered as a warning or caution to David Whitmer. David became one of the Three Witnesses and also one of the six original members of the Church. He later settled in Missouri and served as a Church leader there. However, in 1837, David Whitmer aligned himself with others who had apostatized from the Church. He was excommunicated on April 13, 1838, and never returned to the Church, but he bore testimony of the Book of Mormon plates until he died. The importance of enduring to the end was explained by **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Some think of enduring to the end as simply suffering through challenges. It is so much more than that—it is the process of coming unto Christ and being perfected in Him. …

"Enduring to the end is the doctrine of continuing on the path leading to eternal life after one has entered into the path through faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost. Enduring to the end requires our whole heart. …

"Enduring to the end means that we have planted our lives firmly on gospel soil, staying in the mainstream of the Church, humbly serving our fellow men, living

Christlike lives, and keeping our covenants" ("Press On," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2004, 101).

What are some things that you are doing to demonstrate to the Lord that you desire to endure to the end?

Doctrine and Covenants 14:7. "Eternal life … is the greatest of all the gifts of God"

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what eternal life is and why it is considered to be the greatest gift we can receive from God:

"Eternal life is the name of the kind of life which God lives and is therefore 'the greatest of all the gifts of God' (D&C 14:7); and because those who gain it become like God, they are one with him.

"Exaltation consists of an inheritance in the highest heaven of the celestial world, where alone the family unit continues and where each recipient gains for himself an eternal family unit, patterned after the family of God our Heavenly Father, so that every exalted person lives the kind of life which God lives and is therefore one with him. …

"Thus, to be saved, to gain exaltation, to inherit eternal life, all mean to be one with God, to live as he lives, to think as he thinks, to act as he acts, to possess the same glory, the same power, the same might and dominion that he possesses" (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 130).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 15–16, looking for how much the Lord values the work of saving souls.

Doctrine and Covenants 15–16. Revelations containing the same words

At times, the Lord reveals the same message to different individuals because they may have similar desires or circumstances. For example, mission calls that are extended today by the President of the Church have nearly identical wording. Nevertheless, those who receive the calls recognize the personal application of the direction given as it guides them in their missionary service. As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 15–16, the Lord called John Whitmer and Peter Whitmer by name and revealed His will to them one at a time.

Doctrine and Covenants 15:4–6 (16:4–6). "The thing which will be of the most worth unto you"

In the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 15–16, the Lord blessed John and Peter Whitmer for having shared God's words with others. They learned that declaring repentance and bringing souls to Jesus Christ is the most worthwhile thing that they could do. **Elder M. Russell Ballard** explained one of the reasons why bringing souls unto Christ is of such great importance: "Don't ever forget, brothers and sisters, that you and I have in our possession the very points of

doctrine that will bring people to the Lord. The restored gospel of Jesus Christ has within it the power to bring deep and abiding happiness to the human soul—something that will be valued and cherished for the rest of time and for all eternity. We are not just trying to get people to join our Church; we are sharing with them the fulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. But as powerful as our message is, it cannot be imposed or forced upon people. It can only be shared—heart to heart, soul to soul, spirit to spirit—by being good neighbors and by caring and showing love" ("The Essential Role of Member Missionary Work," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2003, 40).



The Lord called the early Saints on missions to declare His gospel.

In what ways does The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints emphasize the importance of missionary work today? Think about opportunities that you might have to help others learn of Jesus Christ and come unto Him. What will you do to assist in the Lord's harvest?

CHAPTER 8

Doctrine and Covenants 19

Introduction and Timeline

As the translation of the Book of Mormon neared completion in June 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Martin Harris hired the printer Egbert B. Grandin to print 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon for $3,000. However, Grandin would not start the printing until he was guaranteed payment for the job, so Martin Harris made a verbal agreement to pay for the printing by mortgaging some of his farm. Sometime after the initial agreement, Martin Harris became concerned about mortgaging his farm. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 19, likely given in the summer of 1829, the Lord commanded Martin Harris to "impart a portion of [his] property … [and] pay the debt [he had] contracted with the printer" (D&C 19:34–35). The Lord also revealed important truths about His atoning sacrifice and taught about repentance.

Early June 1829

Joseph Smith and Martin Harris arranged for Egbert Grandin to publish 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon.

July 1, 1829

Joseph Smith completed the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Summer 1829

Doctrine and Covenants 19 was received.

August 25, 1829

Martin Harris mortgaged his farm for $3,000 to pay for the printing of the Book of Mormon.

March 26, 1830

Copies of the Book of Mormon were made available for purchase.

Consider how important it has been in your life to learn about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 19, look for truths regarding the Atonement of Jesus Christ that can lead a person to sincere repentance.

Doctrine and Covenants 19: Additional Historical Background

Sometime in June 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Martin Harris visited printers in both Palmyra and Rochester, New York, hoping to arrange for someone to print the Book of Mormon. Egbert B. Grandin was 23 years old and working as owner, editor, and publisher of the *Wayne Sentinel* newspaper in Palmyra, New York, when he was approached about the job of printing the Book of Mormon. He refused at first because of strong critical attitudes in the Palmyra area against Joseph Smith. When Grandin was approached a second time, Martin Harris pledged to mortgage his farm to guarantee payment for the publication costs. Grandin's price to print the unusually large order of 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon was $3,000.

Joseph filed an application for a copyright on the Book of Mormon on June 11, 1829. After the translation of the Book of Mormon was completed on approximately July 1, 1829, Joseph Smith had Oliver Cowdery begin to make a duplicate copy of the entire manuscript to avoid repeating the problems caused by the earlier loss of the 116 pages. To safeguard the manuscript, only a few pages of the manuscript were taken at a time to the printer.

Although Martin Harris had previously agreed to guarantee payment, Grandin decided that he would not purchase new metal type or begin printing until the arrangements were finalized. It would require Martin to risk nearly all of his property in order to insure the payment. Doctrine and Covenants 19 was likely received in the summer of 1829, providing him with the needed confidence to move forward with the agreement. (*Note:* Earlier editions of the Doctrine and Covenants give the date of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 19 as March 1830. Recent research suggests that the revelation was likely received during the summer of 1829. This date is reflected in the 2013 edition of the scriptures and in this chapter.) On August 25, 1829, Martin Harris mortgaged his property to Grandin as payment for the publication (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 86–89). "By so doing, he secured his place as the most significant financial supporter of the Book of Mormon and thus the early Church. None among Joseph Smith's younger and poorer friends could have provided this critical contribution" (Matthew McBride, "The Contributions of Martin Harris," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 8, see also history.lds.org).

Grandin and his assistant John H. Gilbert began work right away on the printing. In March 1830, copies of the Book of Mormon became available for purchase.



Doctrine and Covenants 19:1–20

The Lord explains the consequences of not repenting and describes His suffering for sin

Read Doctrine and Covenants 19:1–20, looking for doctrine and principles relating to Jesus Christ's mission and what He has done for us.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:2–3. "Having accomplished and finished the will of … the Father"

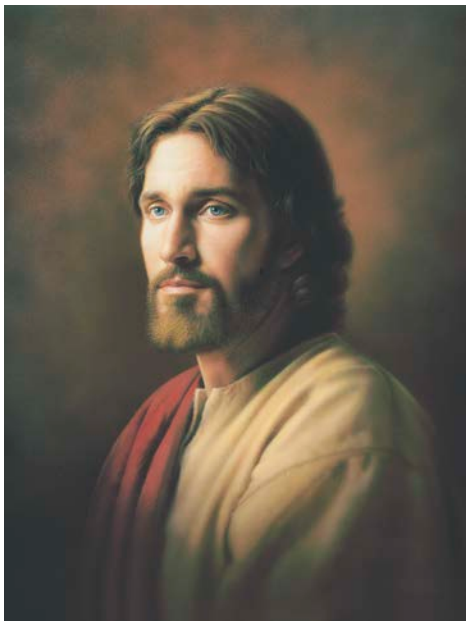
Jesus Christ has always obeyed His Father's will in all things. In the Council in Heaven, when the Father asked whom He should send to redeem His children,

Jesus Christ declared, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). The Savior testified of the purpose of His mortal mission when He taught His disciples, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). In Doctrine and Covenants 19:2, the phrase "having accomplished and finished the will of him whose I am" refers to the completion of the Savior's mortal mission, particularly His Atoning sacrifice. In Jesus Christ's final moment of agony on the cross, having satisfied the eternal demands of justice for the sins of the world, He cried, "Father, it is finished, thy will is done, [and] yielded up the ghost (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 27:54 [in Matthew 27:50, footnote *a*]). Following His resurrection, the Savior introduced Himself to the Nephite multitude by declaring, "I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:11).

This perfect submission to Heavenly Father's will resulted in Jesus Christ receiving all power—including the power to destroy Satan and all evil at the end of the world. **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) taught how accomplishing the will of Heavenly Father endowed Jesus Christ with power: "To qualify as the *Redeemer* of all our Father's children, Jesus had to be perfectly obedient to all the laws of God. Because He subjected Himself to the will of the Father, He grew 'from grace to grace, until he received a fulness' of the Father's power. Thus He had 'all power, both in heaven and on earth.' (D&C 93:13, 17.)" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 92).

Doctrine and Covenants 19:3. Jesus Christ will judge everyone according to his or her deeds

The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that obedience is a fundamental principle. The blessings that come to those who choose to be obedient are both immediate and eternal. Disobedience causes a person to forfeit blessings and brings chastening and loss of the Spirit. All of God's children will be judged according to their deeds, or their efforts to be obedient. The "last great day of judgment" (D&C 19:3) refers to the Final Judgment, which will occur at the end of the Millennium.



***Divine Redeemer,* by Simon Dewey**

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified how our works and deeds influence how we will be judged:

"Many Bible and modern scriptures speak of a final judgment at which all persons will be rewarded according to their deeds or works or the desires of their hearts.

But other scriptures enlarge upon this by referring to our being judged by the *condition* we have achieved. …

"… The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have *done.* It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have *become.* It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become" ("The Challenge to Become," *Ensign,* Nov. 2000, 32).

Doctrine and Covenants 19:4–12. Endless and eternal punishment

In referring to the judgment that comes upon those who choose not to repent of their sins, the terms "endless punishment" and "eternal punishment" (see D&C 19:11–12) do not refer to the length of time that the wicked will suffer. The Savior said, "I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name" (D&C 19:10). Because the Savior is Endless and Eternal, the terms "endless punishment" and "eternal punishment" refer to the source of punishment rather than the duration.

With the exception of those who inherit outer darkness, every person who suffers God's punishment will eventually be redeemed to a kingdom of glory (see D&C 76:31, 38–39). **Elder James E. Talmage** (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: "To hell there is an exit as well as an entrance. Hell is no place to which a vindictive judge sends prisoners to suffer and to be punished principally for his glory; but it is a place prepared for the teaching, the disciplining of those who failed to learn here upon the earth what they should have learned. True, we read of everlasting punishment, unending suffering, eternal damnation. That is a direful expression; but in his mercy the Lord has made plain what those words mean. 'Eternal punishment,' he says, is God's punishment, for he is eternal; and that condition or state or possibility will ever exist for the sinner who deserves and really needs such condemnation; but this does not mean that the individual sufferer or sinner is to be eternally and everlastingly made to endure and suffer. No man will be kept in hell longer than is necessary to bring him to a fitness for something better. When he reaches that stage the prison doors will open and there will be rejoicing among the hosts who welcome him into a better state. The Lord has not abated in the least what he has said in earlier dispensations concerning the operation of his law and his gospel, but he has made clear unto us his goodness and mercy through it all, for it is his glory and his work to bring about the immortality and eternal life of man" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1930, 97).

Doctrine and Covenants 19:13, 15, 20. "I command you to repent"

The repeated command to repent throughout the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 19 illustrates the Lord's love for Martin Harris, for if Martin repented, he would not have to suffer as the Lord did. This same invitation is extended to each of us. The Lord wants us to repent so that we will not have to suffer.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught why repentance allows us to receive God's mercy and forgiveness: "Repentance exists as

an option only because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is His infinite sacrifice that 'bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance' (Alma 34:15). Repentance is the necessary condition, and the grace of Christ is the power by which 'mercy can satisfy the demands of justice' (Alma 34:16)" ("The Divine Gift of Repentance," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 38).

Doctrine and Covenants 19:15–17. Repent or suffer as the Savior suffered

In order to receive the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we must repent of our sins. Those who refuse to accept Jesus Christ and repent will suffer for their sins. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught the following about the choice to repent or suffer: "Let not Jesus' redemption for us stop at the immortalizing dimension of the Atonement. … Let us grasp the proffered gift of eternal life! We will end up either choosing Christ's manner of living or His manner of suffering!" ("Overcome … Even As I Also Overcame," *Ensign,* May 1987, 72).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson explained why we must choose to repent: "If a man rejects the Savior's Atonement, he must redeem his debt to justice himself. … An unredeemed individual's suffering for sin is known as hell. It means being subject to the devil and is described in scriptural metaphors as being in chains or a lake of fire and brimstone. Lehi begged his sons to choose Christ's Redemption 'and not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom' (2 Nephi 2:29). Even so, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, hell has an end, and those who are obliged to pass through it are 'redeemed from the devil [in] the last resurrection' (Doctrine and Covenants 76:85). The relatively few 'sons of perdition' are 'the only ones on whom the second death shall have any [lasting] power; yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath' (Doctrine and Covenants 76:32, 37–38)" ("Redemption," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2013, 112, endnote 4).

Although repentance makes it possible for us to receive the blessings of the Savior's atoning sacrifice, we will still experience some suffering as a consequence of sin. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** clarified the relationship between sin and suffering:

"There is a relationship between sin and suffering that is not understood by people who knowingly sin in the expectation that all the burden of suffering will be borne by Another, that the sin is all theirs but that the suffering is all His. That is not the way. Repentance, which is an assured passage to an eternal destination, is nevertheless not a free ride.

"Let us recall two scriptures: (1) 'Repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment' (Alma 42:16); and (2) the Savior said that he had suffered these things for all, 'that they might not suffer if they would repent; but if they would not repent they must suffer even as I' (D&C 19:16–17).

"This obviously means that the unrepentant transgressor must suffer for his own sins. Does it also mean that a person who repents does not need to suffer at all because the entire punishment is borne by the Savior? That cannot be the meaning because it would be inconsistent with the Savior's other teachings. What is meant is

that the person who repents does not need to suffer 'even as' the Savior suffered for that sin. Sinners who are repenting will experience some suffering, but because of their repentance and the Atonement, they will not experience the full, 'exquisite' extent of eternal torment the Savior suffered" ("Sin and Suffering," *Ensign,* July 1992, 71–72).



Jesus Christ suffered for the sins of the world.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19. The Savior described His suffering for our sins

Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19 contains the Savior's personal account of His suffering. Other descriptions of Jesus Christ's suffering during His atoning sacrifice are given by someone other than Himself (see Matthew 26:36–39; Mark 14:32–41; Luke 22:39–44; Mosiah 3:7). **Elder James E. Talmage** described the intensity of suffering the Savior endured during His atoning sacrifice:

"Christ's agony in the garden is unfathomable by the finite mind, both as to intensity and cause. … He struggled and groaned under a burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might even conceive as possible. It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing. No other man, however great his powers of physical or mental endurance, could have suffered so; for his human organism would have succumbed, and [the loss of blood to the brain] would have produced unconsciousness and welcome oblivion. In that hour of anguish Christ met and overcame all the horrors that Satan, 'the prince of this world' [John 14:30] could inflict. …

"In some manner, actual and terribly real though to man incomprehensible, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world" (*Jesus the Christ,* 3rd ed. [1916], 613).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified why Jesus Christ was willing to suffer for our sins: "In some incredible way that none of

us can fully comprehend, the Savior took upon Himself the sins of the world. Even though His life was pure and free of sin, He paid the ultimate penalty for sin—yours, mine, and everyone who has ever lived. His mental, emotional, and spiritual anguish were so great they caused Him to bleed from every pore (see Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18). And yet Jesus suffered willingly so that we might all have the opportunity to be washed clean—through having faith in Him, repenting of our sins, being baptized by proper priesthood authority, receiving the purifying gift of the Holy Ghost by confirmation, and accepting all other essential ordinances. Without the Atonement of the Lord, none of these blessings would be available to us, and we could not become worthy and prepared to return to dwell in the presence of God" ("The Atonement and the Value of One Soul," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 85).

What impact does understanding the Savior's suffering have on your desire to repent and keep His commandments? What do you need to do to more fully repent and receive the blessings of His sacrifice for you?

Doctrine and Covenants 19:18–19. The Savior did not shrink

The phrase "would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:18) refers to the Savior's desire to not retreat under the weight of His suffering. Though His suffering was beyond anything we can comprehend, He submitted to Heavenly Father's will and completed the Atonement.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell described how we might apply the truths taught in Doctrine and Covenants 19:18–19 to our own lives: "As we confront our own … trials and tribulations, we too can plead with the Father, just as Jesus did, that we 'might not … shrink'—meaning to retreat or to recoil (D&C 19:18). Not shrinking is much more important than surviving! Moreover, partaking of a bitter cup without becoming bitter is likewise part of the emulation of Jesus" ("Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ," *Ensign,* Nov. 1997, 22).

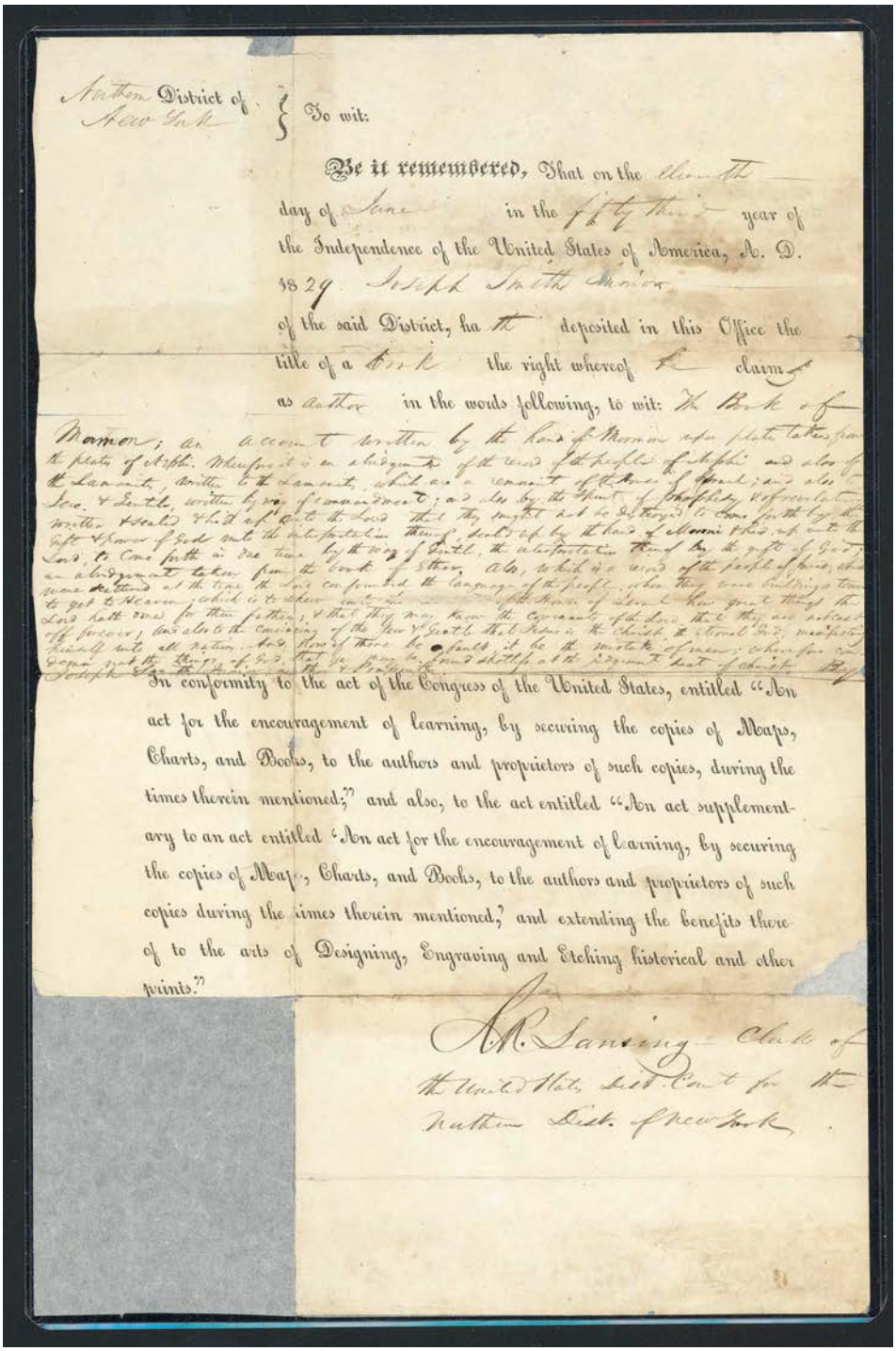
In what ways has the gospel of Jesus Christ helped you remain faithful during trials and tribulations, as the Savior did?

Doctrine and Covenants 19:20. When did the Lord withdraw His Spirit from Martin Harris?

Although it is not clear what time or event is referred to in the phrase "the time I withdrew my Spirit" (D&C 19:20), the Lord may have been speaking of the time when Martin Harris lost 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript. At that time the Lord expressed displeasure, describing Martin as a "wicked man" who had "set at naught the counsels of God, and … broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and … depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom" (D&C 3:12–13). Martin's carelessness that resulted in the loss of the manuscript certainly caused him to feel a withdrawal of the Spirit of the Lord for a season. Martin later found great hope in the Lord's willingness to

permit him to view the plates as one of the Three Witnesses (see D&C 5:23–28; 17:1–8).

Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, described the feelings in their home after Martin Harris had lost the 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon: "I well remember that day of darkness, both within and without: to us at least the heavens seemed clothed with blackness, and the earth shrouded with gloom; and I have often said within myself, that, if a continual punishment, as severe as that which we experienced on that occasion, were to be inflicted upon the most wicked characters, who ever stood upon the footstool of the Almighty; if … their punishment was even no greater than this[,] I should feel to pity [their] condition" ("Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845," 134–35, josephsmithpapers.org).



Northern District of New York } To wit:

Be it remembered, That on the eleventh day of June in the fifty third year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1829 Joseph Smith Junior of the said District, has deposited in this Office the title of a Book the right whereof he claims as author in the words following, to wit: The Book of Mormon; an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi. Wherefore it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi and also of the Lamanites, written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew & Gentile, written by way of commandment; and also by the spirit of prophecy & revelation, written & sealed & hid up unto the Lord that they might not be destroyed, to come forth by the gift & power of God unto the interpretation thereof, sealed up by the hand of Moroni & hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile, the interpretation thereof by the gift of God. An abridgment taken from the book of Ether, also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to Heaven, which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; & that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew & Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. And now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ. By Joseph Smith Junior Author & Proprietor

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also, to the act entitled "An act supplementary to an act entitled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of Designing, Engraving and Etching historical and other prints."

R. R. Lansing Clerk of the United States District Court for the Northern Dist. of New York.

One of the two copies of the copyright application for the Book of Mormon filed with the United States district court in Utica, New York

Doctrine and Covenants 19:21–41

The Lord gives Martin Harris several commandments, including the command to impart his farm for the printing of the Book of Mormon

Read Doctrine and Covenants 19:21–41, looking for additional commandments the Lord gave to Martin Harris.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:23. "Learn of me, … and you shall have peace in me"

Not only was Martin Harris commanded to repent in order to progress as a disciple of Jesus Christ, but he was also to learn of Jesus Christ, listen to Him, and walk in meekness as He does (see D&C 19:23). **President Thomas S. Monson** taught that studying the revealed word of God is one way we can learn of the Savior and receive His peace in our lives:

"*Fill your mind with truth.* We do not find truth groveling through error. Truth is found by searching, studying, and living the revealed word of God. We adopt error when we mingle with error. We learn truth when we associate with truth.

"The Savior of the world instructed, 'Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith' [D&C 88:118]. He added, 'Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me' [John 5:39].

"He invites each of us, 'Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me' [D&C 19:23]" ("Be Thou an Example," *Ensign,* Nov. 2001, 98).

Consider writing down something specific you can do to learn about the Savior.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:26–27, 34–35. "Pay the debt thou hast contracted with the printer"

Martin Harris had pledged his property to help pay for the printing of the Book of Mormon, but he worried that he might lose his farm. He eventually sold 151 acres of his land to pay the debt. Although it cost Martin greatly, selling his land was a small price to assist in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, which has brought countless souls to the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Later in life, Martin testified that from the proceeds of the sale of the book, he recouped all of the money that he had advanced for the printing of the book (see "Additional Testimony of Martin Harris (One of the Three Witnesses) to the Coming forth of the Book of Mormon," *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star,* vol. 21 [August 20, 1859], 545.)

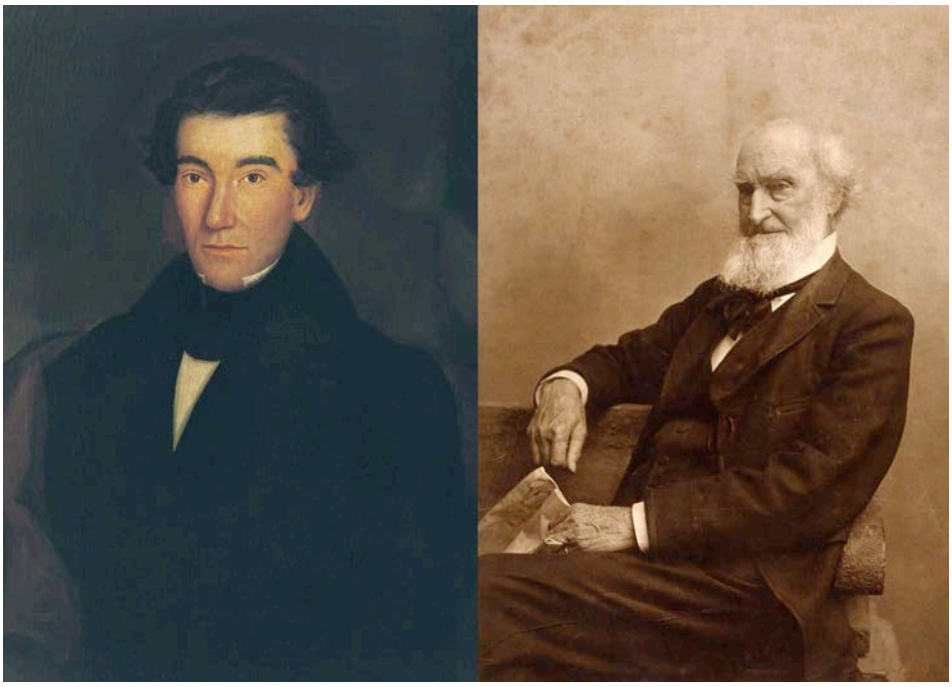


Martin Harris sold part of his farm to pay for the printing of the Book of Mormon (photograph ca. 1907).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

According to Doctrine and Covenants 19:26–27, why is the Book of Mormon so important?

Doctrine and Covenants 19:25–26. "Thou shalt not covet"

The Lord commanded Martin Harris to impart of his property freely for the printing of the Book of Mormon. To help Martin understand the importance of this commandment and encourage him to act on it, in Doctrine and Covenants 19:25–26 the Lord used language like that in Exodus 20:17, which warns of the sin of covetousness. There is no evidence that Martin was coveting a neighbor's wife or that he was seeking a neighbor's life. The Lord was teaching him that coveting can extend to even our own property or time if we value it more than the Lord and His work.



Egbert B. Grandin (left) printed the first 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon. John H. Gilbert (right) was the typesetter for the original printing of the Book of Mormon.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:29–31. Revile not against revilers

When sharing the gospel or defending beliefs, Church members are to speak and act with humility and civility. The Lord commands His disciples to love others, especially when there is a difference of opinion. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** explained the importance of avoiding contention:

"The gospel has many teachings about keeping the commandments while living among people with different beliefs and practices. The teachings about contention are central. When the resurrected Christ found the Nephites disputing over the manner of baptism, He gave clear directions on how this ordinance should be performed. Then He taught this great principle:

" 'There shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.

" 'For verily, verily I say unto you, *he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.*

" 'Behold, this is … my doctrine, that such things should be done away' (3 Nephi 11:28–30; emphasis added).

"The Savior did not limit His warning against contention to those who were not keeping the commandment about baptism. He forbade contention by anyone. Even those who keep the commandments must not stir up the hearts of men to contend with anger. The 'father of contention' is the devil; the Savior is the Prince of Peace.

"Similarly, the Bible teaches that 'wise men turn away wrath' (Proverbs 29:8). The early Apostles taught that we should 'follow after the things [that] make for peace' (Romans 14:19) and '[speak] the truth in love' (Ephesians 4:15), 'for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God' (James 1:20). In modern revelation the Lord commanded that the glad tidings of the restored gospel should be declared 'every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in meekness' (D&C 38:41), 'with all humility, … reviling not against revilers' (D&C 19:30)" ("Loving Others and Living with Differences," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 25–26).



The building where E. B. Grandin printed the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon

Doctrine and Covenants 19:35. Debt is a form of bondage

Just as a debt must be paid to escape the bondage of sin, the Lord's followers must pay their monetary debts to escape financial bondage. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) explained how the counsel given to Martin Harris to "pay the debt" (D&C 19:35) can apply to us today:

"Since the beginnings of the Church, the Lord has spoken on [the] matter of debt. To Martin Harris through revelation He said: 'Pay the debt thou hast contracted with the printer. Release thyself from bondage' (D&C 19:35).

"President Heber J. Grant spoke repeatedly on this matter. … He said: 'If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within our means. And if there is any one thing that is grinding and discouraging and disheartening, it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet' (*Gospel Standards,* comp. G. Homer Durham [1941], 111).

"We are carrying a message of self-reliance throughout the Church. Self-reliance cannot obtain when there is serious debt hanging over a household. One has neither independence nor freedom from bondage when he is obligated to others. …

"What a wonderful feeling it is to be free of debt, to have a little money against a day of emergency put away where it can be retrieved when necessary. …

"I urge you … to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.

"This is a part of the temporal gospel in which we believe. May the Lord bless you … to set your houses in order. If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your [families] and peace in your hearts. That's all I have to say about it, but I wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable" ("To the Boys and to the Men," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 53–54).

Consider making a plan of what you will do to follow the Lord's counsel to pay your debts and become self-reliant.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:38. Blessings greater than the treasures of the earth

The Lord promised Martin Harris that if he was obedient, He would "pour out [His] Spirit upon [him]" and he would receive blessings greater than the treasures of the earth (D&C 19:38). While it may have been difficult for Martin to see at that time, the blessings associated with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon far outweighed his personal property and wealth.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles compared heavenly blessings and earthly treasures: "The scriptures tell us, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven' [Matthew 6:19–20]. The riches of this world are as dust compared to the riches that await the faithful in the mansions of our Heavenly Father. How foolish is he who spends his days in the pursuit of things that rust and fade away. How wise is he who spends his days in the pursuit of eternal life" ("Earthly Debts, Heavenly Debts," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 43).

Reflect on the Savior's willingness to submit His will to His Father and the suffering He endured on your behalf so that you can be forgiven and made clean. How can you emulate the Savior? What are you willing to sacrifice now to bring your life in harmony with the Lord's commandments so that you may have the greater blessings He has in store for you?

CHAPTER 9

Doctrine and Covenants 20–22

Introduction and Timeline

In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord commanded that His Church be organized on April 6, 1830. Although this revelation, now found as Doctrine and Covenants 20, was recorded a few days after the Church's organization, portions of it may have been revealed as early as June 1829. This revelation highlights the importance of the Book of Mormon, outlines responsibilities of priesthood offices, and provides instructions for the ordinances of baptism and the sacrament.

On the day the Church was organized, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 21. In it the Lord designated him as a prophet, seer, and leader of the restored Church and exhorted the Church members to heed the Prophet's words. Soon after the Church was established, some people questioned whether those who had been baptized previously in other churches needed to be baptized again to become members of the restored Church. Joseph inquired of the Lord and received the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 22, wherein the Lord taught that baptism must be performed by those with proper authority.

End of March 1830

The printing of the Book of Mormon was completed.

April 6, 1830

The Church was organized by Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York.

April 6, 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 21 was received.

After April 6, 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 20 was finalized and recorded (though portions were likely received months earlier).

April 16, 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 22 was received.

June 9, 1830

The first Church conference was held in Fayette, New York.

Why are you grateful to live in a time when the Lord's Church has been organized again upon the earth? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 20–22, look for doctrine and principles that the Lord revealed at the time the Church was organized and think about how these truths have impacted your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 20: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded that in June 1829, in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr., the voice of God commanded him and Oliver Cowdery to ordain one another as elders but specified that they should delay the ordination until their brethren could assemble and provide their consent by vote (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 326; see also D&C 128:21). Also in June, the Lord commanded Oliver Cowdery to help "build up [the Lord's] church" (D&C 18:5) by relying upon the Book of Mormon, which was nearing completion at that time. Subsequently, Oliver compiled a document called "Articles of the Church of Christ," which included details about ordinances, priesthood offices, and Church procedures as found in the Book of Mormon (see *The Joseph Smith Papers,*

Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831, ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 368–74). This information may have been intended to guide believers until the time when the Church would be established.

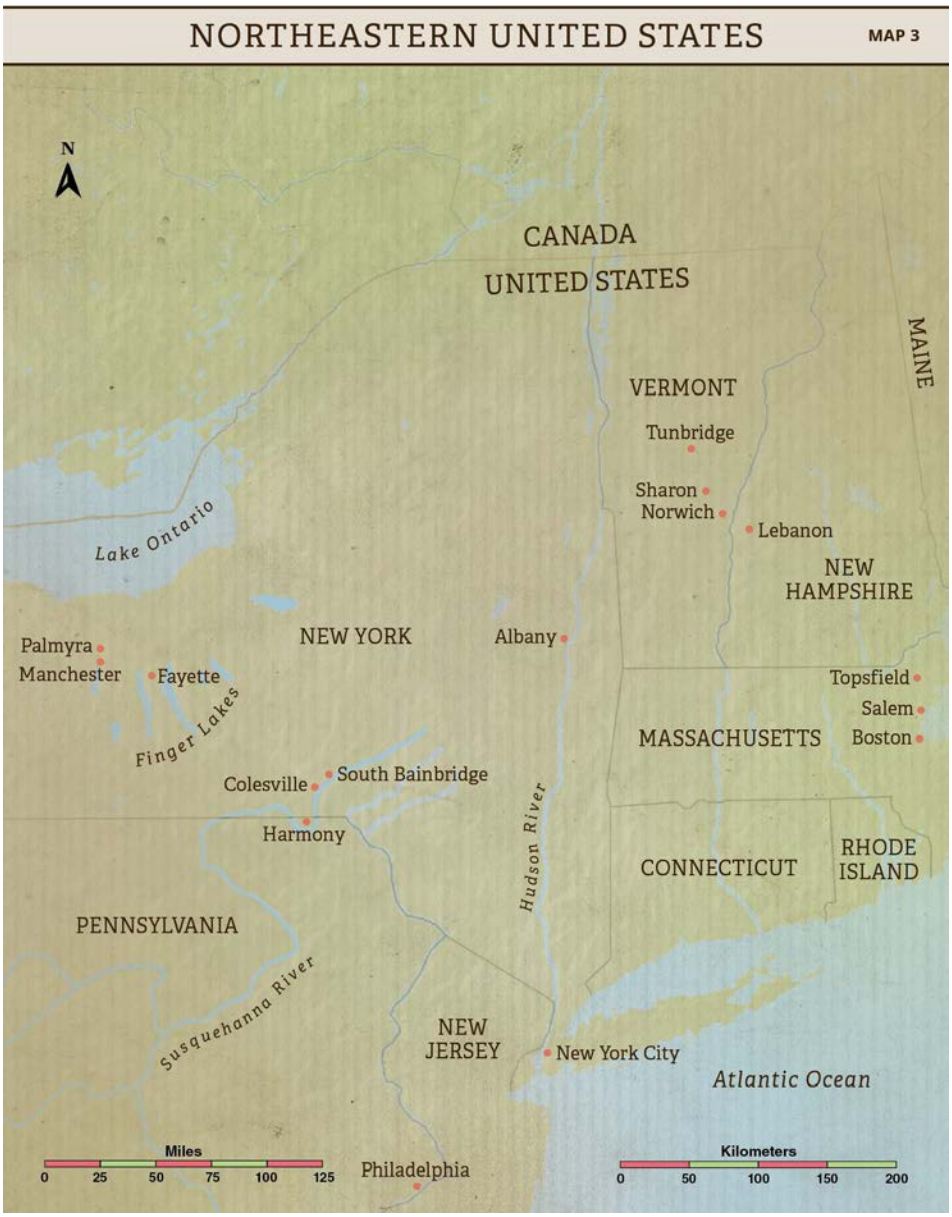


Upstairs room in the reconstructed home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York, where the Book of Mormon translation was completed and where the voice of God was heard (see D&C 128:21)

While it is not known exactly when the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 20 was received, the Prophet Joseph Smith summarized the flow of divine direction: "In this manner did the Lord continue to give us instructions from time to time, concerning the duties which now devolved upon us, and among many other things of the kind, we obtained of him the following, by the Spirit of Prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to his will and commandment, we should proceed to organize his Church once again, here upon the earth" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* 336; spelling standardized). Those instructions became known as the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ."

The complete text of the Articles and Covenants was written soon after the organizational meeting held on April 6, 1830, and provides an overview of the beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ and of offices and ordinances in it. At the first conference of the Church, held on June 9, 1830, at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr., the Articles and Covenants were read and presented to the membership for approval (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 116–26). Over the next few years, the Articles and Covenants, now Doctrine and Covenants 20, was amended from time to time as the Prophet Joseph Smith continued to receive revelation concerning the structure of the Church. For

example, Doctrine and Covenants 20:65–67 was added after the office of high priest was revealed in Kirtland, Ohio, in June 1831 (see the section heading to D&C 52).



Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–36

Events of the Restoration are recounted and truths taught in the Book of Mormon are summarized

Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–4, looking for evidence that the Church of Jesus Christ was established under the Lord's direction.



The reconstructed home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York

Doctrine and Covenants 20:1. "The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days"

Following the deaths of the ancient Apostles, unauthorized changes were made to the organization, doctrine, and ordinances of the Church of Jesus Christ. After centuries of apostasy, the Lord restored His gospel and His Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This restoration included the organization of the Church of Christ on April 6, 1830. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) testified of the destiny of the Lord's Church:

"Joseph Smith and his associates met in the inconspicuous log house on the Peter Whitmer farm in the quiet village of Fayette, New York, and organized the Church of Christ.

"From that modest beginning something truly remarkable has happened. Great has been the history of this work. Our people have endured every kind of suffering. Indescribable have been their sacrifices. Immense beyond belief have been their labors. But out of all of this fiery crucible has come something glorious. Today we stand on the summit of the years and look about us.

"From the original six members has grown a vast family of worshipers. … From that quiet village has grown a movement that today is scattered through some 160 nations of the earth. … Within its vast embrace are members from many nations who speak many tongues. It is a phenomenon without precedent. As the tapestry of its past has unrolled, a beautiful pattern has come to view. It finds expression in the lives of a happy and wonderful people. It portends marvelous things yet to come" ("The Church Goes Forward," *Ensign,* May 2002, 4).

What do you think the word *rise* in Doctrine and Covenants 20:1 means in relation to the organization of the Church? How can we help the Lord's Church to continue to "rise" in our day?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:1. The Church of Christ

When the restored Church was officially organized on April 6, 1830, it was called the Church of Christ. In 1834, a Church council approved the title Church of the Latter Day Saints as a preferred alternative name for the Church. Finally, in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in April 1838, the Lord declared that His Church would be called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see D&C 115:4).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the purpose and significance of God's Church in our quest for exaltation:

"Exaltation is the goal of this mortal journey, and no one gets there without the means of the gospel of Jesus Christ: His Atonement, the ordinances, and the guiding doctrine and principles that are found in the Church.

"It is the Church wherein we learn the works of God and accept the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that saves us. It is within the Church that we form the commitments and covenants of eternal families that become our passport to exaltation. It is the Church that is powered by the priesthood to propel us through the unpredictable waters of mortality" ("God Is at the Helm," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 27).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:5–36, looking for doctrinal truths that we understand more clearly because of the Book of Mormon.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:2–16. The Book of Mormon and Restoration events

Doctrine and Covenants 20 reviews some of the significant events of the Restoration. For example, Joseph Smith was visited by God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and "received a remission of his sins" during the First Vision (D&C 20:5). The "holy angel" Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith and instructed him and "gave unto him commandments which inspired him" (D&C 20:6–7). Joseph Smith later obtained the golden plates and was given "power" and "means" to translate the Book of Mormon (D&C 20:8). Others, such as the Three Witnesses, received confirmation of the Book of Mormon's divine origin (see D&C 20:10). The restoration of priesthood authority is evident in the ordination of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as the first and second elders of the Church (see D&C 20:2–3).



Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God.

This revelation also testifies that the Book of Mormon establishes the truthfulness of the Bible (see D&C 20:11; see also 1 Nephi 13:40; Mormon 7:8–9). Furthermore, this revelation emphasizes the vital role of the Book of Mormon by promising eternal life to "those who receive it in faith" and condemning "those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it" (D&C 20:14–15).

Doctrine and Covenants 20:9. The Book of Mormon contains "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ"

The Lord defined "the fulness of the gospel" (D&C 20:9) as "the covenant which I have sent forth to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel" (D&C 39:11). The Doctrine and Covenants contains several revelations that indicate that the Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the gospel (see D&C 20:9; 27:5; 42:12; 135:3).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) explained: "The Lord Himself has stated that the Book of Mormon contains the 'fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.' (D&C 20:9.) That does not mean it contains every teaching, every doctrine ever revealed. Rather, it means that in the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation. The Book of Mormon offers so much that broadens our understandings of the doctrines of salvation. Without it, much of what is taught in other scriptures would not be nearly so plain and precious" ("The Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign,* Jan. 1992, 5).

Copies of the Book of Mormon were available for sale to the public beginning on March 26, 1830, 11 days before the Church was officially organized. Why do you think the Lord directed that the Book of Mormon be translated and published before organizing His Church again on the earth?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:17–36. "By these things we know"

In Doctrine and Covenants 20:17, the phrase "by these things" refers to the truths we know through the Book of Mormon (see D&C 20:8–10). Through the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel, Latter-day Saints have been given a clearer understanding of the doctrines related to our personal salvation, especially the central role of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. **President Ezra Taft Benson** taught:

"In the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord devotes several verses to summarizing the vital truths which the Book of Mormon teaches. (See vs. 17–36.) It speaks of God, the creation of man, the Fall, the Atonement, the ascension of Christ into heaven, prophets, faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, endurance, prayer, justification and sanctification through grace, and loving and serving God.

"We must know these essential truths. Aaron and Ammon and their brethren in the Book of Mormon taught these same kinds of truths to the Lamanite people (see Alma 18:22–39), who were 'in the darkest abyss' (Alma 26:3). After accepting these eternal truths, the Book of Mormon states, those converted Lamanites never did fall away. (See Alma 23:6.)

"If our children and grandchildren are taught and heed these same truths, will they fall away? We best instruct them in the Book of Mormon at our dinner table, by our firesides, at their bedsides, and in our letters and phone calls—in all of our goings and comings" ("A New Witness for Christ," *Ensign,* Nov. 1984, 7).

The phrase "we know" is used several times in Doctrine and Covenants 20:17–36 (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:17, 29, 30, 31, 35). It reflects a spirit of testimony and reminds Church members that these fundamental doctrines shape our beliefs.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:37–84

The Lord sets forth the duties of priesthood offices and gives instructions for baptism and the sacrament

Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:37–67, comparing the duties of elders, priests, teachers, and deacons.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:37. What does it mean to have a broken heart and a contrite spirit?

To receive a remission of our sins requires that we "come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits" (D&C 20:37). **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) taught what it means to have a broken heart and a contrite spirit: "Godly sorrow is a gift of

the Spirit. It is a deep realization that our actions have offended our Father and our God. It is the sharp and keen awareness that our behavior caused the Savior, He who knew no sin, even the greatest of all, to endure agony and suffering. Our sins caused Him to bleed at every pore. This very real mental and spiritual anguish is what the scriptures refer to as having a 'broken heart and a contrite spirit' " (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 83).

Doctrine and Covenants 20:38. "An apostle is an elder"

In the early years of the restored Church, the term *apostle* was often applied to elders involved in missionary work (see, for example, the Lord's reference to Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer in D&C 18:9, 14). It is also helpful to note that at the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 20 was given, the office of high priest in the Melchezidek priesthood had not yet been revealed. The title "Elder" is now used to describe any Melchizedek Priesthood holder who is called to preach the gospel, regardless of his priesthood office. "For example, male missionaries are addressed as elders. Also, an Apostle is an elder, and it is proper to speak of members of the Quorum of the Twelve or Quorums of the Seventy by this title (D&C 20:38; 1 Pet. 5:1)" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Elder," scriptures.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–59. Priesthood duties

When the Church was organized in 1830, the Lord outlined the responsibilities and duties of elders, priests, teachers, and deacons. Since that time, additional details have been revealed regarding these priesthood offices. Nevertheless, the important instructions outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–59 are principles that all priesthood holders should continue to study and follow. **President Thomas S. Monson** emphasized the need to know our duty and to carry it out in the service of others:

"The priesthood is not really so much a gift as it is a commission to serve, a privilege to lift, and an opportunity to bless the lives of others.

"The call of duty can come quietly as we who hold the priesthood respond to the assignments we receive. President George Albert Smith, that modest yet effective leader, declared, 'It is your duty first of all to learn what the Lord wants and then by the power and strength of His holy Priesthood to magnify your calling in the presence of your fellows in such a way that the people will be glad to follow you' [in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 14]" ("Do Your Duty—That Is Best," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2005, 59).

What truths do you learn about priesthood service by comparing the duties of elders, priests, teachers, and deacons? How have you been blessed by a priesthood holder fulfilling his priesthood responsibilities?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–84, looking for truths the Lord teaches about baptism and the sacrament.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79. Partaking of the sacrament "in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus"

The sacrament was administered by the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on April 6, 1830, the day that the Church was organized. The Lord commanded members of His Church to "meet together often to partake of [the sacrament] in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus" (D&C 20:75).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained one of the reasons why it is a blessing to participate in this sacred ordinance: "The sacramental prayers confirm that one of the central purposes of the sacrament as instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ is that we might 'always remember him' (D&C 20:77, 79). Remembering the Savior obviously includes remembering His Atonement, which is symbolically represented by the bread and water as emblems of His suffering and death. We must never forget what He did for us, for without His Atonement and Resurrection, life would have no meaning. With His Atonement and Resurrection, however, our lives have eternal, divine possibilities" ("To Always Remember Him," *Ensign,* Apr. 2011, 49).



Interior room in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York, where the Church was organized on April 6, 1830

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how keeping the covenant to always remember Jesus Christ can help us make better choices:

"When our day-to-day challenges loom before us, it is natural to focus on the here and now. But when we do, we may make poor choices, become depressed, or experience hopelessness. Because of this human tendency, prophets have admonished us to remember the eternal perspective. Only then can we successfully navigate mortality. …

"Each Sunday the sacrament helps us remember God's goodness and marvelous promises. By partaking of simple, tangible objects—a piece of bread and a sip of water—we promise to always remember the Savior and His great atoning sacrifice. Through the sacrament, we renew our covenants and express our willingness to keep His commandments. …

"With the help of the sacrament, we can always remember Him and maintain an eternal perspective" ("Maintaining an Eternal Perspective," *Ensign,* Mar. 2014, 56, 59).

How has worthily partaking of the sacrament and faithfully keeping the covenants you have made helped you make better choices?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:77. "Willing to take upon them the name of thy Son"

When we partake of the sacrament worthily, we signify our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what it means to be willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ:

"Our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ has several different meanings. …

"… We take upon us the name of Christ when we are baptized in his name, when we belong to his Church and profess our belief in him, and when we do the work of his kingdom. …

"It is significant that when we partake of the sacrament we do not witness that we *take upon us* the name of Jesus Christ. We witness that we are *willing* to do so. (See D&C 20:77.) The fact that we only witness to our willingness suggests that something else must happen before we actually take that sacred name upon us in the most important sense. …

"Willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ can … be understood as willingness to take upon us the authority of Jesus Christ. According to this meaning, by partaking of the sacrament we witness our willingness to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and to receive the highest blessings available through the name and by the authority of the Savior when he chooses to confer them upon us. …

"… When we witness our *willingness* to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, we are signifying our commitment to do all that we can to achieve eternal life in the kingdom of our Father. We are expressing our candidacy—our determination to strive for—exaltation in the celestial kingdom" ("Taking upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ," *Ensign,* May 1985, 80–82).

Doctrine and Covenants 21: Additional Historical Background

Following the Lord's instructions to organize His Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith gathered approximately 60 believers together at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York, on Tuesday, April 6, 1830. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery organized the Church according to the will of God and according to the laws of the state of New York. The meeting consisted of prayer, sustainings, ordinations, the administration of the sacrament, and confirmations of those previously baptized. At this meeting, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 21.

Doctrine and Covenants 21

Members of the Church are to heed the words of Joseph Smith

Read Doctrine and Covenants 21, looking for commandments and promises the Lord gave on the day the Church was organized.

Doctrine and Covenants 21:1. Joseph Smith's responsibilities

To the believers who were gathered on the day the Church was organized, the Lord described the divine callings given to His ordained servant Joseph Smith. Joseph was to be known as "a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church" (D&C 21:1; see also D&C 107:91–92; 124:125; 127:12; 135:3). These sacred responsibilities distinguished Joseph Smith from all of the other religious leaders of his day. This mighty prophet of the latter days was not to be simply a presiding officer; he was authorized by God to establish the Lord's Church and to bring forth the revealed word of the Lord.



The Church was organized on April 6, 1830, in Fayette, New York.

Doctrine and Covenants 21:1. "There shall be a record kept among you"

The importance of record-keeping in the Church was emphasized in the revelation given at the organizational meeting of the Church. **Elder Marlin K. Jensen** of the Seventy and former Church Historian noted that the Lord's command to keep a record remains in force today: "The history of the Church of Jesus Christ and its people deserves our remembrance. The scriptures give the Church's history high priority. In fact, much of scripture is Church history. On the very day the Church was organized, God commanded Joseph Smith, 'Behold, there shall be a record kept among you' [D&C 21:1]. Joseph acted on this command by appointing Oliver Cowdery, the second elder in the Church and his chief assistant, as the first Church historian. We keep records to help us remember, and a record of the Church's rise and progress has been kept from Oliver Cowdery's time to the present day. This extraordinary historical record reminds us that God has again opened the heavens and revealed truths that call our generation to action" ("Remember and Perish Not," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 37).

What principle can we learn from the Lord's commandment and related promise recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6?

Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6. "For his word ye shall receive … in all patience and faith"

The Lord guides His people through His chosen servants. In April 1830, those believers who would become members of the Church were instructed to "give heed" to the words and commandments of the Prophet Joseph Smith as if they came from the mouth of the Lord (see D&C 21:4–5). In another revelation the Lord explained why the prophet can be considered as God's mouthpiece: "What I the

Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38).

The Lord also counseled those who would become members of His Church to receive the Prophet Joseph Smith's words "in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:5). **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) explained how this passage applies to all Church members today: "The only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized. We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through His prophet, 'as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; … as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith' (D&C 21:4–5). There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord Himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory' (D&C 21:6)" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 84–85).

Why does it require patience and faith to heed the words of the prophets? How have you been blessed or protected for following the counsel of the Lord's prophets?

Doctrine and Covenants 22: Additional Historical Background

Shortly after the Church's organization, some who desired to join the newly established Church of Christ struggled with the requirement that they must be baptized again. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** explained: "The question of divine authority … was not firmly fixed in their minds. When they desired to come into the Church, having received the testimony that Joseph Smith had told a true story, they wondered why it was necessary for them to be baptized again when they had complied with an ordinance of baptism by immersion" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:109).

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 22 was received on April 16, 1830. The earliest written accounts of this revelation were sometimes included as part of the Articles and Covenants, probably because the revelation clarifies the doctrine of baptism taught in Doctrine and Covenants 20.

Doctrine and Covenants 22

Baptisms must be performed by those holding proper authority

Read Doctrine and Covenants 22, looking for the counsel the Lord gave to those who desired to join the restored Church without being baptized again.

Doctrine and Covenants 22:1. "A new and an everlasting covenant"

The Lord answered the question about the need for new members to be baptized again by declaring that "a new and an everlasting covenant" had been given (D&C 22:1). The fulness of the gospel is referred to as the new and everlasting covenant when it is revealed in a new dispensation. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** explained:

"The new and everlasting covenant is the fulness of the gospel. It is composed of 'All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations' that are sealed upon members of the Church by the Holy Spirit of promise, or the Holy Ghost, by the authority of the President of the Church who holds the keys. …

"Marriage for eternity is a new and everlasting covenant. Baptism is also a new and everlasting covenant, and likewise ordination to the priesthood, and every other covenant is everlasting and a part of the new and everlasting covenant which embraces all things" (*Answers to Gospel Questions,* comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. [1966], 1:65).



Many of the early Saints were baptized in Seneca Lake, near Fayette, New York (photograph ca. 1897–1927).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Doctrine and Covenants 22:2. "You cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses"

The "strait gate" refers to baptism (see 2 Nephi 31:17–18). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 22, the Lord compared individuals who desired to join His restored Church without rebaptism to those who relied on the law of Moses without having faith in Jesus Christ. Using this comparison, the Lord emphasized the need to let go of "dead" religious practices (D&C 22:3)—including baptisms performed without priesthood authority—that cannot save and to embrace the new and everlasting covenant of the gospel, just as early Jewish converts to Christianity needed to do.

Ponder what you have learned from your study of Doctrine and Covenants 20–22 about the importance of actively participating in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Consider the following invitations, and set a goal regarding at least one of them:

- How can you make the partaking of the sacrament each week more meaningful?
- What can you do to more faithfully keep the covenants you made at baptism?
- How can you better exercise "patience and faith" (D&C 21:5) in order to follow the counsel and teachings of prophets?

CHAPTER 10

Doctrine and Covenants 23–25

Introduction and Timeline

Within days after the Church's organization on April 6, 1830, five individuals approached the Prophet Joseph Smith seeking to know their duties with respect to the restored Church. A personalized answer was given to each of them in a series of five revelations that were later combined into Doctrine and Covenants 23.

In June and July 1830, persecution arose in the Colesville, New York, area against the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church members. During this difficult time the Lord strengthened the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery by giving them the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 24, in which they were instructed to be patient in afflictions and to continue teaching and declaring the gospel.

Emma Smith, the Prophet's wife, was baptized on June 28, 1830. Persecution at the time forced her confirmation to be postponed until nearly two months later, in August. In July 1830, the Lord provided the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 25 to Emma. In this revelation the Lord told Emma she was an elect lady and gave her instructions regarding her family and Church responsibilities.

April 6, 1830

The restored Church of Jesus Christ was organized.

April 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 23 was received.

June 9, 1830

The first conference of the Church was held at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr.

June 28, 1830

Emma Smith was baptized.

June 28–July 2, 1830

Joseph Smith was arrested and acquitted of being a disorderly person in South Bainbridge, New York, and again in Colesville, New York.

July 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 24 was received.

July 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 25 was received.

August 1830

Emma Smith was confirmed as a member of the Church.

We encounter personal challenges and questions throughout our lives. Fortunately, the Lord has given us the help we need through the gift of revelation. Doctrine and Covenants 23–25 demonstrate the Lord's ability to speak personally to each of His children and give unique counsel according to their circumstances and needs. As you study these revelations, consider the personal messages the Lord has given you and your efforts to obey the promptings you have received.

Doctrine and Covenants 23: Additional Historical Background

In April 1830, shortly after the Church was organized, Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Joseph Smith Sr., and Joseph Knight Sr. received individual revelations from the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith. When these divine instructions were first published in the Book of Commandments in 1833, they were listed as five separate revelations. However, since the publication of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, they have been combined into one section.



Doctrine and Covenants 23

In response to their desires, the Lord reveals His will to five men

Read Doctrine and Covenants 23, looking for the Lord's counsel given to five individuals and considering how it might have influenced the course of each of their lives.

Doctrine and Covenants 23:1–2. "Beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation"

Oliver Cowdery was instrumental in the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon, and he had recently been ordained as the second elder of the Church (see D&C 20:3) when the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 23 was

received. However, the Lord, knowing Oliver's strengths and weaknesses, counseled him to beware of pride. Regarding this counsel, **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency said: "Oliver had great intellect and enjoyed marvelous spiritual blessings. However, over time he forgot the Lord's warning, and pride entered into his heart. Brigham Young later said of this pride: 'I have seen men who belonged to this kingdom, and who really thought that if they were not associated with it, it could not progress. One man especially, whom I now think of, … was peculiarly gifted in self-reliance and general ability. He said as much to the Prophet Joseph a number of times as to say that if he left this kingdom, it could not progress any further. I speak of Oliver Cowdery. He forsook it, and it still rolled on, and still triumphed over every opposing foe, and bore off safely all those who clung to it' [in *Journal of Discourses,* 11:252]" ("The Prophetic Voice," *Ensign,* May 1996, 5–6).

When difficulties arose among the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1837, Oliver Cowdery fell out of harmony with the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders and relocated to Missouri. In 1838, Church leaders in Missouri charged Oliver Cowdery with "persecuting Church leaders with vexatious lawsuits, seeking to destroy the character of Joseph Smith, not abiding ecclesiastical authority in temporal affairs, selling lands in Jackson County [which was against counsel given by the Lord], and leaving his calling as Assistant President of the Church and turning to the practice of law. Oliver refused to appear before the council, but he answered by letter. He denied the Church's right to dictate how he should conduct his life and asked that his fellowship with the Church be ended" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual,* 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 186–87). Oliver was excommunicated on April 12, 1838. He remained unaffiliated with the Church for 10 years but was rebaptized on November 12, 1848 in Kanesville, Iowa. Before Oliver could arrange to join the Saints in the Salt Lake Valley, he became very ill in Richmond, Missouri, where he died on March 3, 1850.

Doctrine and Covenants 23:3. "Thy duty is unto the church forever … because of thy family"

As the older brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Hyrum was an eyewitness to many of the earliest events of the Restoration. He assisted in the publication of the Book of Mormon by working directly with the printer. He served as president of the first branch of the Church in Colesville, New York. Throughout his life he was a loyal supporter of his brother and had a firm testimony that Joseph was a prophet of God.

In May 1829 the Lord had told Hyrum to study the Bible and also the Book of Mormon when the translation was completed and to wait to declare the gospel until the Church was organized and he obtained the word (see D&C 11:21–22). In April 1830 when the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 23 was given, after the Book of Mormon was published and the Church was organized, he was told that his calling was to exhort—to urge and encourage—"and to strengthen the Church continually" (D&C 23:3). **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who is a second great-grandson of Hyrum Smith, explained how Hyrum strengthened the Church and sustained his brother the Prophet:

"Throughout Hyrum's life, the forces of evil combined against him in an attempt to defeat him or at least to prompt him to stray off course.

"After his older brother Alvin's death in 1823, Hyrum bore significant responsibility in the Smith family. At the same time, he assisted and served his brother, Joseph the Prophet, throughout the long and arduous process of the Restoration. Ultimately, he joined Joseph and other martyrs of past gospel dispensations. His blood was shed as his final testimony to the world.

"Through it all, Hyrum stood firm. He knew the course his life would take, and he consciously chose to follow it. To Joseph, Hyrum became companion, protector, provider, confidant, and eventually joined him as a martyr. Unjust persecution engulfed them throughout their lives. Although he was older, Hyrum recognized his brother's divine mantle. While he gave Joseph strong counsel on occasion, Hyrum always deferred to his younger brother.

"Speaking to his brother, Joseph once said, 'Brother Hyrum, what a faithful heart you have got! Oh may the Eternal Jehovah crown eternal blessings upon your head, as a reward for the care you have had for my soul! O how many are the sorrows we have shared together' [in *History of the Church,* 5:107–8]. …

"Hyrum gave unfailing service to the Church" ("Hyrum Smith: 'Firm as the Pillars of Heaven,'" *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 6–7).

Doctrine and Covenants 23:4. "Thou art not as yet called to preach before the world"

Samuel Smith, a younger brother of the Prophet, was the third person baptized after the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood in May 1829. Though he is not as well known as his brothers Joseph and Hyrum, Samuel was one of the Eight Witnesses who saw the golden plates. At the time of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 23, the Lord did not command Samuel to preach the gospel. However, after he was ordained an elder on June 9, 1830, Samuel was called as the first missionary in the Church and began to visit neighboring towns around Palmyra to sell copies of the Book of Mormon and preach the gospel. On one such trip he sold a copy of the Book of Mormon that eventually led to the conversion of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball and many of their family members.

Doctrine and Covenants 23:5. "Thy calling also is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church"

Doctrine and Covenants 23 is the second recorded revelation addressed to Joseph Smith Sr. The Prophet's father provided essential support and encouragement to his son. He became a member of the Church the day it was organized. He fulfilled a mission, beginning in August 1830, with his son Don Carlos to upstate New York to take the gospel message to extended family members. In his later calling as the first patriarch of the Church, he had the opportunity to bless, exhort, and counsel many of the early Church members.

Doctrine and Covenants 23:6–7. "It is your duty to unite with the true church"

At the time that the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 23 was received, Joseph Knight Sr. was not yet baptized as a member of the Church. He was a close friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith and had shown him great kindness. He provided the Prophet with supplies while he worked on the translation of the Book of Mormon. He had felt a desire to be baptized with others on the day the Church was organized, but he refrained because he wanted to study the Book of Mormon further. He was the only one of the five individuals in this revelation who was not specifically told that he was "under no condemnation" (D&C 23:1, 3, 4, 5). Shortly after this revelation was received, Joseph Knight Sr. was baptized, and later Joseph Smith described him as "faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 462).

Each of the five individuals who approached the Prophet Joseph Smith to know the mind and will of the Lord for them received personalized counsel. What truths about receiving personal revelation can you learn from Doctrine and Covenants 23? What can you do to seek out individual direction from the Lord?

Doctrine and Covenants 24: Additional Historical Background

In late June 1830, Joseph Smith, Emma Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and John Whitmer traveled from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to visit Church members and other believers in Colesville, New York. On Saturday, June 26, a stream was dammed to prepare for baptisms the next day (Sunday), but a hostile mob destroyed the dam during the night. Early Monday morning, the dam was rebuilt and 13 people were baptized, including Emma Smith. By the time the baptisms were completed, however, a mob of nearly 50 men gathered, insulting and threatening to harm the Saints. That evening, the Saints met to confirm those who had been baptized earlier that day, but before the confirmations could be performed, Joseph was arrested on charges of "being a disorderly person, of setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 396).



The original home of Joseph Knight Sr. in Nineveh (Colesville), New York

On the way to his trial, Joseph escaped a mob with the help of the sympathetic constable who escorted him. After standing trial and being acquitted of the charges, Joseph was immediately arrested again by a constable from a different county. That night Joseph was ridiculed and abused by "a number of men" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* 402), and the next morning he stood trial. Joseph was again acquitted of the charges and escaped another mob as he traveled home.

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery made another attempt to unite with the recently baptized members in Colesville, but a mob gathered shortly after they arrived. Joseph and Oliver were forced to flee, barely escaping as the mob pursued them throughout the night (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* 414). Sometime in July, after they had returned to Harmony, Joseph and Oliver received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 24.

Doctrine and Covenants 24

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery receive direction for their callings

Read Doctrine and Covenants 24:1–9, looking for what the Lord taught Joseph Smith about his role as God's prophet.

Doctrine and Covenants 24:3. "Magnify thine office"

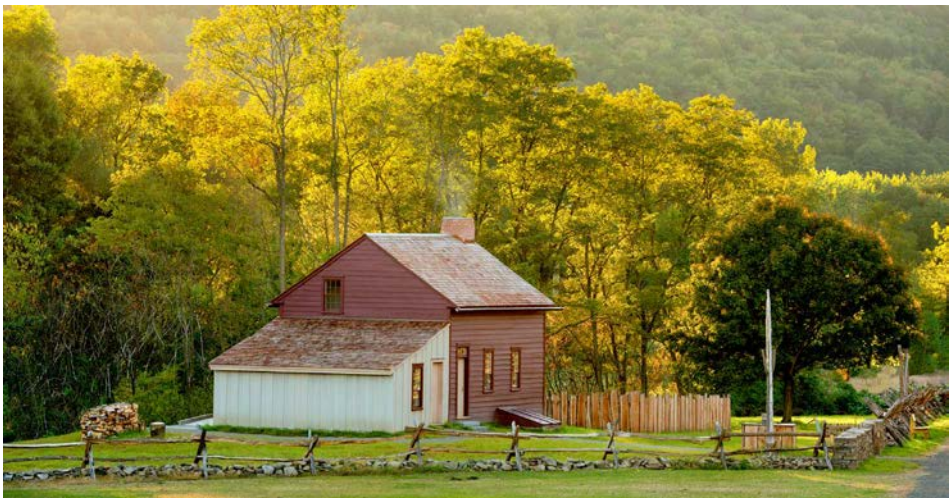
In March 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that when that work of translating the Book of Mormon plates was completed, he would be "ordained and go forth and deliver [the Lord's] words unto the children of men" (D&C 5:6). When

the Church was organized one year later, Joseph was ordained as the first elder. The divine instructions given in Doctrine and Covenants 24 served to remind Joseph that his time and attention were now to be devoted to his office as the Lord's prophet rather than to temporal concerns. The Lord explained that the Church members would support Joseph Smith temporally, for which they would be blessed (see also D&C 41:7; 43:12–14). In the face of the persecution that Joseph and early Church members were experiencing, the natural desire for many may have been to minimize their efforts to build the Church to avoid further persecution. However, the Lord counseled the Prophet to magnify his office, meaning to enlarge his time and devotion to his calling. Speaking to priesthood holders, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) said:

"That word *magnify* is interesting. As I interpret it, it means to enlarge, to make more clear, to bring closer, and to strengthen. …

"All of you, of course, are familiar with binoculars. When you put the lenses to your eyes and focus them, you magnify and in effect bring closer all within your field of vision. But if you turn them around and look through the other end, you diminish and make more distant that which you see.

"So it is with our actions as holders of the priesthood. When we live up to our high and holy calling, when we show love for God through service to fellowmen, when we use our strength and talents to build faith and spread truth, we magnify our priesthood. When, on the other hand, we live lives of selfishness, when we indulge in sin, when we set our sights only on the things of the world rather than on the things of God, we diminish our priesthood" ("Magnify Your Calling," *Ensign,* May 1989, 46–47).



Joseph Smith was commanded to plant crops and then go quickly to teach and minister to the people in Colesville, New York (see D&C 24:3–4).

Doctrine and Covenants 24:4. "If they receive thee not"

The Saints were to receive, or sustain, the Prophet Joseph Smith spiritually and to assist him temporally. Those who receive the prophet today and act on his words will receive blessings, and those who do not will experience consequences. **Sister**

Carol F. McConkie, First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, said:

"To be in harmony with heaven's divine purposes, we sustain the prophet and choose to live according to his words. …

"In a world threatened by a famine of righteousness and spiritual starvation, we have been commanded to sustain the prophet. As we give heed to, uphold, and affirm prophetic word, we witness that we have the faith to humbly submit to the will, the wisdom, *and* the timing of the Lord.

"We heed prophetic word even when it may seem unreasonable, inconvenient, and uncomfortable. According to the world's standards, following the prophet may be unpopular, politically incorrect, or socially unacceptable. But following the prophet is always right. …

"The Lord honors and favors those who will heed prophetic direction" ("Live according to the Words of the Prophets," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 77–78).

Doctrine and Covenants 24:8. "I am with thee"

The Prophet Joseph Smith was 24 years old when the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 24 was received. Up to that point in his life, Joseph had endured a number of challenges and trials, such as a painful leg operation, the death of a beloved brother, the ridicule and persecution of his community because of the First Vision and the golden plates, the death of his first child, the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages, and most recently, the persecution of mobs in Colesville, New York, and arrests and trials on false charges. Surely Joseph felt comforted when the Lord told him, "I have lifted thee up out of thine afflictions, and have counseled thee, that thou hast been delivered from all thine enemies, and … from the power of Satan and from darkness" (D&C 24:1). Yet the Prophet learned that he would need to "be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many" (D&C 24:8). Nevertheless, the Lord reassured him with the promise "I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days" (D&C 24:8).

In what ways can you apply the counsel and promise in Doctrine and Covenants 24:8 in your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 24:9. "In temporal labors thou shalt not have strength"

Church members and leaders do not receive increased ability to accumulate wealth. All experience the challenges and risks of mortality. Nevertheless, some may be blessed with talents for business, finance, and other matters. These were not Joseph Smith's gifts. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "[Joseph Smith] was almost continually on the edge of financial distress. In the midst of trying to fulfill the staggering responsibilities of his sacred calling, he had to labor as a farmer or merchant to provide a living for his family. He did this without the remarkable spiritual gifts that sustained him in his prophetic calling. The Lord had advised him that 'in temporal labors thou shalt not have strength, for this is not thy calling' (D&C 24:9)" ("Joseph, the Man and the Prophet," *Ensign,* May 1996, 71).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 24:10–19, looking for the special help that the Lord promised to Oliver Cowdery as he fulfilled his calling.

Doctrine and Covenants 24:13–14. "Require not miracles"

The servants of the Lord can cast out devils and administer blessings to the sick, but miracles occur according to the Lord's will and when faith is exercised. Miracles are not given to convert people to the truth but to strengthen those who demonstrate their faith in the Lord. (See also Mark 16:16–18, 20; Mormon 9:23–25; D&C 84:64–73.)

Doctrine and Covenants 24:15. "Casting off the dust of your feet"

The Lord gave the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery permission to "[cast] off the dust of [their] feet" as a testimony against those who would not receive them (D&C 24:15). Concerning this, **Elder James E. Talmage** (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "To ceremonially shake the dust from one's feet as a testimony against another was understood by the Jews to symbolize a cessation of fellowship and a renunciation of all responsibility for consequences that might follow. It became an ordinance of accusation and testimony by the Lord's instructions to His apostles [see Matthew 10:12–14; Mark 6:10–11; Luke 9:4–5]. … In the current dispensation, the Lord has similarly directed His authorized servants to so testify against those who wilfully and maliciously oppose the truth when authoritatively presented (see Doc. and Cov. 24:15; 60:15; 75:20; 84:92; 99:4). The responsibility of testifying before the Lord by this accusing symbol is so great that the means may be employed only under unusual and extreme conditions, as the Spirit of the Lord may direct" (*Jesus the Christ,* 3rd ed. [1916], 345). Full-time missionaries are not authorized to do this today.

Doctrine and Covenants 24:18. "Take no purse nor scrip"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were also commanded to "take no purse nor scrip" (D&C 24:18), meaning that they traveled without money and relied on the hospitality and kindness of others, particularly members of the Church (see D&C 24:3), to provide food and shelter. The Lord knew that the demands of leading the Church would require all of the Prophet's time and energy, and thus He directed that the Church provide the necessary temporal support for the Prophet and his family so he could devote his time and attention to the work of the Lord. In later revelations the Lord reiterated that the Church should provide temporal assistance for the Prophet so he could accomplish the work he was called to do (see D&C 41:7; 43:13). While the Church has no paid ministry, the Church today follows these same principles by providing a modest living allowance for Church leaders called to full-time Church service, allowing them to devote their full strength, time, and attention to the work of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 25: Additional Historical Background

Emma Smith was among 13 Saints baptized in Colesville, New York, on June 28, 1830. As a consequence of mob action and the Prophet Joseph Smith being

arrested on false charges, these newly baptized individuals were not confirmed as Church members that evening. Between Emma's baptism in June and her eventual confirmation in August, the Lord provided the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 25 to Emma through her husband, Joseph. Of all of the revelations that Joseph Smith received for individuals through July 1830, this was the first given to a woman. This revelation is an indication of the prominent role that Emma would fulfill in the Restoration. She was selected as the first president of the Relief Society in March 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 162).



The reconstructed home of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale, parents of Emma Hale Smith, in what was called Harmony Township, Pennsylvania

Doctrine and Covenants 25

The Lord gives Emma Smith personalized counsel and instruction

Read Doctrine and Covenants 25:1–9, looking for the Lord's counsel to Emma Smith that can also apply to anyone seeking to become a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 25:1. "Sons and daughters in my kingdom"

All people who come to earth are spirit children of our Heavenly Father. The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants both teach that those who receive the restored gospel and the accompanying covenants and ordinances, and are truly born again, are adopted into the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. He becomes the Father of their spiritual new birth and the Father of their salvation. This is what King Benjamin meant when, speaking to those who had undergone a mighty

change of heart and desired to enter into a covenant to keep the commandments of God, he declared: "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7; see also Ether 3:14; D&C 35:2; 39:4–6; 45:8). Emma Smith had recently been baptized into the Church, and, therefore, the Savior referred to her as His daughter in Doctrine and Covenants 25.

Doctrine and Covenants 25:2–3. "Walk in the paths of virtue before me"

The Christlike attribute of *virtue* "is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards … [and] is prerequisite to receiving the Spirit's guidance" (*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 118). Commenting on the Lord's direction to Emma Smith to "walk in the paths of virtue" (D&C 25:2), **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said:

"I feel those words were given to Emma Smith, and consequently to all of us, as a condition to be observed if we are to receive an inheritance in the kingdom of God. Lack of virtue is totally inconsistent with obedience to the commandments of God. There is nothing more beautiful than virtue. There is no strength that is greater than the strength of virtue. …

"It is interesting that in this revelation, when the Lord gave that great conditional promise to Emma, he went on to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art an elect lady.' [D&C 25:3.] I am so grateful for the gift of forgiveness extended by a merciful Father. Said the Lord through the prophet Isaiah concerning those who repent and are forgiven, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' (Isa. 1:18.)

"To any within the sound of my voice who may be grieving over serious mistakes in their lives, I hold out the assurance, given anciently and in modern revelation, that where there is repentance there may be forgiveness. Do not dwell upon the tragic mistakes of the past. Rather, 'look to God and live.' (Alma 37:47.)" ("If Thou Art Faithful," *Ensign,* Nov. 1984, 91).

Doctrine and Covenants 25:3. In what way was Emma "an elect lady"?

The Lord said that Emma Smith was "an elect lady" (D&C 25:3), meaning that she was chosen because of her faithfulness to assist in God's work. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) later explained the meaning of this title when he organized the Relief Society on March 17, 1842: "I assisted in commencing the organization of 'The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo' in the Lodge Room. Sister Emma Smith, President, and Sister Elizabeth Ann Whitney and Sarah M. Cleveland, Counselors. I gave much instruction, read in the New Testament, and Book of Doctrine and Covenants, concerning the Elect Lady, and showed that the elect meant to be elected to a certain work … and that the revelation was then fulfilled by Sister Emma's election to the Presidency of the Society, she having previously been ordained to expound the Scriptures" (in *History of the Church,* 4:552–53).

Doctrine and Covenants 25:4. What had Emma not seen that may have caused her to murmur?

The Lord knew and loved Emma Smith. His instruction for her to "murmur not" (D&C 25:4) came because she had not seen the Book of Mormon plates. She was present during some of the translation of the golden plates and even participated briefly as a scribe. It may have been difficult for her when the Three Witnesses and Eight Witnesses were permitted to view them and she was not. Though Emma did not have the opportunity to view the plates, she later explained that during the translation process, "the plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him [Joseph Smith] to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book. …

"I did not attempt to handle the plates, other than [through the linen cloth]. … I was satisfied that it was the work of God, and therefore did not feel it to be necessary to do so" ("Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Herald,* Oct. 1, 1879, 290; spelling standardized).

Doctrine and Covenants 25:5–9. "The office of thy calling"

Emma Smith endured many difficulties and sorrows as she also endured the hardships, abuse, and persecution inflicted upon her husband. The Lord called Emma to comfort and support her husband in his unique capacity as the Prophet of the Restoration. Additionally, Emma received significant assignments to lead and teach in the Church. **Sister Julie B. Beck,** a former Relief Society General President, taught the following regarding Emma's role in the Restoration:

"As the Lord began restoring His Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, He again [as He did anciently] included women in a pattern of discipleship. A few months after the Church was formally organized, the Lord revealed that Emma Smith was to be set apart as a leader and teacher in the Church and as an official helper to her husband, the Prophet [see D&C 25]. In her calling to help the Lord build His kingdom, she was given instructions about how to increase her faith and personal righteousness, how to strengthen her family and her home, and how to serve others.

"I hope my granddaughters will understand that from the day the gospel began to be restored in this dispensation, the Lord has needed faithful women to participate as His disciples" ("What I Hope My Granddaughters (and Grandsons) Will Understand about Relief Society," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 110).



The Lord called Emma Smith to "be for a comfort" to her husband, Joseph, in his afflictions (D&C 25:5).

Speaking of the important contributions women make to the Church, **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

"The women of this dispensation are distinct from the women of any other because this dispensation is distinct from any other. This distinction brings both privileges and responsibilities.

"… In 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball made a profound prophecy about the impact that covenant-keeping women would have on the future of the Lord's Church. He prophesied: 'Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world … will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world' [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 222–23].

"My dear sisters, you who are our vital associates during this winding-up scene, the day that President Kimball foresaw is today. You are the women he foresaw! Your virtue, light, love, knowledge, courage, character, faith, and righteous lives will draw good women of the world, along with their families, to the Church in unprecedented numbers!

"We, your brethren, need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices. The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God!

"President [Boyd K.] Packer declared:

"'We need women who are organized and women who can organize. We need women with executive ability who can plan and direct and administer; women who can teach, women who can speak out. …

"'We need women with the gift of discernment who can view the trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or dangerous' ["The Relief Society," *Ensign,* Nov. 1978, 8].

"Today, let me add that we need women who know how to make important things happen by their faith and who are courageous defenders of morality and families in a sin-sick world. We need women who are devoted to shepherding God's children along the covenant path toward exaltation; women who know how to receive personal revelation, who understand the power and peace of the temple endowment; women who know how to call upon the powers of heaven to protect and strengthen children and families; women who teach fearlessly" ("A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 96).

Doctrine and Covenants 25:7. The meaning of the word *ordained*

At the March 17, 1842, meeting to organize the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, Emma Smith was elected president, and Sarah M. Cleveland and Elizabeth Ann Whitney were selected as Emma's counselors in the presidency. John Taylor ordained Sarah and Elizabeth to their callings. However, when he "laid his hands on the head of Mrs. Smith," he "blessed her, and confirmed upon her all the blessings which have been conferred on her" (*The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History,* ed. Jill Mulvay Derr, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Kate Holbrook, and Matthew J. Grow [2016], 32; spelling standardized). The Prophet Joseph Smith clarified that Emma was not ordained at the meeting because "she was ordained at the time, the Revelation [D&C 25] was given" (*The First Fifty Years of Relief Society,* 32; spelling standardized; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals: Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843,* ed. Andrew H. Hedges and others [2011], 45, note 163).



The Lord called Emma Smith "to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church" (D&C 25:7).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained what was meant when the Lord said that Emma Smith would "be ordained under [the Prophet Joseph Smith's] hand (D&C 25:7): "The term 'ordain' was used generally in the early days of the Church in reference to both ordination and setting apart. … Men holding the Priesthood were said to have been 'ordained' to preside over branches and to perform special work. Sisters also were said to have been 'ordained' when they were called to some special duty or responsibility. In later years we developed a distinction between ordain and setting apart. Men are ordained to offices in the Priesthood and set apart to preside over stakes, wards, branches, missions, and auxiliary organizations. The sisters are set apart—not ordained—as presidents of auxiliary organizations, to missions, etc. This saying that Emma Smith was 'ordained' to expound scripture, does not mean that she had conferred upon her the Priesthood, but that she was set apart to this calling, which found its fulfillment in the Relief Society of the Church" (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* [1953], 1:126).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 25:10–16, looking for what Emma Smith was told to do to prepare to receive a crown of righteousness.

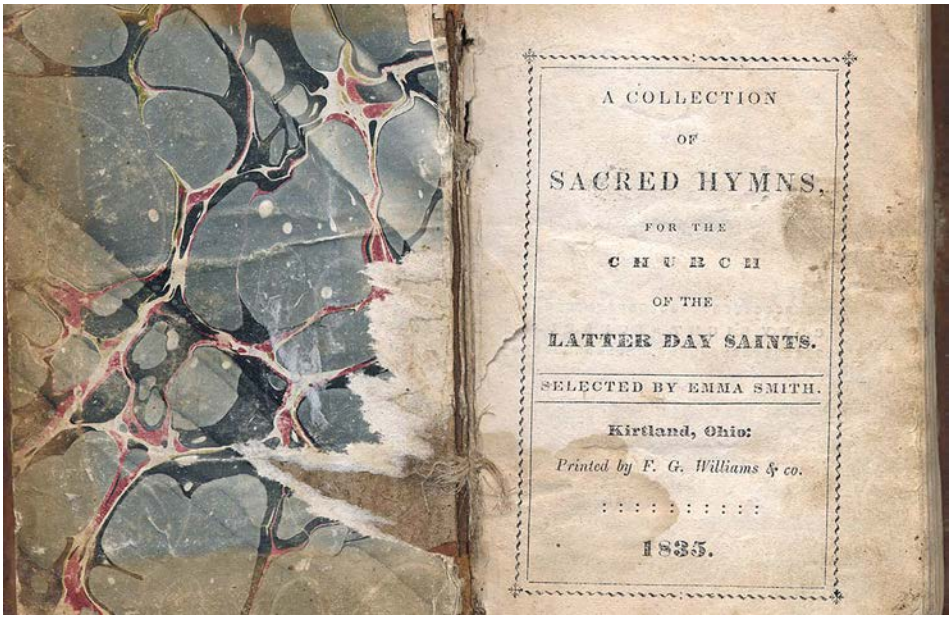
Doctrine and Covenants 25:10. "Lay aside the things of this world"

President Gordon B. Hinckley, commenting on the Lord's instructions to Emma Smith in Doctrine and Covenants 25:10, said: "I feel he was not telling Emma that she should not feel concerned about a place to live, food on her table, and clothing. He was saying to her that she should not be obsessed with these things, as so many of us are wont to be. He was telling her to get her thoughts on the higher things of

life, the things of righteousness and goodness, matters of charity and love for others, the things of eternity" ("If Thou Art Faithful," 91).

Doctrine and Covenants 25:11–12. "My soul delighteth in the song of the heart"

The scriptures provide evidence that music has often been an important part of worship for God's children (see 1 Chronicles 15:27; Matthew 26:30; Colossians 3:16; Alma 26:8; Mormon 7:7; Moroni 6:9; D&C 136:28). The Lord declared that "the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me" (D&C 25:12). Emma Smith was assigned by the Lord to "make a selection of sacred hymns" (D&C 25:11). In 1835, the first hymnal of the Church was published in Kirtland, Ohio, and the title page identifies Emma Smith as having selected the hymns. She gathered 90 hymn texts from mostly Protestant sources, along with new hymns written by Church members, such as W. W. Phelps.


A COLLECTION
OF
SACRED HYMNS,
FOR THE
CHURCH
OF THE
LATTER DAY SAINTS.
SELECTED BY EMMA SMITH.
Kirtland, Ohio:
Printed by F. G. Williams & co.
1835.

Title page of an original copy of the 1835 hymnal prepared by Emma Smith

What blessings have you received as a result of worshipping the Lord through appropriate music? Consider how choosing to listen to appropriate music will help you to draw closer to the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 25:16. "This is my voice unto all"

While some of the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants were originally given to specific individuals, it is appropriate and important for readers to view the doctrinal truths and principles found in scripture passages as if they had received them personally from the Lord. A diligent study of the scriptures will help readers identify these important truths. **President Marion G. Romney** (1897–1988) of the First Presidency explained, "One cannot honestly study the scriptures without learning gospel principles because the scriptures have been written to preserve principles for our benefit" ("The Message of the Old Testament," [address to

Church Educational System religious educators, Aug. 17, 1979], 3). When gospel truths and principles are identified and valued, they can be applied to everyday living.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 25:13 again, and consider how being faithful to covenants has blessed you. Think about what you can do to remember and keep covenants that you have made with God so that you can lift up your heart and rejoice.

CHAPTER 11

Doctrine and Covenants 26–28

Introduction and Timeline

Following the organization of the Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith traveled several times between Harmony, Pennsylvania, and the branches of the Church in New York to strengthen the members and build the Church. This left little time for him to tend to his farm and provide for his material needs. In July 1830, the Lord gave a revelation instructing Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer on how they should occupy their time while preparing for an upcoming Church conference in the fall. This revelation, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 26, gave direction for both spiritual and temporal matters and gave further instruction regarding the principle of common consent in the Church.

While at Harmony in August 1830, Joseph Smith went to obtain wine for the sacrament and was met by a heavenly messenger. The Prophet was given instructions regarding the emblems of the sacrament as well as the importance of putting on the whole armor of God. The directions he received are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 27.

Because of increasing persecution in Harmony, Pennsylvania, Joseph and Emma Smith accepted Peter Whitmer Sr.'s invitation to live with his family again in Fayette, New York. As they arrived in early September 1830, the Prophet learned that Hiram Page claimed to be receiving revelation for the Church through a stone. Joseph inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 28, in which the Lord clarified the order of receiving revelation for the Church.

June 1830

Mob persecution in Colesville, New York, prevented newly baptized converts from being confirmed.

June 1830

Joseph Smith begins the inspired translation of the Bible by dictating the "Visions of Moses" (Moses 1).

July 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 26 was received.

August 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 27 was received.

August 1830

Hiram Page claimed to be receiving revelation for the Church.

Early September 1830

Joseph and Emma Smith moved to Fayette, New York.

September 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 28 was received.

September 26–28, 1830

The second conference of the Church was held in Fayette, New York.

October 1830

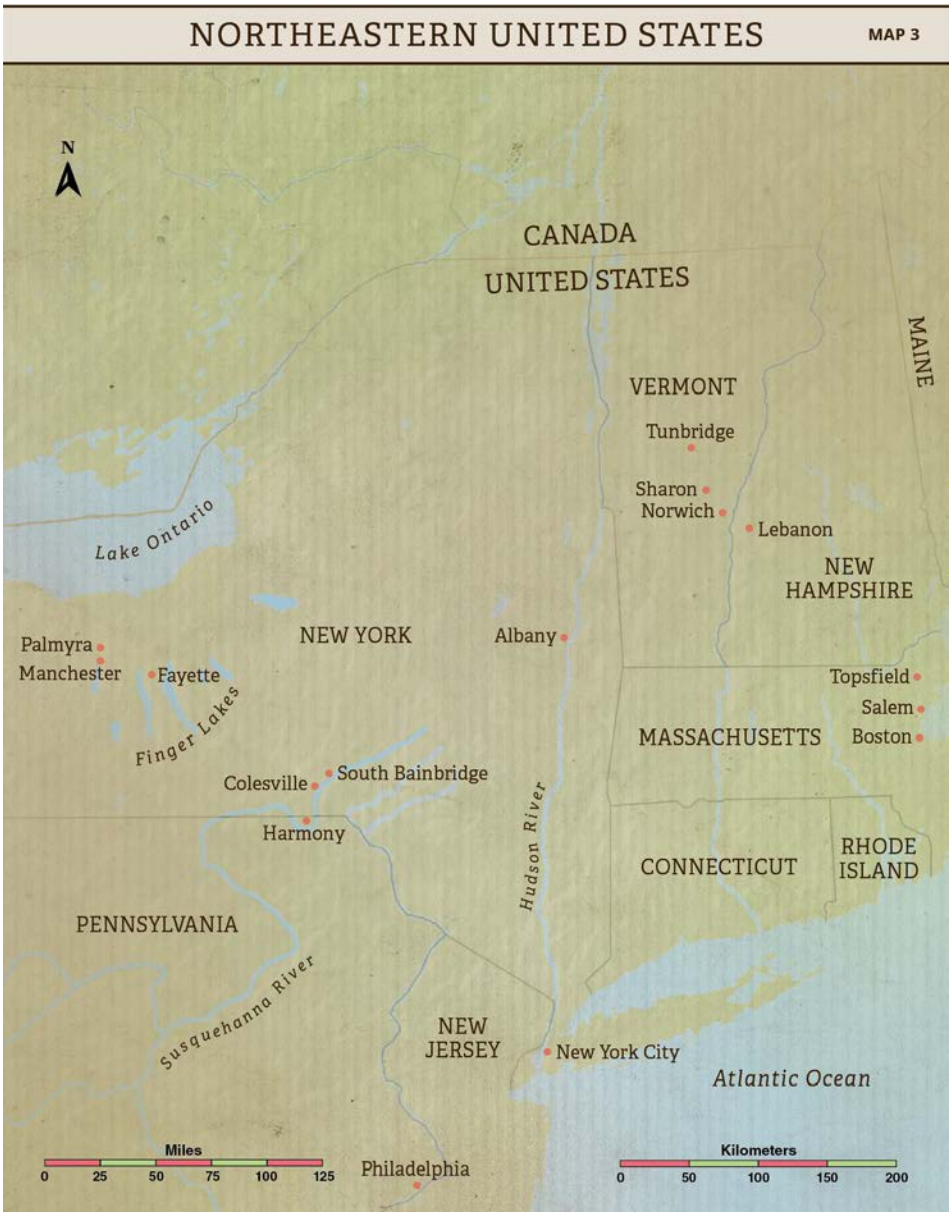
Oliver Cowdery and others departed on a mission to the Lamanites.

Consider different aspects of your life, such as work, family, personal development, and spiritual growth. Why is it important to balance the time you spend on each? As you read Doctrine and Covenants 26, think about the demands that the Prophet Joseph Smith faced and how he would need to balance his time to accomplish them.

Doctrine and Covenants 26: Additional Historical Background

Following the publication of the Book of Mormon and the organization of the Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith traveled back and forth from his home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, to visit the members of the three branches of the Church in New York (Manchester, Fayette, and Colesville). In Colesville, New York, some

newly baptized members were not confirmed after their baptism because of mob persecution and the arrest of the Prophet on false charges of "being a disorderly person, of setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon" (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 1:88). In July 1830, the Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer to return to Colesville and confirm the baptized individuals there (see D&C 26:1). Newel Knight recorded, "This revelation was a great consolation to the little band of brethren and sisters at Colesville after having been abandoned from time to time, by the Servants of God, in consequence of the wickedness of the wicked who were constantly seeking to destroy the work of God from the earth" (Newel Knight autobiography, circa 1871, 114–15, Church History Library, Salt Lake City).



Doctrine and Covenants 26

The Lord instructs His servants on the principle of common consent

Read Doctrine and Covenants 26:1–2, looking for instructions the Lord gave to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer.

Doctrine and Covenants 26:1. The Lord's instructions for the next conference

The Lord had previously instructed the Saints to "meet in conference once in three months, or from time to time as said conferences shall direct or appoint" (D&C 20:61). The first conference of the Church was held in Fayette, New York, on June 9, 1830. In July 1830, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was living at his home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, the Lord indicated that the time was approaching when Joseph "shall go to the west to hold the next conference" (D&C 26:1). That conference was held on September 26–28, 1830, in Fayette, which is approximately 100 miles (161 kilometers) northwest of Harmony.

Doctrine and Covenants 26:1. "Let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures"

During the translation of the Book of Mormon, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that "many plain and precious things" (1 Nephi 13:28) had been lost from the Bible and that those truths would someday be restored (see 1 Nephi 13:28, 32).

In addition to those truths taught in the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Bible and other revelations have helped to restore lost truths. In October 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery purchased a Bible from E. B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York, that was used during the inspired translation of the Bible. In June 1830, as Joseph began his revelatory translation of the Bible, he dictated the "Visions of Moses," which is now Moses 1 in the Pearl of Great Price. Although it is not known where Joseph and Oliver were when this revelation was received, the Prophet later recorded that "amid all the trials and tribulations we had to wade through, the Lord, who well knew our infantile and delicate situation, vouchsafed for us a supply of strength, and granted us 'line upon line of knowledge—here a little and there a little' [see 2 Nephi 28:30], of which the following [Moses 1] was a precious morsel" (in *History of the Church,* 1:98).

It is possible that the Lord's direction to "let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures" (D&C 26:1) was an instruction for Joseph to continue with his inspired translation of the Bible that is known today as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (see Robert J. Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, a History and Commentary* [1975], 27).

Doctrine and Covenants 26:2. "All things shall be done by common consent in the church"

The principle of common consent was first implemented in this dispensation when the Church was organized on April 6, 1830. The believers who were gathered at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. were asked to give their consent that Joseph Smith should serve as the presiding first elder in the Church and that Oliver Cowdery

should preside under Joseph as the second elder. This practice of common consent has continued in the Church since that time. It demonstrates a belief in the principle that every person is free to express his or her willingness or unwillingness to sustain those who are called to positions in God's kingdom here on earth. The principle of common consent was reaffirmed in several revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 26:2; 28:13; 38:34; 42:11; 104:71–72, 85; 124:144).

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what sustaining our leaders means for us today:

"Often we sing, 'We thank thee, O God, for a prophet' ['We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,' *Hymns,* no. 19]. Do you and I really understand what that means? Imagine the privilege the Lord has given us of sustaining His prophet, whose counsel will be untainted, unvarnished, unmotivated by any personal aspiration, and utterly true!

"How do we really sustain a prophet? Long before he became President of the Church, President Joseph F. Smith explained, 'It is an important duty resting upon the Saints who … sustain the authorities of the Church, to do so not only by the lifting of the hand, the mere form, but in *deed* and in truth' [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 211; emphasis added]" ("Sustaining the Prophets," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 74).



The Lord commanded the Saints that "all things shall be done by common consent" in the Church (D&C 26:2).

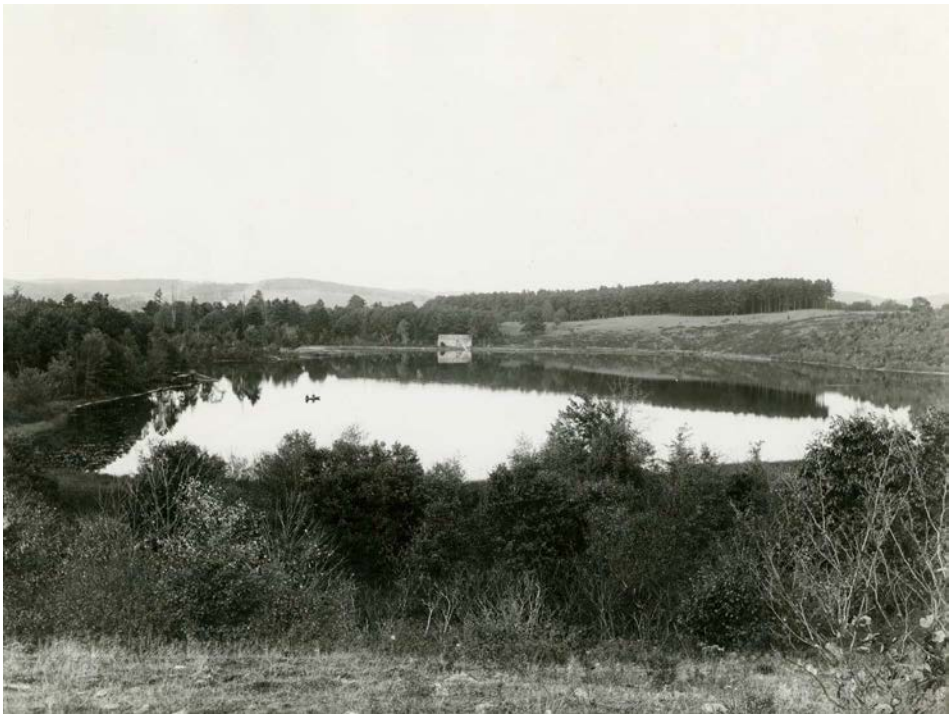
President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught that the purpose of a sustaining vote is not to express personal preference regarding those whom the Lord has duly called: "The priesthood selects, under the inspiration of our Father in heaven, and then it is the duty of the Latter-day Saints, as they are assembled in conference, or other capacity, by the uplifted hand, to sustain or to reject; and I take

it that no man has the right to raise his hand in opposition, or with contrary vote, unless he has a reason for doing so that would be valid if presented before those who stand at the head. In other words, I have no right to raise my hand in opposition to a man who is appointed to any position in this Church, simply because I may not like him, or because of some personal disagreement or feeling I may have, but only on the grounds that he is guilty of wrong doing, of transgression of the laws of the Church which would disqualify him for the position which he is called to hold" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:123–24).

After the Church members sustained President Thomas S. Monson as the President of the Church for the first time, **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized the covenantal nature of the law of common consent in the Church. He taught that when we raise our hands to the square, it is "not just a vote" but more "a private and personal commitment, even a covenant, to sustain and to uphold the laws, ordinances, commandments, and the prophet of God" ("Gaining a Testimony of God the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2008, 29).

In what ways are you blessed because "all things [are] done by common consent in the church, by much prayer and faith" (D&C 26:2)?

Doctrine and Covenants 27: Additional Historical Background



Emma Smith was baptized near Pickerel Pond on Joseph Knight's farm in Colesville, New York (photograph ca. 1907).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Before the Prophet Joseph Smith could return to Colesville, New York, Newel and Sally Knight went to visit him and his wife, Emma, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, in August 1830. Because of persecution from the mob in June, neither Sally Knight nor Emma Smith had been confirmed members of the Church and given the gift of the Holy Ghost. Before the Knights returned home, the couples decided to partake of the sacrament together and perform the confirmations. Joseph wrote, "I set out to go to procure some wine for the occasion, but had gone only a short distance when I was met by a heavenly messenger" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 428). Joseph received the instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 27 from the messenger.

Joseph returned home and, after preparing wine of their own making, those in attendance held a small meeting and partook of the sacrament, and Emma and Sally were confirmed. The Prophet later recorded that "the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us, [and] we praised the Lord God, and rejoiced exceedingly" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* 432).

Doctrine and Covenants 27:1–4

Joseph Smith is taught truths regarding the emblems of the sacrament

In August 1830 the Church was still in its infancy and the ordinance of the sacrament had only been performed a few times. Read Doctrine and Covenants 27:1–4, looking for what the heavenly messenger taught the Prophet Joseph Smith about the sacrament.

Doctrine and Covenants 27:1–4. "It mattereth not what ye shall eat or … drink when ye partake of the sacrament"

The sacrament prayers recorded in scripture indicate that wine was used to remind believers of the Savior's blood, which was shed in their behalf (see Moroni 5; D&C 20:40, 78–79). Wine was used for the sacrament at the Church's organization on April 6, 1830. The heavenly messenger that spoke to the Prophet Joseph Smith in August 1830 said that wine was not necessary to commemorate the Lord's sacrifice as long as we partake "with an eye single to [His] glory" (D&C 27:2). Joseph was specifically warned not to purchase wine or strong drink from the enemies of the Church for use in the sacrament, but he could use wine of his own making. Even after the Word of Wisdom was received in 1833, the use of water instead of wine was not adopted everywhere at first. Today, however, water is used exclusively in the Church for the sacrament.

When bread is not available for use in the sacrament, an appropriate substitute may be used. For example, potatoes or potato peelings were sometimes used for the sacrament by European Latter-day Saints during World War II (see Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1952, 120).



Interior of the reconstructed home of Joseph and Emma Smith in Harmony, Pennsylvania, where they welcomed Newel and Sally Knight in August 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 27:2. "Partake of the sacrament … with an eye single to my glory"

Participating in the ordinance of the sacrament to commemorate Jesus Christ's Atonement should be the most important part of our worship on the Sabbath. Our duty to remember the sacrifice of the Savior's body and blood while we partake of the sacrament was described by the angel who appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 27:2). Specifically, we are to "partake of the sacrament … with an eye single to [the Lord's] glory" (D&C 27:2). Having an "eye single" means to be spiritually focused on the Savior and His redeeming work. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminds us of how easily distracted we may be from the true purpose of the sacrament:

"The ordinance of the sacrament makes the sacrament meeting the most sacred and important meeting in the Church. It is the only Sabbath meeting the entire family can attend together. …

"During sacrament meeting—and especially during the sacrament service—we should concentrate on worship and refrain from all other activities, especially from behavior that could interfere with the worship of others. … Sacrament meeting is not a time for reading books or magazines. Young people, it is not a time for whispered conversations on cell phones or for texting persons at other locations. When we partake of the sacrament, we make a sacred covenant that we will always remember the Savior. How sad to see persons obviously violating that covenant in the very meeting where they are making it" ("Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 17–19).

What does it mean to you to partake of the sacrament "with an eye single to [His] glory" (D&C 27:2)? What truths about partaking of the sacrament can you identify and apply from Doctrine and Covenants 27:2 that can help you have a more meaningful experience during the ordinance of the sacrament? In what ways have you been strengthened by remembering the Savior when partaking of the sacrament?

Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–18

The Lord describes a great latter-day gathering of His servants from all dispensations to partake of the sacrament

Through the heavenly messenger, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that a day would come when He would again partake of the sacrament with His people on the earth. Read Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–18, and identify who will be in attendance at this sacred event.

Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–14. "I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth"

When the Savior met with His disciples in Jerusalem to partake of the Passover meal and institute the ordinance of the sacrament, He informed them that He would "not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (Luke 22:18; see also Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25). This prophecy anticipates the time when Jesus Christ will partake of the sacrament as part of the events surrounding His return to the earth in glory. In August 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that not only will ancient prophets join together to partake of the emblems of the sacrament with the Savior but also "all those whom [the] Father hath given [Him] out of the world" (D&C 27:14), meaning all faithful members of the Church who come unto Christ and endure to the end.



Jesus Christ promised that the time was coming when He would "drink of the fruit of the vine" with His disciples again, as He had during the Last Supper (D&C 27:5).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained who would have the privilege of participating in this important event: "Jesus is going to partake of the sacrament again with his mortal disciples on earth. But it will not be with mortals only. He names others who will be present and who will participate in the sacred ordinance [see D&C 27:5–14]. … The sacrament is to be administered in a future day, on this earth, when the Lord Jesus is present, and when all the righteous of all ages are present. This, of course, will be a part of the grand council at Adam-ondi-Ahman"

(*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 587). Concerning that event, Elder McConkie also taught: "Every faithful person in the whole history of the world, every person who has so lived as to merit eternal life in the kingdom of the Father will be in attendance and will partake, with the Lord, of the sacrament" (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 595).

Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–13. Priesthood keys

Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–13 contains a list of some of the ancient prophets and apostles who held priesthood keys of authority and who will someday participate in the sacrament with Savior. The restoration of these priesthood keys in the latter days was essential to the establishment of the dispensation of the fulness of times. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained:

"God purposed in Himself that there should not be an eternal fullness until every dispensation should be fulfilled and gathered together in one. …

"… All the ordinances and duties that ever have been required by the Priesthood, under the directions and commandments of the Almighty in any of the dispensations, shall all be had in the last dispensation, therefore all things had under the authority of the Priesthood at any former period, shall be had again, bringing to pass the restoration spoken of by the mouth of all the Holy Prophets" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 511).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie testified that the priesthood keys of authority were transmitted to Joseph Smith and subsequent prophets and apostles in our dispensation: "We know that God has in these last days restored again the fulness of his everlasting gospel for the salvation of all men on earth who will believe and obey; and that he has called Joseph Smith, Jr., to be his latter-day prophet, to be the first and chief Apostle in the dispensation of the fulness of times, and has given him every key and priesthood and power that Peter and the Apostles and the ancient prophets held in the days of their ministry; and that these keys and this holy Apostleship have descended [through each President of the Church to the present]; and that this holy Apostleship and these keys will continue to descend from one Apostle to another until the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the clouds of heaven to reign personally upon the earth. … His is the only name given under heaven whereby salvation comes, and we are his ministers" ("Upon This Rock," *Ensign,* May 1981, 77).

Doctrine and Covenants 27:15–18. "Take upon you my whole armor"

The Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian Saints to "put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11; see Ephesians 6:11–18), and the same counsel was given to the Latter-day Saints (see D&C 27:15–18). **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) explained some of the symbolic meaning of the armor of God and what we should seek to protect if we are to put on the whole armor of God: "We have the four parts of the body that the Apostle Paul said or saw to be the most vulnerable to the powers of darkness. The loins, typifying virtue, chastity. The heart typifying our conduct. Our feet, our goals or objectives in life and finally our head, our thoughts" (*Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace,* Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Nov. 9, 1954], 2).

The Lord's declaration "Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor" (D&C 27:15) follows His promise that not only His servants from past dispensations will be present at the great sacrament meeting when he returns to earth but "all those whom the Father hath given me out of the world" (D&C 27:14). This suggests an important connection between putting on the armor of God and being prepared and worthy to be numbered among those who will gather with the Savior before His return in glory to earth.

As you think about the imagery of the armor of God described in Doctrine and Covenants 27:15–18, consider how spiritual strength can protect you against temptation and evil. What can you do to receive the help and protection promised in this passage?

Doctrine and Covenants 28: Additional Historical Background

On the day the Church was organized, the Lord commanded the members of His Church to "give heed unto all [the Prophet's] words and commandments … for his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth" (D&C 21:4–5). However, it took time for Church members to fully understand the meaning of this doctrine. In the summer of 1830, Oliver Cowdery wrote to the Prophet Joseph Smith to inform him that he felt there was an error in one of the commandments contained in the passage now recorded as Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, and Oliver commanded the Prophet to change the wording.

Joseph Smith explained: "I immediately wrote to him in reply, in which I asked him, by what authority he took upon him to command me to alter, or erase, to add or diminish to or from a revelation or commandment from Almighty God. In a few days afterwards I visited him and Mr. Whitmer's family, when I found the family in general of [Oliver's] opinion … ; and it was not without both labor and perseverance that I could prevail with any of them to reason calmly on the subject. … Finally, … I succeeded in bringing not only the Whitmer family, but also Oliver Cowdery also to acknowledge that they had been in error" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* 426).

In early September 1830 another serious challenge to the Lord's order of revelation in His Church occurred. As a result of increasing persecution in Harmony, Pennsylvania, Joseph and Emma Smith moved to the Peter Whitmer Sr. home in Fayette, New York. Upon their arrival, Joseph learned that Hiram Page was claiming to have received revelations through a stone. Excitement and support for these so-called revelations abounded among the Whitmers and Oliver Cowdery.

Newel Knight, who had arrived in Fayette to attend the second conference of the Church, shared the following:

"On my arrival I found Brother Joseph in great distress of mind on account of [Hiram] Page, who had managed to get up some dissension of feeling among the brethren by giving revelations concerning the government of the Church and other matters, which he claimed to have received through the medium of a stone he possessed. He had quite a roll of papers full of these revelations, and many in the

Church were led astray by them. Even Oliver Cowdery and the Whitmer family had given heed to them, although they were in contradiction to the New Testament and the revelations of these last days. Here was a chance for Satan to work among the little flock, and he sought by this means to accomplish what persecution failed to do. Joseph was perplexed and scarcely knew how to meet this new exigency [emergency]. That night I occupied the same room that he did and the greater part of the night was spent in prayer and supplication. After much labor with these brethren they were convinced of their error, and confessed the same, renouncing the revelations as not being of God, but acknowledged that Satan had conspired to overthrow their belief in the true plan of salvation. In consequence of these things Joseph enquired of the Lord before conference commenced and received the revelation [recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 28], wherein God explicitly states His mind and will concerning the receiving of revelation.

"Conference having assembled, the first thing done was to consider the subject of the stone in connection with [Hiram] Page, and after considerable investigation and discussion, Brother Page and all the members of the Church present renounced the stone, and the revelations connected with it, much to our joy and satisfaction. …

"During this time we had much of the power of God manifested among us and it was wonderful to witness the wisdom that Joseph displayed on this occasion, for truly God gave unto him great wisdom and power, and it seems to me, even now, that none who saw him administer righteousness under such trying circumstances, could doubt that the Lord was with him, as he acted—not with the wisdom of man, but with the wisdom of God" ("Newel Knight's Journal," in *Scraps of Biography* [1883], 10:64–65).

Doctrine and Covenants 28

Oliver Cowdery learns that only the President of the Church can receive revelation for the entire Church

Read Doctrine and Covenants 28, looking for what the Lord taught the Saints regarding the order of revelation in His Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 28:1–7. Revelation follows proper lines of authority

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 28, given through the Prophet Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery, the Lord gave the proper order of revelation in the Church. Although Oliver was ordained as the second elder of the Church, his role was not to receive revelations or write commandments for the Church, nor was he to command Joseph Smith, who stood at the head of the Church. Rather, Oliver was to follow the pattern found in the example of Aaron, "to declare faithfully the commandments and the revelations" (D&C 28:3) that had been given to the Lord's prophet. Like Moses, Joseph Smith was the prophet who had received the keys of the kingdom in his day. Nevertheless, Oliver was promised that he would be led by the Comforter and would be blessed with power and authority as he taught the things revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith.



The Lord compared Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to Moses and Aaron (see D&C 28:2–3).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: "It was very necessary that Oliver Cowdery should receive this admonition, for he was inclined to take issue with the Prophet even in regard to matters of revelation. Much good came out of this unpleasant incident, for the members were taught that there was order in the Church and only one appointed to receive commandments and revelations for their guidance, and he was the one God had called" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:135).

In speaking about this proper order of revelation, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "It is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority, higher than themselves; … if any person have a vision or a visitation from a heavenly messenger, it must be for his own benefit or instruction; for the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 197–98). On a later occasion he declared, "The Presidents or [First] Presidency are over the Church; and revelations of the mind and will of God to the Church, are to come through the Presidency. This is the order of heaven, and the power and privilege of [the Melchizedek] Priesthood. It is also the privilege of any officer in this Church to obtain revelations, so far as relates to his particular calling and duty in the Church" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 197).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks outlined how this order of revelation continues today in the Church: "Our Heavenly Father's house is a house of order, where his servants are commanded to 'act in the office in which [they are] appointed' (D&C 107:99). This principle applies to revelation. Only the president of the Church receives revelation to guide the entire Church. Only the stake president receives revelation for the special guidance of the stake. The person who receives revelation for the ward is

the bishop. For a family, it is the priesthood leadership of the family. Leaders receive revelation for their own stewardships. Individuals can receive revelation to guide their own lives. But when one person purports to receive revelation for another person outside his or her own stewardship—such as a Church member who claims to have revelation to guide the entire Church or a person who claims to have a revelation to guide another person over whom he or she has no presiding authority according to the order of the Church—you can be sure that such revelations are not from the Lord" ("Revelation" [Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 29, 1981], 7, speeches.byu.edu).

In what ways will an understanding of the order of revelation in the Church help protect you from deception?

Doctrine and Covenants 28:8–10, 14–16. Oliver Cowdery is called on a mission to the Lamanites

Oliver Cowdery was called to lead a mission to the Lamanites (see D&C 28:8–10, 14–16; see also D&C 30:5–6; 32:1–3). The term *Lamanites* refers to a group of people in the Book of Mormon, many of whom were descendants of Laman, the eldest son of Lehi. The Lord's use of the term *Lamanites* in Doctrine and Covenants 28:9 indicates that some of Lehi's descendants were among the Native Americans, or American Indians, who, at the time, were living on what was considered the western border of the United States. In May 1830, the United States Congress passed the Indian Removal Bill, which required all American Indians to relocate to the federal Indian Territory west of the state of Missouri. Thus, Oliver Cowdery and his companions traveled to western Missouri, "on the borders by the Lamanites" (D&C 28:9), to teach the gospel to American Indians.

The Book of Mormon does not claim that American Indians descended exclusively from the family of Lehi. **President Anthony W. Ivins** (1852–1934) of the First Presidency said: "We must be careful in the conclusions that we reach. The Book of Mormon teaches the history of three distinct peoples … who came from the old world to this continent. It does not tell us that there was no one here before them. It does not tell us that people did not come after. And so if discoveries are made which suggest differences in race origins, it can very easily be accounted for, and reasonably, for we do believe that other people came to this continent" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 15).

Doctrine and Covenants 28:9. "The city Zion shall be built … on the borders by the Lamanites"

After the Book of Mormon was published, the Saints became familiar with prophecies about latter-day Zion—the New Jerusalem to be built upon the American continent (see 3 Nephi 20:22; 21:22–23; Ether 13:4–8). It was only natural that the Saints would inquire about its location. In the summer of 1830, Hiram Page sought to discover the location of the latter-day city of Zion through a stone that he believed enabled him to receive revelation. However, he was eventually convinced that he had been deceived by Satan, and he renounced his purported "revelations." Along with Oliver Cowdery's call to preach the gospel to the Lamanites, the Lord

indicated that the location for the city Zion "shall be on the borders by the Lamanites" (D&C 28:9). Months later, the location for Zion was identified as being in Missouri (see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 57:1–3 in this manual).

Doctrine and Covenants 28:11–14. "Satan deceiveth him"

An issue in the controversy created by Hiram Page was his presumption that the Lord would permit him to obtain revelation that was not his privilege to receive. This presumption further allowed him to be deceived and influenced by Satan. The Whitmer family and others in the Fayette, New York, area, including Oliver Cowdery, who believed Hiram Page's claims were similarly deceived. According to Doctrine and Covenants 28, Oliver was assigned to correct Hiram Page and to teach true principles. The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded that at the September 1830 conference, "Brother Page, as well as the whole church who were present, renounced the said stone, and all things connected therewith" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* 452).

President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency testified that the President of the Church is the only person who can receive revelation for the whole Church and explained how this provides order and protection for Latter-day Saints:

"Some have claimed higher spiritual gifts or authority outside the established priesthood authority of the Church. They say that they believe in the principles and ordinances of the gospel and accept the President of the Church as the legal administrator thereof, but claim they have a higher order which the President does not have. This is often done to justify an activity which is not in accordance with the doctrines of the Church. There can be no higher order, however, because the President of the Church both holds and exercises all of the keys of the kingdom of God on earth. The Lord has said of the President of the Church 'that none else shall be appointed [to receive commandments and revelations] except it be through him' [D&C 43:4]. …

"… Continuing revelation and leadership for the Church come through the President of the Church, and he will never mislead the Saints" ("The Prophetic Voice," *Ensign,* May 1996, 6–7).

Doctrine and Covenants 28:11. "Those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me"

In northwestern New York during the early 1800s, many people believed individuals could receive knowledge supernaturally through an instrument such as a stone or a divining rod. Hiram Page claimed that words would appear on the stone he possessed. He said that after he dictated the words and had them copied to paper, the words would disappear from the stone and others would appear (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents: Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 184). The Lord denounced Hiram Page's false revelations.

In addition to using the Urim and Thummim, the Prophet Joseph Smith may have used a seer stone he found in his youth to translate a portion of the Book of Mormon. Several possibilities exist as to how the Prophet used the Urim and

Thummim to translate the Book of Mormon and about other particulars of the translation process, but **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated, "We simply do not know the details" ("By the Gift and Power of God," *Ensign,* Jan. 1997, 39). One very important difference between Joseph Smith and Hiram Page is that God called Joseph Smith to perform the work of translation and to receive revelation for the Church (see D&C 21:1–6). In contrast, the Lord clearly stated that Satan was deceiving Hiram Page and those who believed in the words Hiram dictated (see D&C 28:11).

President James E. Faust cautioned us to avoid activities that may invite Satan's influence into our lives:

"Satan is not an enlightening subject. I consider him to be the great imitator. …

"It is not good practice to become intrigued by Satan and his mysteries. No good can come from getting close to evil. Like playing with fire, it is too easy to get burned. … The only safe course is to keep well distanced from him and any of his wicked activities or nefarious practices. The mischief of devil worship, sorcery, witchcraft, voodooism, casting spells, black magic, and all other forms of demonism should always be avoided" ("The Forces That Will Save Us," *Ensign,* Jan. 2007, 5).

Consider how your life has been blessed by giving heed to living prophets. Make a decision about what you will do if others try to convince you of teachings that are not in harmony with the scriptures or the words of the living prophets.

CHAPTER 12

Doctrine and Covenants 29

Introduction and Timeline

In September 1830, before the second conference of the Church was held in Fayette, New York, some early Church members anticipated that Book of Mormon prophecies about Zion and the gathering of God's elect would soon be fulfilled. A group of six elders and three other Church members met together and asked the Lord about these prophecies. In response to their inquiry, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 29. In this revelation the Lord taught them about the gathering of the Savior's elect before His Second Coming and about our redemption from the Fall of Adam and Eve through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

June–October 1830

Joseph Smith dictated Moses 1–5 as he worked on the inspired translation of the early chapters of Genesis.

August–September 1830

Church members were confused by Hiram Page's alleged revelations.

September 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 29 was received.

September 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 28 was received (likely after Doctrine and Covenants 29).

September 26–28, 1830

The second conference of the Church was held in Fayette, New York.

October 1830

Oliver Cowdery and his missionary companions departed on a mission to the Lamanites.

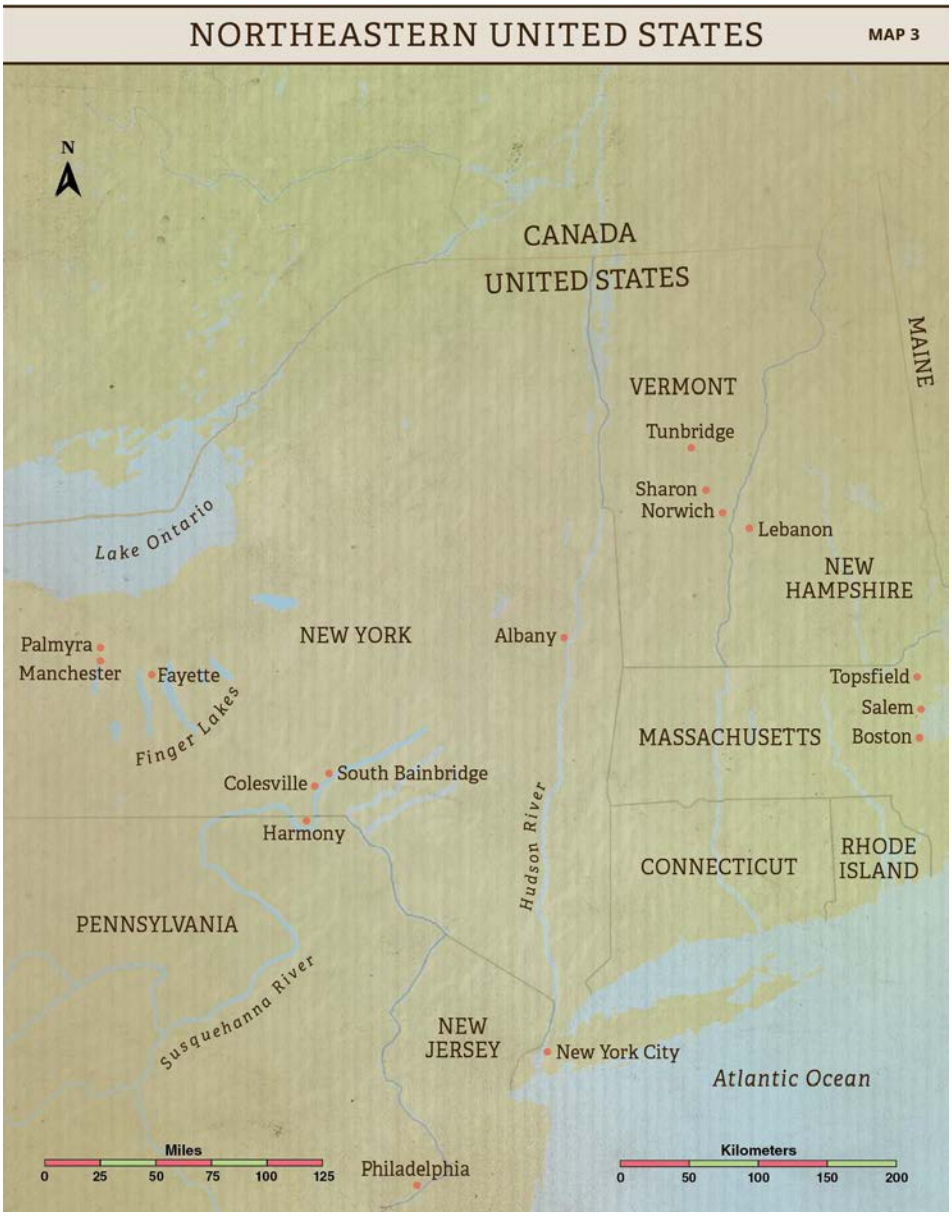
Have you ever felt concerned about the calamities and tribulations that will take place in the last days? Do you feel prepared to stand before God and be judged at the Final Judgment? As you read Doctrine and Covenants 29, look for what you can do to prepare your heart for the Second Coming of the Lord and the Final Judgment.

Doctrine and Covenants 29: Additional Historical Background

When Joseph Smith moved to Fayette, New York, in September 1830, he found that the Saints there were curious about the fulfillment of Book of Mormon prophecies regarding Zion. These prophecies spoke of the latter-day gathering of the house of Israel in order to build Zion, or "the New Jerusalem," and of the promised return of Jesus Christ (see 3 Nephi 21:23–26; see also 3 Nephi 16:18). A group that included six elders and three other Church members sought for further understanding regarding the coming forth of Zion and the transgression of Adam and Eve. In response to their enquiry, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 29 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 177–78).

The truths taught in Doctrine and Covenants 29 added to the Saints' understanding about the need for Zion in the last days and may have corrected some of the doctrinal confusion caused by Hiram Page's writings (see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 28 in this manual). The Prophet Joseph Smith had been engaged since June 1830 on an inspired translation of the early

chapters of Genesis, and this information provided clarification about Adam and Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden. Furthermore, Doctrine and Covenants 29 provided important truths about the gathering of Israel and the plan of salvation before Oliver Cowdery and his companions left on a mission to preach the gospel to the Lamanites.



Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–21

Jesus Christ calls His people to gather in preparation for His Second Coming

Read Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–13, looking for the promised blessings that the righteous will receive at the Lord's Second Coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–2. "Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I AM"

During His premortal ministry, Jehovah identified Himself to Moses as "I AM" and as the God of the ancient patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Exodus 3:13–15). The title "I AM" is a variation of "Jehovah" and comes from the first-person Hebrew verb meaning "I exist," and represents the eternal and all-powerful nature of God (see also D&C 68:6). During the summer months before the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 29 was received, the Prophet Joseph Smith had started his inspired translation of the book of Genesis in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ's introduction of Himself recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–2 confirmed the truth that He was indeed the God of the Old Testament. These verses also confirm that, just as Jesus Christ gathered, protected, and delivered ancient Israel when they were in bondage in Egypt, He will gather His latter-day children under His protection if they will hearken unto His voice.



Joseph Smith was staying in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr., in Fayette, New York, when he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 29.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:4–8. The gathering of the elect

The small group of elders who met with the Prophet Joseph Smith when this revelation was given learned that the members of the Church in this dispensation are chosen to declare the gospel and to gather the Lord's "elect," whom God defined as those who "hear [His] voice and harden not their hearts" (D&C 29:7). The elect are also those who are chosen to assist the Lord in the work of salvation (see D&C 101:39–40; 115:5; 138:55–56). The gathering of the elect occurs when individuals accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, make covenants with God, and gather with the faithful Saints. This gathering of the scattered house of Israel must occur

so that God's people can prepare for "the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked" (D&C 29:8).

In October 1830, Oliver Cowdery was sent on a mission to the Lamanites to prepare for the time when the Lord would identify the place where the Saints were to gather (see D&C 29:8–9). The Saints later learned that the Lord intended for Church members to gather in an orderly manner in Jackson County, Missouri (see D&C 57:1–3; 58:56). However, those who later gathered in Jackson County were driven from their homes, and eventually the gathering shifted to Far West, Missouri (see D&C 115:7–8), then to Nauvoo, Illinois (see D&C 124:25–28, 55), and then later "to the West" (D&C 136:1). Today, it is no longer necessary to relocate to a specific geographical place in order to gather with the Church. Rather, Latter-day Saints are to help build up the stakes of Zion wherever they live (see D&C 101:20–22).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained: "The gathering of Israel consists of joining the true Church and … coming to a knowledge of the true God. … Any person, therefore, who has accepted the restored gospel, and who now seeks to worship the Lord in his own tongue and with the Saints in the nations where he lives, has complied with the law of the gathering of Israel and is heir to all of the blessings promised the Saints in these last days" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball,* ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 439).

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught how the gathering of God's elect occurs today:



God has called us "to bring to pass the gathering of [His] elect" (D&C 29:7).

"Here on earth, missionary work is crucial to the gathering of Israel. … Consequently, servants of the Lord have gone forth proclaiming the Restoration. In many nations our missionaries have searched for those of scattered Israel. …

"The choice to come unto Christ is not a matter of physical location; it is a matter of individual commitment. People can be 'brought to the knowledge of the Lord' [3 Nephi 20:13] without leaving their homelands. True, in the early days of the Church, conversion often meant emigration as well. But now the gathering takes place in each nation. The Lord has decreed the establishment of Zion [see D&C 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6] in each realm where He has given His Saints their birth and nationality. Scripture foretells that the people 'shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise' [2 Nephi 9:2]. 'Every nation is the gathering place for its own people' [Bruce R. McConkie, in

Conference Report, Mexico City Mexico Area Conference 1972, 45]. The place of gathering for Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; the place of gathering for Nigerian Saints is in Nigeria; the place of gathering for Korean Saints is in Korea; and so forth. Zion is 'the pure in heart' [D&C 97:21]. Zion is wherever righteous Saints are. Publications, communications, and congregations are now such that nearly all members have access to the doctrines, keys, ordinances, and blessings of the gospel, regardless of their location" ("The Gathering of Scattered Israel," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2006, 81).

How has embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ and participating in the Lord's Church blessed your life? In what ways can you assist in the work of gathering the house of Israel?

Doctrine and Covenants 29:9. The proud will burn as stubble

The Lord warned that those who are "proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble" and burn at His coming (D&C 29:9). While pride is a common sin that affects everyone to some degree, in this case "the proud" refers to those who cannot abide the Lord's glory because of wickedness. In a later revelation, the Lord clarified that this group includes "they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth" (D&C 76:103–4).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:9–13. "I will reveal myself … with power and great glory"

Near the conclusion of the Savior's mortal life, His disciples asked when the end of the world would occur and what signs would be given that His coming was near (see Matthew 24:3; D&C 45:15–16). The Lord's declaration to His Saints in the latter days is that "the hour is nigh" (D&C 29:10). When Jesus Christ returns, His Apostles who "were with [Him] in [His] ministry at Jerusalem" will stand with Him, wearing "robes of righteousness, with crowns upon their heads" (D&C 29:12). This description signifies their royal authority in God's kingdom. Doctrine and Covenants 29:12–13 indicates that "as many as have loved me and kept my commandments" will also receive a crown and be clothed like the Savior is clothed on that day, symbolic of their eternal inheritance with Him in the kingdom of God (see also D&C 88:107; 109:75–76, 80).



The Second Coming, **by Grant Romney Clawson. Jesus Christ will return to earth with power and great glory.**

Doctrine and Covenants 29:14–21. Signs of the coming of the Son of Man

The Lord described in vivid detail some of the ways that He will "take vengeance upon the wicked" before His Second Coming (D&C 29:17). The most significant consequence that the unrepentant will suffer will be that the Lord's "blood shall not cleanse them" (D&C 29:17; see also D&C 88:35). Some of the destructive events of the last days will be similar to those that have occurred at other times in history, such as when the Lord sent plagues upon the Egyptians in order to deliver the children of Israel from bondage (see Exodus 8:21; 9:23–25; 10:22) or when the wicked were destroyed in the Americas before the Resurrected Lord's appearance among the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 8:5–7, 14–16, 22). The prophecy that "the great and abominable church" will be destroyed by fire (D&C 29:21) refers to the combined forces of evil that fight against Zion as foretold throughout scripture (see Ezekiel 38:18–22; 39:17–20; 1 Nephi 14:10–17; 22:13–14; 2 Nephi 10:16; D&C 88:94). The Lord makes it clear that wickedness must be removed from the earth—either through repentance or destruction. Doctrine and Covenants 29 serves as a merciful reminder and warning to all to repent and prepare for that day.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized why it is important to prepare now for the Lord's Second Coming:

"Brothers and sisters, as the Book of Mormon teaches, 'this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; … the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors' (Alma 34:32). Are we preparing?

"In His preface to our compilation of modern revelation the Lord declares, 'Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh' (D&C 1:12). …

"Always we are cautioned that we cannot know the day or the hour of His coming. …

"What if the day of His coming were tomorrow? If we knew that we would meet the Lord tomorrow—through our premature death or through His unexpected coming—what would we do today? What confessions would we make? What practices would we discontinue? What accounts would we settle? What forgivenesses would we extend? What testimonies would we bear? …

"We need to make both temporal and spiritual preparation for the events prophesied at the time of the Second Coming. And the preparation most likely to be neglected is the one less visible and more difficult—the spiritual" ("Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 8–9).

Why are these revelations and warnings a sign of God's mercy for us? What can you do now to heed the signs of the Lord's Second Coming and prepare yourself for that great day?

Doctrine and Covenants 29:22–29

The Savior reveals truths about what will happen after the Millennium, including the Final Judgment

Read Doctrine and Covenants 29:22–29, looking for what will happen at the conclusion of Jesus Christ's thousand-year reign on earth—the Millennium.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:22. "Men again begin to deny their God"

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ will usher in the thousand-year period called the Millennium, when the Lord Himself will dwell upon the earth (see D&C 29:11). There will be many important changes that will distinguish conditions during the Millennium from the conditions we experience in the world today. For example, during that time, "whatsoever any man shall ask, it shall be given unto him" (D&C 101:27) and the Lord will reveal all things (see D&C 101:32–34). The Lord has also said that during the Millennium "Satan shall be bound" (D&C 43:31) and "shall not have power to tempt any man" (D&C 101:28). Because of God's power and the righteousness of the people, Satan "shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men" (D&C 45:55). Sadly, at the conclusion of the thousand years, people will "again begin to deny their God" (D&C 29:22) and Satan will be "loosed again … for a little season" (D&C 43:31). It may be hard to comprehend why some who have experienced the blessings of the Millennium will begin to deny God. Nevertheless, there will be those who, having been partakers of God's power, will still deny the truth and knowingly and "wilfully rebel against God" (3 Nephi 6:18; see also 4 Nephi 1:38; D&C 29:44–45; 76:31).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:23–25. "A new heaven and a new earth"

The earth will be transfigured, or changed, when Jesus Christ returns to reign (see D&C 63:20–21). It will return to the "paradisiacal," or terrestrial, state that it was in before the Fall of Adam and Eve (Articles of Faith 1:10). At the end of the Millennium, the earth, and the heavens around it, will once again be changed—this time to become a celestial kingdom for those who have also received celestial glory (see D&C 88:19–20).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:26. Who is Michael?

Michael was the noble archangel who occupied a position of authority next to Jesus Christ in the premortal world and later became Adam, the first mortal man to live on earth (see Revelation 12:7–9; D&C 27:11; 107:54–55). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught that Michael was "the first to hold the spiritual blessings, to whom was made known the plan of ordinances for the salvation of his posterity unto the end, and to whom Christ was first revealed" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 107).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:30–50

The Savior declares that He has redeemed us from the Fall and offers us salvation from our sins

Read Doctrine and Covenants 29:30–50, looking for what the Lord taught about His commandments and about our agency.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:31–35. "All things unto me are spiritual"

God "created … all things both spiritual and temporal" (D&C 29:31). Temporal things have to do with mortality and the temporary nature of this earth. While we distinguish between spiritual and temporal things, God declared, "All things unto me are spiritual" (D&C 29:34). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 29:34–35, the Lord explained that He never gave Adam or his posterity temporal commandments. All commandments are spiritual, meaning that they have eternal purpose.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught, "In our mortal, or carnal, way of thinking, many of the commandments the Lord has required seem to be temporal, but he has said that at no time has he given a temporal law. (D. & C. 29:34.) All things to him are spiritual, or in other words intended to be eternal. The Lord does not think in temporal terms; his plan is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. In his eyes, therefore, all the commandments that have to do with our present welfare, are considered to be but steps on the way to his eternal salvation" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:307–8).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency explained how we must consider both the temporal and the spiritual aspects of our actions:

"Like two sides of a coin, the temporal and spiritual are inseparable. …

"Unfortunately, there are those who overlook the temporal because they consider it less important. They treasure the spiritual while minimizing the temporal. While it is important to have our thoughts inclined toward heaven, we miss the essence of our religion if our hands are not also inclined toward our fellowman. …

"As always, we can look to our perfect example, Jesus Christ, for a pattern. As President J. Reuben Clark Jr. taught, 'When the Savior came upon the earth he had two great missions; one was to work out the Messiahship, the atonement for the fall, and the fulfilment of the law; the other was the work which he did among his brethren and sisters in the flesh by way of relieving their sufferings' [in Conference Report, Apr. 1937, 22].

"In a similar way, our spiritual progress is inseparably bound together with the temporal service we give to others.

"The one complements the other. The one without the other is a counterfeit of God's plan of happiness" ("Providing in the Lord's Way," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 53).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:35. What does it mean to have agency?

When God created Adam, He made Adam "an agent unto himself" (D&C 29:35). This agency, however, carries with it the responsibility of accepting the consequences of their choices: blessings for righteousness or condemnation for sin (see D&C 93:28, 31–32). Therefore, God's commandments provide us with the opportunity to live the laws He lives and enjoy the blessings He enjoys. **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Those scriptural words, 'Thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee' (Moses 3:17), introduced Adam and Eve and their posterity to all the risks of mortality. In mortality men are free to choose, and each choice begets a consequence. The choice Adam made energized the law of justice, which required that the penalty for disobedience would be death.

"… A redeemer was sent to pay the debt and set men free. That was the plan. …

"An atonement was made. Ever and always it offers amnesty from transgression and from death if we will but repent. Repentance is the escape clause in it all. Repentance is the key with which we can unlock the prison from inside. We hold that key within our hands, and agency is ours to use it.

"How supernally precious freedom is; how consummately valuable is the agency of man.

"Lucifer in clever ways manipulates our choices, deceiving us about sin and consequences. He, and his angels with him, tempt us to be unworthy, even wicked. But he cannot, in all eternity he cannot, with all his power he cannot completely destroy us; not without our own consent. Had agency come to man without the Atonement, it would have been a fatal gift" ("Atonement, Agency, Accountability," *Ensign,* May 1988, 71).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:36–43. New understanding about God's plan

After the Prophet Joseph Smith began his inspired translation of the Bible and had dictated what is now Moses 1 in the Pearl of Great Price, he continued during the summer of 1830 the work of translation, with Oliver Cowdery as his scribe. The Prophet's translation of Genesis 1–5 is now contained in the Pearl of Great Price as Moses 2–5. Included in those chapters is the account of Satan's rebellion in the premortal life, his efforts to tempt Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and our first parents' partaking of the forbidden fruit and being cast out of the garden. The doctrinal truths that were obtained through the inspired translation of Genesis certainly prepared the Prophet to receive similar truths about God's plan that were summarized in Doctrine and Covenants 29:30–45.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:36–39. Satan and his angels seek to deceive

The principle of agency functioned in premortality, as evidenced by Lucifer's rebellion and the fact that "a third part of the hosts of heaven" chose to follow Lucifer instead of God (D&C 29:36). Here in mortality, Satan and his followers work to oppose the Father's plan of salvation by tempting and deceiving God's children. Nevertheless, their power is limited when we exercise our agency to obey Heavenly Father's commandments. **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency explained:

"We need not become paralyzed with fear of Satan's power. He can have no power over us unless we permit it. He is really a coward, and if we stand firm, he will retreat. The Apostle James counseled: 'Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' [James 4:7]. And Nephi states that 'he hath no power over the hearts' of people who are righteous [1 Nephi 22:26].

"We have heard comedians and others justify or explain their misdeeds by saying, 'The devil made me do it.' I do not really think the devil can make us do anything; certainly he can tempt and he can deceive, but he has no authority over us which we do not give him.

"The power to resist Satan may be stronger than we realize. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: 'All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him. The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power' [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 181]. He also stated, 'Wicked spirits have their bounds, limits, and laws by which they are governed' [in *History of the Church,* 4:576]. So Satan and his angels are not all-powerful. …

"… Satan's efforts can be thwarted by all who come unto Christ by obedience to the covenants and ordinances of the gospel. The humble followers of the divine Master need not be deceived by the devil. Satan does not sustain and uplift and bless. He leaves those he has grasped in shame and misery. The Spirit of God is a sustaining and uplifting influence" ("Serving the Lord and Resisting the Devil," *Ensign,* Sept. 1995, 6–7).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:41–42. What is "the first death" and "the last death"?

When Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit and were cast out of the Garden of Eden, they experienced spiritual death, meaning that they were separated from God's immediate presence. Doctrine and Covenants 29:41 calls this "the first death," and it comes upon all of God's children in mortality. "The last death" (D&C 29:41) is also a spiritual death, but it is experienced only by those known as the sons of perdition as they suffer the everlasting punishment of being eternally cast out of God's presence (see Helaman 14:15–18; D&C 76:34–37, 44). Because they choose to rebel against God rather than repent, "they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall" (D&C 29:44).

The Lord decreed that Adam and Eve would not experience temporal death until they had an opportunity to learn "repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of [God's] Only Begotten Son" (D&C 29:42).



***Adam and Eve,* by Douglas M. Fryer. Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden of Eden for partaking of the forbidden fruit (see D&C 29:40–41).**

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained more regarding spiritual death and how we can overcome spiritual death:

"By yielding to temptation, Adam and Eve were 'cut off from the presence of the Lord' (Helaman 14:16). In the scriptures this separation is called spiritual death (see Helaman 14:16; D&C 29:41).

"The atonement of our Savior overcame this spiritual death. … As a result of this atonement, 'men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression' (Articles of Faith 1:2).

"Our Savior has redeemed us from the sin of Adam, but what about the effects of our own sins? Since 'all have sinned' (Romans 3:23), we are all spiritually dead. Again, our only hope for life is our Savior. …

"In order to lay claim upon our Savior's life-giving triumph over the spiritual death we suffer because of our own sins, we must follow the conditions he has prescribed. …

"Our third article of faith describes the Savior's conditions in these words: 'We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel' " ("The Light and Life of the World," *Ensign,* Nov. 1987, 64–65).

D&C 29:46–50. "Little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world"

Doctrine and Covenants 29:46–50 explains that there are those "having knowledge" and those who "hath no understanding" of the gospel. Those who have knowledge are commanded to repent (see D&C 29:49), while little children (and those with "no understanding") are not accountable and, therefore, cannot

sin. Little children cannot be tempted by Satan "until they begin to become accountable" (D&C 29:47).

The Lord's declaration that "little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world" (D&C 29:46) refers to the fact that God's plan of salvation, including the Atonement of Jesus Christ, was known and understood from the time of our premortal estate. One of the unconditional blessings of the Lord's atoning sacrifice is that little children are redeemed, meaning their misdeeds are covered by Jesus Christ's Atonement until they become accountable before God, at which time they are responsible for their own actions. The Lord later defined the age of accountability as "eight years old" (D&C 68:27).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the significance of the phrase that children "*begin* to become accountable" (D&C 29:47; italics added): "Accountability does not burst full-bloom upon a child at any given moment in his life. Children become accountable gradually, over a number of years. Becoming accountable is a process, not a goal to be attained when a specified number of years, days, and hours have elapsed. … There comes a time, however, when accountability is real and actual and sin is attributed in the lives of those who develop normally. It is eight years of age, the age of baptism. (D&C 68:27.)" ("The Salvation of Little Children," *Ensign,* Apr. 1977, 6).

The prophet Mormon taught this principle in an epistle to his son Moroni:

"Little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world. …

"And he that saith that little children need baptism denieth the mercies of Christ, and setteth at naught the atonement of him and the power of his redemption" (Moroni 8:12, 20).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "The doctrine of baptizing children, or sprinkling them, or they must welter in hell, is a doctrine not true, not supported in Holy Writ, and is not consistent with the character of God. All children are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the moment that children leave this world, they are taken to the bosom of Abraham" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 94–95).

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the universal nature of God's merciful plan of salvation: "The marvelous doctrine revealed to the Prophet Joseph unveiled to us a plan of salvation that is applicable to all mankind, including those who do not hear of Christ in this life, children who die before the age of accountability, and those who have no understanding [see D&C 29:46–50; 137:7–10]" ("Our Father's Plan—Big Enough for All His Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 37).

As you reflect upon God's plan for your salvation, think about the ways in which you are using the gift of agency to draw nearer to Him and become more like Him. Set a goal to purposefully choose to act upon something that will bring you nearer to Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son.

CHAPTER 13

Doctrine and Covenants 30–34

Introduction and Timeline

Immediately after the second Church conference, held in late September 1830 in Fayette, New York, the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelations for David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer Jr., and John Whitmer. These revelations are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 30. At about the same time, the Lord also called Thomas B. Marsh to preach the gospel and to help establish the Church. This call, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 31, also included promises and counsel to guide him as a missionary and in his personal life.

In October 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 32, in which the Lord called Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson to join Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer Jr. on a mission to the Lamanites in western Missouri. In another revelation, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 33, the Lord called Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet to proclaim the gospel. The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 34 was given in November 1830. In it the Lord commended Orson Pratt for his faith and commanded him to preach the gospel in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Summer 1830

Parley P. Pratt read the Book of Mormon and was baptized.

September 1830

Thomas B. Marsh and his family moved from near Boston, Massachusetts, to Palmyra, New York, and he was baptized.

September 19, 1830

Orson Pratt was baptized by his older brother Parley.

September 26–28, 1830

The second conference of the Church was held in Fayette, New York.

Late September 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 30–31 were received.

October 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 32–33 were received.

October 1830

Oliver Cowdery and his companions departed on a mission to the Lamanites.

November 4, 1830

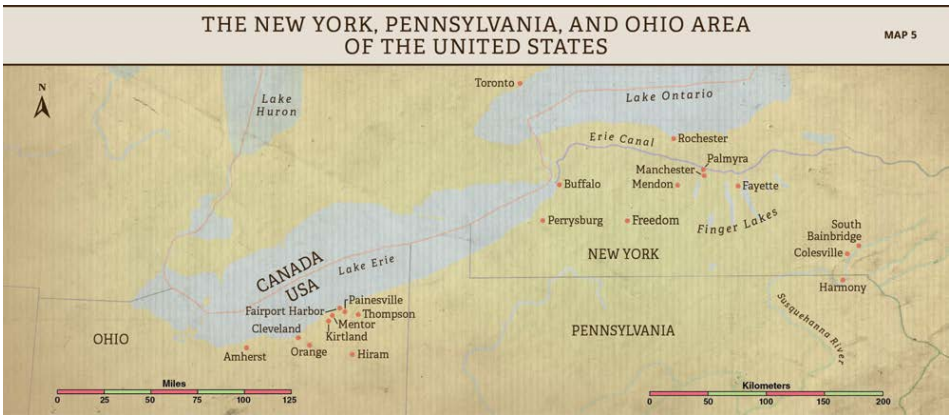
Doctrine and Covenants 34 was received.

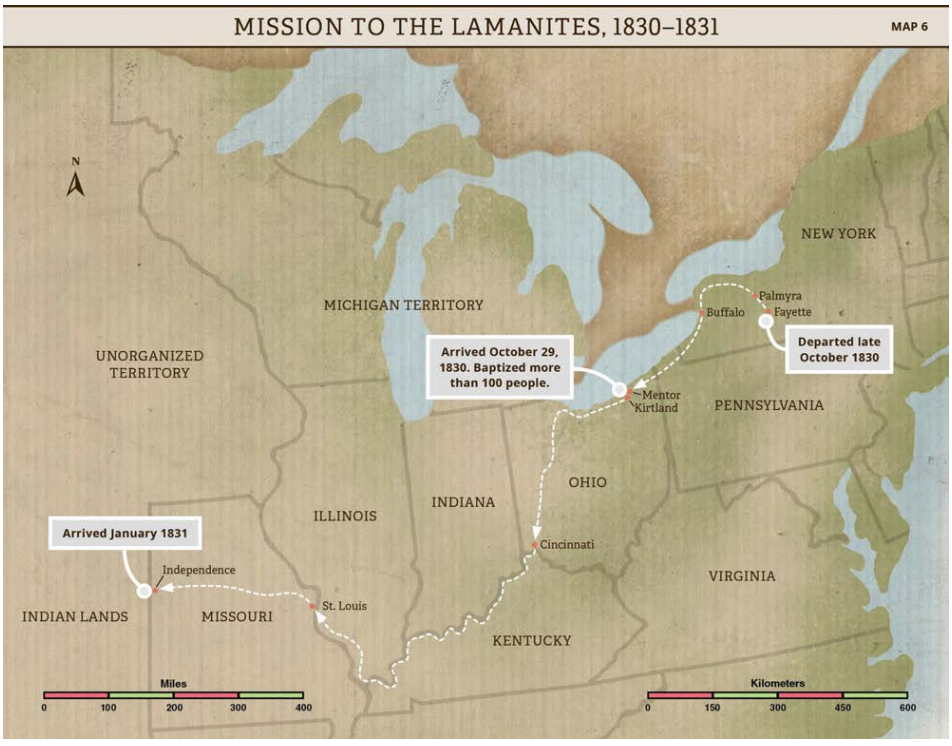
Think about the responsibilities you hold as a covenant follower of Jesus Christ. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 30–34, consider how the Lord's counsel can help you to fulfill your duties.

Doctrine and Covenants 30: Additional Historical Background

The second conference of the Church, held in Fayette, New York, in September 1830, lasted three days. The conference included discussion about the stone Hiram Page used to receive his alleged revelations (see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 28 in this manual). The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded that "Brother Page, as well as the whole church who were present, renounced the said stone, and all things connected therewith, much to our mutual satisfaction and happiness" and that the Saints then "partook of the sacrament, confirmed, and ordained many, and attended to a great variety of Church business on that and the following day; during which time we had much of the power of God manifested amongst us; the

Holy Ghost came upon us, and filled us with joy unspeakable; and peace, and faith, and hope, and charity abounded in our midst" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 452). Before the Saints departed from the conference, revelations were given for brothers David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer Jr., and John Whitmer. These revelations were originally published separately in the Book of Commandments, but Joseph Smith combined them into one section in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.





Doctrine and Covenants 30

The Lord teaches David, Peter Jr., and John Whitmer concerning their role in God's work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 30, looking for ways that the Lord wants you to rely on Him for strength.

Doctrine and Covenants 30:1–4. "You have feared man and have not relied on me"

As one of the Three Witnesses, David Whitmer had seen an angel and had seen and handled the Book of Mormon plates. He had also received other revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 14; 17; 18). Yet when his brother-in-law, Hiram Page, professed to be receiving revelations for the Church, David was misled. The Lord chastised David for fearing man instead of relying on God (see D&C 30:1).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) explained how pride can cause us to fear man:

"The proud stand more in fear of men's judgment than of God's judgment. (See D&C 3:6–7; 30:1–2; 60:2.) 'What will men think of me?' weighs heavier than 'What will God think of me?'

"King Noah was about to free the prophet Abinadi, but an appeal to his pride by his wicked priests sent Abinadi to the flames. (See Mosiah 17:11–12.) Herod sorrowed at the request of his wife to behead John the Baptist. But his prideful desire to look good to 'them which sat with him at meat' caused him to kill John. (Matt. 14:9; see also Mark 6:26.)

"Fear of men's judgment manifests itself in competition for men's approval. The proud love 'the praise of men more than the praise of God.' (John 12:42–43.) Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did 'always those things' that pleased God. (John 8:29.) Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 233–34).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how the Saints should not be influenced by the things of the world: "We do not serve our Savior well if we fear man more than God. He rebuked some leaders in His restored Church for seeking the praise of the world and for having their minds on the things of the earth more than on the things of the Lord (see D&C 30:2; 58:39). Those chastisements remind us that we are called to establish the Lord's standards, not to follow the world's. Elder John A. Widtsoe declared, 'We cannot walk as other men, or talk as other men, or do as other men, for we have a different destiny, obligation, and responsibility placed upon us, and we must fit ourselves [to it]' [in Conference Report, Apr. 1940, 36]. That reality has current application to every trendy action" ("Unselfish Service," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 94–95).

Doctrine and Covenants 30:5–8. "Declare my gospel"

In June 1829 the Lord told Peter Whitmer Jr. that declaring repentance would be the thing of "most worth" for him to do (see D&C 16:4, 6). In September 1830, Peter was appointed to serve a mission as a companion to Oliver Cowdery in establishing the Church among the Lamanites. The emphasis on the importance of missionary work has continued throughout the history of the Church.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why the Saints will always focus on declaring the gospel to others: "Missionary work isn't the only thing we need to do in this big, wide, wonderful Church. But almost everything else we need to do depends on people first hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ and coming into the faith. Surely that is why Jesus's final charge to the Twelve was just that basic—to 'go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' [Matthew 28:19]. Then, and only then, can the rest of the blessings of the gospel fully come—family solidarity, youth programs, priesthood promises, and ordinances flowing right up to the temple. But as Nephi testified, none of that can come until one has 'enter[ed] into the … gate' [2 Nephi 33:9]. With all that there is to do along the path to eternal life, we need a lot more missionaries opening that gate and helping people through it" ("We Are All Enlisted," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 46–47).

Doctrine and Covenants 30:6. "Build up my church among the Lamanites"

For information regarding the use of the term *Lamanites* in the Doctrine and Covenants, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 28:8–10, 14–16 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 30:9–11. "Proclaim my gospel, as with the voice of a trump"

John Whitmer was one of the Eight Witnesses of the Book of Mormon plates and also served for a short time as a scribe to the Prophet Joseph Smith during his inspired translation of the Bible. In a revelation through the Prophet in June 1829, the Lord told him, "The thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me" (D&C 15:6). After the Church conference in September 1830, the Lord commanded John to go forth and labor in His work, beginning in the area where Philip Burroughs lived, in Seneca Falls, New York, not far from the Whitmer family (see D&C 30:9–10). Just a couple of weeks before this revelation was received, Parley P. Pratt had preached a sermon to a group who had gathered at Philip Burroughs's home, and some of the people were converted. Though Philip Burroughs is referred to as "brother" in Doctrine and Covenants 30:10, there is no record of him ever becoming a member of the Church. His wife, however, was baptized.

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded Church members why they should raise their voice to share the gospel: "It should be 'with great earnestness' (D&C 123:14) that we bring the light of the gospel to those who are searching for answers the plan of salvation has to offer. Many are concerned for their families. Some are looking for security in a world of changing values. Our opportunity is to give them hope and courage and to invite them to

come with us and join those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord's gospel is on earth and will bless their lives here and in the eternities to come" ("Bring Souls unto Me," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 110).

Doctrine and Covenants 31: Additional Historical Background

As a young married man living near Boston, Massachusetts, Thomas B. Marsh had read the Bible and investigated religions, but he felt prompted that "a new church would arise, which would have the truth in its purity" (Thomas B. March, "History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh (Written by Himself in Great Salt Lake City, November, 1857)," *Deseret News,* Mar. 24, 1858, 18). He felt impressed by the Lord to take a trip to western New York. There he heard about Joseph Smith and the golden plates and sought to learn more. He met with Martin Harris in Palmyra and also with Oliver Cowdery, since Joseph Smith was living in Harmony, Pennsylvania, at the time. Thomas returned home to Boston and continued to learn about God's work by corresponding with Oliver Cowdery. After learning that the Church of Jesus Christ had been organized, he moved his family to Palmyra, New York, arriving in September 1830. He was soon baptized by David Whitmer, and he attended the second conference of the Church that same month. Thomas Marsh was privileged to receive personal direction from the Lord through a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith during that conference.

Doctrine and Covenants 31

The Lord calls Thomas B. Marsh, Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson to preach the gospel

As you read Doctrine and Covenants 31, look for the blessings promised to Thomas B. Marsh if he would serve the Lord in faith.

Doctrine and Covenants 31:1–6. As we faithfully serve the Lord, our families are blessed

Certainly, as the father of a young family, Thomas Marsh had concerns for his wife and children as they moved from Massachusetts to New York. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 31, he was promised that through his faith and service to the Lord, his family would one day believe and be with him in the Church. At that time, Thomas and his wife, Elizabeth, had three sons, ages nine, seven, and three. Elizabeth was later converted in 1831 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 194, note 412). The Lord's promise to bless the Marsh family would have strengthened Thomas as he was called to assist in God's work.

Similar promises are available today to those who strive to dedicate themselves to the Lord's service. **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the following experience:

"One [full-time missionary] couple worried about leaving their youngest daughter who was no longer active in the Church. Her faithful father wrote: 'We prayed for

her continually and fasted regularly. Then, during general conference, the Spirit whispered to me, "If you will serve, you will not have to worry about your daughter anymore." So we met with our bishop. The week after we received our call, she and her boyfriend announced they were engaged. Before we left for Africa, we had a wedding in our home. [Then we gathered our family together and] held a family council. … I bore testimony of the Lord and Joseph Smith … and told them I would like to give each of them a father's blessing. I started with the oldest son and then his wife and proceeded to the youngest … [including our new son-in-law].' …

"… As the faithful father in this story blessed his family members, his son-in-law felt the influence of the Holy Ghost. The father wrote: 'By the end of our first year [the] heart [of our son-in-law] began to soften toward the Church. Just before we returned home from our mission, he and our daughter came to visit us. In his suitcase was the first set of Sunday clothes he had ever owned. They came to Church with us, and after we returned home he was baptized. A year later, they were sealed in the temple'" ("Couple Missionaries: Blessings from Sacrifice and Service," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2005, 40).

When have you witnessed a family being blessed because one of its family members faithfully served the Lord? In what ways can knowing that the Lord blesses the families of those who serve Him influence your efforts to serve?

Doctrine and Covenants 31:5. "Thrust in your sickle with all your soul, and your sins are forgiven you"



The Golden Harvest, **by David Merrill. The scriptures refer to the sheaves of harvested wheat representing the fruits of missionary labors, including converted souls (see D&C 31:4–5; 33:7, 9).**

Among the blessings promised to Thomas B. Marsh was the assurance that his sins would be forgiven through his diligent efforts to declare the gospel to others (see D&C 31:5). **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified the connection between sharing the gospel and retaining a remission of our sins:

"A natural consequence of conversion is the continued remission of sin by living the gospel, which includes sharing the gospel with others. President Spencer W. Kimball declared, 'The Lord has told us that our sins will be forgiven more readily as we bring souls unto Christ and remain steadfast in bearing testimony to the world, and surely every one of us is looking for additional help in being forgiven of our sins.' (*Ensign,* Oct. 1977, p. 5.)

"In the Doctrine and Covenants we read: 'For I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment—that you remain steadfast in your minds in solemnity and the spirit of prayer, in *bearing testimony to all the world* of those things which are communicated unto you.' (D&C 84:61; italics added.) And also in the Doctrine and Covenants: 'Nevertheless, ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and *your sins are forgiven you.*' (D&C 62:3; italics added.)

"… The doctrine seems quite clear to me; the remission of sins is an ongoing process. As each one of us strives to become clean, pure, and even sanctified, I see no better way for us to do this than to help others of our Heavenly Father's children find the truth" ("Write Down a Date," *Ensign,* Nov. 1984, 16).

Doctrine and Covenants 31:9–13. Cautions and warnings for Thomas B. Marsh

While Thomas B. Marsh was commended for his faith (see D&C 31:1) and promised great blessings, the Lord also gave him important cautions and counsel. In 1835, Thomas was called to serve in the first Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in this dispensation. He was later called to be the President of that Quorum. Yet, within a few years—in March 1839—he was excommunicated for apostasy. The Lord's instructions in Doctrine and Covenants 31 would have blessed him with spiritual protection if he had heeded them. Thomas B. Marsh was rebaptized July 16, 1857, at Florence, Nebraska, and he came to Utah that same year. He sought forgiveness from Church leaders, and President Brigham Young gave him an opportunity to speak to the Saints. He said the following about his apostasy:

"I have frequently wanted to know how my apostasy began, and I have come to the conclusion that I must have lost the Spirit of the Lord out of my heart.

"The next question is, 'how and when did you lose the Spirit?' I became jealous of the Prophet, and then I saw double and overlooked everything that was right, and spent all my time in looking for the evil, and then when the devil began to lead me it was easy for the carnal mind to rise up, which is anger, jealousy and wrath. I could feel it within me; I felt angry and wrathful, and the Spirit of the Lord being gone, as the Scriptures say, I was blinded" ("Remarks by Thomas B. Marsh," *Deseret News,* Sept. 16, 1857, 220; spelling standardized).

Thomas B. Marsh lived the rest of his life in Utah. He died January 1866 in Ogden, where he is buried.

Doctrine and Covenants 31:10. How was Thomas B. Marsh "a physician unto the church"?

Thomas B. Marsh had acquired some skills in the medicinal use of mild herbs, and with that knowledge he was able to help many people. However, his greater calling was the healing of souls (see Thomas B. Marsh, "History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh," 18.)

Read Doctrine and Covenants 32, looking for how the Lord will help those who are called to preach the gospel.

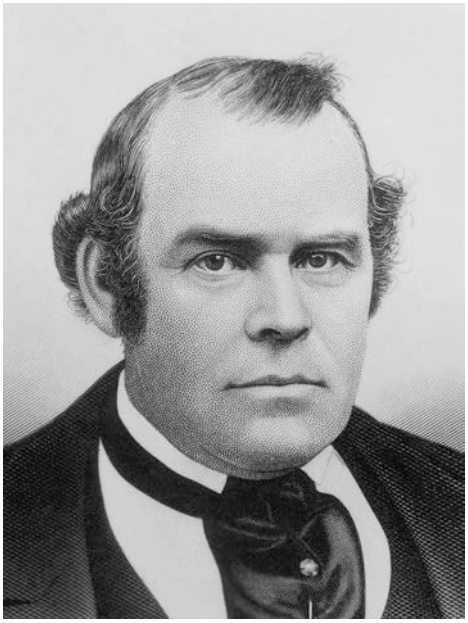
Doctrine and Covenants 32: Additional Historical Background

In the summer of 1830, Parley P. Pratt and his wife, Thankful, journeyed from their home in Amherst, Ohio, to visit relatives in the state of New York. The Holy Ghost

prompted Parley to stop at the village of Newark, New York, near Palmyra, where he learned about the Book of Mormon. He later wrote of his response to the book:

"I opened it with eagerness, and read its title page. I then read the testimony of several witnesses in relation to the manner of its being found and translated. After this I commenced its contents by course. I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep.

"As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended that the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and knows that he exists" (*Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 37).



Parley P. Pratt was called as a missionary to the Lamanites and later as an Apostle.

Parley traveled to Palmyra, where he met and was taught by Hyrum Smith. Soon, Hyrum and Parley journeyed to Fayette, New York, to meet with members of the growing branch of the Church. Parley was baptized and ordained an elder by Oliver Cowdery in September 1830.

Little is known about Ziba Peterson's conversion. We know that he was baptized by Oliver Cowdery in April 1830 and was ordained an elder in June of the same year. Not long before Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer Jr. were to depart on their mission, the Prophet Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord to know if others should accompany them. He received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 32, calling Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson to go.

During the fall of 1830 and the winter of 1830–31, the small group of missionaries including Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson (later joined by a convert from Ohio named Frederick G. Williams), traveled nearly 1,500 miles (about 2,400 kilometers) from Fayette, New York, to Independence, Missouri—much of the way on foot. Along the way, these missionaries preached the gospel in Mentor and Kirtland, Ohio, to a congregation of people who were looking for a restoration of New Testament Christianity. Sidney Rigdon, the group's leader, and many in the congregation were converted to the restored gospel. The missionaries finally arrived at Independence in mid-January 1831. For part of their journey, they endured intense cold, strong winds, and exhaustion, living mainly on frozen cornbread and raw pork. In some places the snow where they walked was three feet deep. In spite of these hardships, the missionaries succeeded in introducing the gospel to American Indians who lived in Indian Territory near the western border of Missouri. The Lord fulfilled His promise that He would be with these missionaries and that nothing would prevail against them. (See *Church*

History in the Fulness of Times, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 83–85.)

Doctrine and Covenants 32

The Lord calls Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson to preach to the Lamanites

What truths can you identify in Doctrine and Covenants 32 about how the Lord will help us as we faithfully serve Him?

Doctrine and Covenants 32:1–3. "I myself will go with them and be in their midst"



***Go into the Wilderness,* by Robert Theodore Barrett. Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Peter Whitmer, and Ziba Peterson were called to preach the gospel "among the Lamanites" (D&C 32:2).**

Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson were appointed to accompany Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer Jr. on their mission to the Lamanites (see D&C 28:8–9; 30:5–8). The Lord promised these missionaries that if they would preach the gospel in meekness, He would "go with them and be in their midst" (D&C 32:3). **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency shared the following experience to teach some of the ways the Lord can be with us as we serve in our callings:

"God magnifies those He calls, even in what may seem to you a small or inconspicuous service. You will have the gift of seeing your service magnified. Give thanks while that gift is yours. …

"The Lord will not only magnify the power of your efforts. He will work with you Himself. His voice to four missionaries, called through the Prophet Joseph Smith to a difficult task, gives courage to everyone He calls in His kingdom: 'And I myself will go with them and be in their midst; and I am their advocate with the Father, and nothing shall prevail against them' [D&C 32:3]. …

"You can have the utmost assurance that your power will be multiplied many times by the Lord. All He asks is that you give your best effort and your whole heart. Do it cheerfully and with the prayer of faith. The Father and His Beloved Son will send the Holy Ghost as your companion to guide you. Your efforts will be magnified in the lives of the people you serve. And when you look back on what may now seem

trying times of service and sacrifice, the sacrifice will have become a blessing, and you will know that you have seen the arm of God lifting those you served for Him, and lifting you" ("Rise to Your Call," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 77–78).

Doctrine and Covenants 33: Additional Historical Background

Ezra Thayre was living near Palmyra, New York, when he learned about the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He had previously hired members of the Smith family to help him on construction projects. He was finally convinced to attend a meeting where Hyrum Smith preached the gospel. He later wrote about his reaction to what Hyrum taught: "Every word touched me to the inmost soul. I thought every word was pointed to me. … The tears rolled down my cheeks, I was very proud and stubborn. There were many there who knew me. … I sat until I recovered myself before I dare look up" (quoted in Matthew McBride, "Ezra Thayre: From Skeptic to Believer," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 62, or history.lds.org).

Ezra received a powerful witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. He also had a vision in which "a man came and brought me a roll of paper and presented it to me, and also a trumpet and told me to blow it. I told him that I never blowed any in my life. He said you can blow it, try it. I put it in my mouth and blowed on it, and it made the most beautiful sound that I ever heard. The roll of paper was the revelation on me and Northrop Sweet. Oliver [Cowdery] was the man that brought the roll and trumpet. When he brought the revelation on me and Northrop Sweet, he said, here is a revelation from God for you" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 206). Ezra Thayre was baptized by Parley P. Pratt, and in October 1830, in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 33, he and Northrop Sweet were called to the Lord's work.

Northrop Sweet was baptized a member of the Church by Parley P. Pratt in October 1830, in Palmyra, New York. He was married to Martin Harris's niece. Shortly after his baptism, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 33, he was appointed to serve a mission. Northrop had moved to Kirtland, Ohio, by June 1831, where he was ordained an elder; however, he left the Church shortly thereafter and attempted, with others, to form another church, claiming that Joseph Smith was a false prophet.

Doctrine and Covenants 33

The Lord calls Ezra Thayre, Northrup Sweet, and Orson Pratt to declare the gospel

Read Doctrine and Covenants 33, looking for the blessings associated with having the courage to teach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 33:4. "They err in many instances because of priestcrafts"

The imagery of the corrupted vineyard in Doctrine and Covenants 33:4 refers to the condition of apostasy that corrupts the world due to the sin of priestcraft. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** explained the meaning of *priestcraft:*

"The scriptures have a word for gospel service 'for the sake of riches and honor'; it is 'priestcraft.' (Alma 1:16.) Nephi said, 'Priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.' (2 Ne. 26:29.) In these latter days, we are commanded to 'seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.' (D&C 6:6.) Unfortunately, not all who accomplish works under that heading are really intending to build up Zion or strengthen the faith of the people of God. Other motives can be at work.

"Service that is ostensibly unselfish but is really for the sake of riches or honor surely comes within the Savior's condemnation of those who 'outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within … are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.' (Matt. 23:28.) Such service earns no gospel reward" ("Why Do We Serve?" *Ensign,* Nov. 1984, 13).

Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy spoke about the difference between priestcraft and serving with an eye single to God's glory:

"Those who seek honor and gain for themselves in doing the Lord's work are guilty of what the scriptures call priestcrafts. …

"Latter-day Saints whose eyes are single to God's glory see life from a vastly different perspective than those whose attention is directed elsewhere. Such members, for instance, care little about receiving credit or recognition for their good deeds. They are more interested in feeding the Lord's sheep than in counting them. In fact, they frequently find their greatest happiness in serving anonymously, thereby leaving the beneficiaries of their kindness with no one to thank or praise except the Lord" ("An Eye Single to the Glory of God," *Ensign,* Nov. 1989, 27).

Doctrine and Covenants 33:8–10. "Open your mouths"

In three verses (see D&C 33:8–10) Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet were commanded three times to open their mouths and declare repentance. The Lord needs servants who are bold and willing to proclaim the gospel. **President Henry B. Eyring** shared the following example of why it is so important to open our mouths and share the gospel with everyone we know:



***Nephi Writing on the Gold Plates,* by Paul Mann. The Lord instructed His servants to open their mouths with the message of repentance, and they would "become even as Nephi of old" (see D&C 33:8–10).**

"At some moment in the world to come, everyone you will ever meet will know what you know now. They will know that the only way to live forever in association with our families and in the presence of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, was to choose to enter into the gate by baptism at the hands of those with authority from God. They will know that the only way families can be together forever is to accept and keep sacred covenants offered in the temples of God on this earth. And they will know that you knew. And they will remember whether you offered them what someone had offered you.

"It's easy to say, 'The time isn't right.' But there is danger in procrastination. Years ago I worked for a man in California. He hired me, he was kind to me, he seemed to regard me highly. I may have been the only Latter-day Saint he ever knew well. I don't know all the reasons I found to wait for a better moment to talk with him about the gospel. I just remember my feeling of sorrow when I learned, after he had retired and I lived far away, that he and his wife had been killed in a late night drive to their home in Carmel, California. He loved his wife. He loved his children. He had loved his parents. He loved his grandchildren, and he will love their children and will want to be with them forever.

"Now, I don't know how the crowds will be handled in the world to come. But I suppose that I will meet him, that he will look into my eyes, and that I will see in them the question: 'Hal, you knew. Why didn't you tell me?' " ("A Voice of Warning," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 33).

When have you felt guided by the Lord as you have opened your mouth to share the gospel?

Doctrine and Covenants 34: Additional Historical Background

Orson Pratt was Parley P. Pratt's brother. Orson described his efforts to draw close to the Lord as a young man: "I often felt a great anxiety to be prepared for a future state; but never commenced, in real earnest, to seek after the Lord, until the autumn of 1829. I then began to pray very fervently, repenting of every sin. In the silent shades of night, while others were slumbering upon their pillows, I often retired to some secret place in the lonely fields or solitary wilderness, and bowed before the Lord, and prayed for hours with a broken heart and contrite spirit; this was my comfort and delight. The greatest desire of my heart was for the Lord to manifest His will concerning me" (in *The Orson Pratt Journals,* comp. Elden J. Watson [1975], 8–9). In September 1830, Orson was visited by one of his older brothers, Parley P. Pratt, who had recently been baptized. Like Parley, Orson became converted to the truth, and he was baptized on September 19, 1830, on his 19th birthday. He then traveled 200 miles to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York. He asked to know the Lord's will for him, and Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 34.

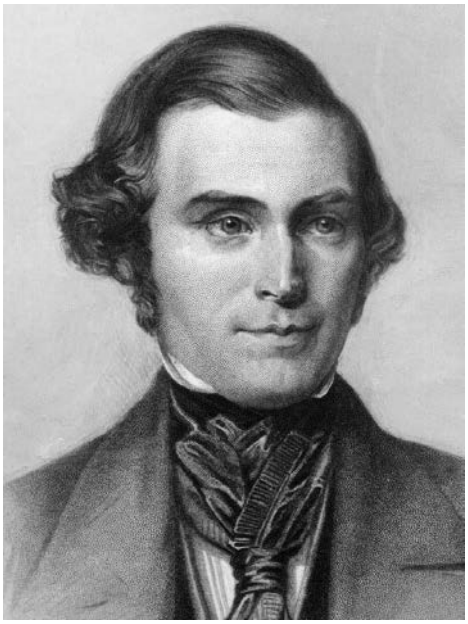
Doctrine and Covenants 34

Orson Pratt is called to preach the gospel

Read Doctrine and Covenants 34, looking for reasons why the Lord commands us to preach the gospel to others.

Doctrine and Covenants 34:10. "It shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost"

Orson Pratt was 19 years old and had been a member of the Church for only a few weeks when the Lord gave him, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 34. In this revelation the Lord promised Orson that he would be able to testify with the spirit of prophecy (see D&C 34:10).



Orson Pratt was 19 years old when he was called to "lift up [his] voice … and cry repentance" (D&C 34:6).

Many years later, as an Apostle of the Lord, **Elder Orson Pratt** (1811–1881) said of that promise: "'Lift up your voice and prophesy, and it shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost.' This was a particular point in the revelation that seemed to me too great for me ever to attain to, and yet there was a positive command that I should do it. I have often reflected upon this revelation, and have oftentimes inquired in my heart—'Have I fulfilled that commandment as I ought to have done? Have I sought as earnestly as I ought to obtain the gift of prophecy, so as to fulfill the requirement of heaven?' And I have felt sometimes to condemn myself, because of my slothfulness and because of the little progress that I have made in relation to this great, heavenly and divine gift. I certainly have had no inclination to prophesy to the people unless it should be given to me by the inspiration and power of the Holy Ghost" ("Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt," *Deseret News,* Mar. 3, 1875, 68).

President Henry B. Eyring testified that the Lord will give divine support through the Holy Ghost to all of His children as they seek to fulfill their callings and responsibilities:

"The Lord will guide you by revelation just as He called you. You must ask in faith for revelation to know what you are to do. With your call comes the promise that answers will come. But that guidance will come only when the Lord is sure you will obey. To know His will you must be committed to do it. The words 'Thy will be done,' written in the heart, are the window to revelation.

"The answer comes by the Holy Spirit. You will need that guidance often. To have the Holy Ghost as your companion, you must be worthy, cleansed by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. So, your obedience to the commandments, your desire to do His will, and your asking in faith will determine how clearly the Master can guide you by answers to your prayers.

"Often the answers will come as you study the scriptures. They contain accounts of what the Lord did in His mortal ministry and the guidance He has given His servants. They have doctrine in them which will apply in every time and every situation. Pondering the scriptures will lead you to ask the right questions in prayer. And just as surely as the heavens were opened to Joseph Smith after he pondered the scriptures in faith, God will answer your prayers and He will lead you by the hand. …

"You can have the utmost assurance that your power will be multiplied many times by the Lord. All He asks is that you give your best effort and your whole heart. Do

it cheerfully and with the prayer of faith. The Father and His Beloved Son will send the Holy Ghost as your companion to guide you. Your efforts will be magnified in the lives of the people you serve. And when you look back on what may now seem trying times of service and sacrifice, the sacrifice will have become a blessing, and you will know that you have seen the arm of God lifting those you served for Him, and lifting you" ("Rise to Your Call," *Ensign,* Nov. 2002, 76, 78).

Ponder a time when you have been blessed for teaching the gospel to someone else or a time when you have been blessed because someone shared the gospel with you. You may want to write down your thoughts.

Doctrine and Covenants 34:11. "I am with you"

The Lord has promised many times that He will be with those who are faithful and who heed the invitation to assist with His work (see, for example, D&C 30:11; 31:13; 32:3; 33:9; 34:11). **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how this promise can be comforting:

"Making and keeping sacred covenants yokes us to and with the Lord Jesus Christ. In essence, the Savior is beckoning us to rely upon and pull together with Him, even though our best efforts are not equal to and cannot be compared with His. As we trust in and pull our load with Him during the journey of mortality, truly His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

"We are not and never need be alone. We can press forward in our daily lives with heavenly help. Through the Savior's Atonement we can receive capacity and 'strength beyond [our] own' ('Lord, I Would Follow Thee,' *Hymns,* no. 220). As the Lord declared, 'Therefore, continue your journey and let your hearts rejoice; for behold, and lo, I am with you even unto the end' (D&C 100:12)" ("Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2014, 88).

In several instances in the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 30–34, the Lord promised that He would be with those who faithfully serve Him (see D&C 30:11; 31:13; 32:3; 33:9; 34:11). Consider marking each instance in your scriptures. Think about a time when the Lord was with you as you served Him.

CHAPTER 14

Doctrine and Covenants 35–36; 39–40

Introduction and Timeline

In the winter of 1830, Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge traveled from Ohio to New York to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith. Both men had heard the restored gospel preached by Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer Jr. in the Kirtland, Ohio, area. Soon after Sidney and Edward's arrival in Fayette, New York, Joseph Smith received revelations for each of them. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 35, the Lord gave Sidney Rigdon specific responsibilities within the newly restored Church. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 36, the Lord called Edward Partridge to preach the gospel.

Several weeks later, James Covel, who had been a Methodist minister for about 40 years, visited the Prophet Joseph Smith and covenanted with the Lord to obey any commandment given him through the Prophet. Consequently, on January 5, 1831, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 39. In it the Lord commanded James Covel to be baptized and to preach the restored gospel. However, the day after the revelation was received, James left Fayette, New York, without being baptized and "returned to his former principles and people" (Joseph Smith, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 237). The Lord then gave Joseph Smith the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 40, explaining that James Covel's "fear of persecution and the cares of the world caused him to reject [God's] word" (D&C 40:2).

October 29, 1830

Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer Jr. preached the gospel in northeastern Ohio for several weeks.

Early December 1830

Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge traveled from Ohio to New York to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith.

December 7, 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 35 was received.

December 9, 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 36 was received.

December 11, 1830

Edward Partridge was baptized by Joseph Smith.

January 2, 1831

The third conference of the Church was held, and Joseph Smith announced that the Saints were to gather in Ohio.

January 1831

James Covel, a Methodist minister, became acquainted with Joseph Smith.

January 5, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 39 was received.

January 6, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 40 was received.

As you study Doctrine and Covenants 35, look for evidence that the Lord is aware of who you are, what you have done, and what you can accomplish.

Doctrine and Covenants 35: Additional Historical Background

Within six months after the organization of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Ziba Peterson, and Parley P. Pratt were called to preach the gospel to the American Indians. On their way to the western borders of Missouri, they stopped in Mentor and Kirtland, Ohio, where they shared the message of the restored gospel with Elder Pratt's friend and former minister Sidney Rigdon. In a short time, more than 120 people, including Sidney Rigdon and many members of

his congregation, were baptized. This approximately doubled the Church's total membership.

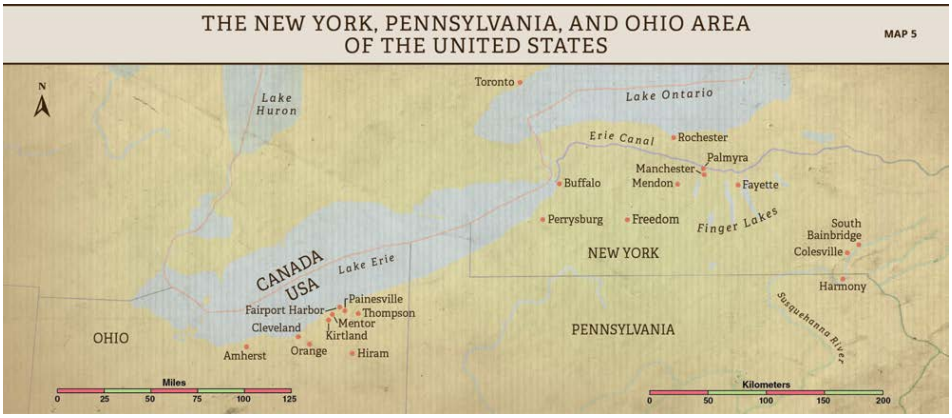
Sidney Rigdon had been ordained a Baptist minister in 1821. Shortly thereafter, he joined the Reformed Baptist movement of Alexander Campbell. Those who followed Campbell were eventually called Disciples of Christ or Campbellites, and they earnestly looked for a restoration of New Testament Christianity. Sidney Rigdon gained a reputation as an influential Reformed Baptist preacher in Mentor, Ohio, and in surrounding communities, including Kirtland. Sidney's commitment to a restoration of New Testament Christianity prepared him and his followers to listen intently to the message brought by the missionaries from New York.



The Lord called Sidney Rigdon, a recent convert from Ohio, to "write for [Joseph]" as he translated the Bible (D&C 35:20).

When Sidney Rigdon received a copy of the Book of Mormon from the missionaries, he began an intense study of it. His son later remarked that Sidney became so engaged in reading the Book of Mormon that "he could hardly lay it aside long enough to eat his meals. He continued to read it night and day until he had read it through and then he thought about and pondered over it" (John W. Rigdon, "Lecture on the Early History of the Mormon Church" [1906], 18, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; capitalization and punctuation standardized). Once he was convinced of the truthfulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, Sidney said to his wife, Phebe, "'My Dear you have followed me once into poverty, are you again willing to do the same[?]'" She responded, "I have weighed the matter, I have contemplated on the circumstances in which we may be placed, I have counted the cost, and I am perfectly satisfied to follow you. [Y]ea, it is my desire to do the will of God, come life or come death" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 213, note 91).

Furious with Sidney and Phebe's conversion to the newly restored Church, many members of Sidney's former congregation of Reformed Baptists who were not among those who accepted the missionaries' message refused to let the Rigdons move into the new house they had built for them and wanted nothing more to do with them. Having lost their source of income, home, and many of their friends and associates, Sidney and Phebe moved their family to Kirtland to live with other recently baptized members of the Church.



Doctrine and Covenants 35

The Lord calls Sidney Rigdon to a greater work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 35:1–6, looking for what the Lord knew about Sidney Rigdon and what He said He would do for him.

Doctrine and Covenants 35:2. "One in me as I am one in the Father"

The Lord was not teaching that He and Heavenly Father are the same person when He said, "I am one in the Father, as the Father is one in me" (D&C 35:2). Rather, this passage clarifies that Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are united in purpose and possess the same character, perfections, and attributes. They invite true followers to become one with Them. **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how we can become "one" with Heavenly Father and His Son:

"Jesus achieved perfect unity with the Father by submitting Himself, both flesh and spirit, to the will of the Father. His ministry was always clearly focused because there was no debilitating or distracting double-mindedness in Him. Referring to His Father, Jesus said, 'I do always those things that please him' (John 8:29). …

"Surely we will not be one with God and Christ until we make Their will and interest our greatest desire. Such submissiveness is not reached in a day, but through the Holy Spirit, the Lord will tutor us if we are willing until, in process of time, it may accurately be said that He is in us as the Father is in Him. At times I tremble to consider what may be required, but I know that it is only in this perfect union that a fulness of joy can be found. I am grateful beyond expression that I am invited to be one with those holy beings I revere and worship as my Heavenly Father and Redeemer" ("That They May Be One in Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 72–73).

Doctrine and Covenants 35:3. "I have … prepared thee for a greater work"

The Lord told Sidney Rigdon that He had "looked upon" him and his works and had heard his prayers (D&C 35:3). Not only was the Lord aware of Sidney, his experience, and his work as a Protestant minister, but He knew of Sidney's great

potential. The Lord also said that He had prepared Sidney Rigdon for "a greater work" than the work he had already done (D&C 35:3). This "greater work" included helping others receive baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost through proper authority and thereby opening the door to receive the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see D&C 35:5–6). Just as He did with Sidney Rigdon, the Lord provides opportunities and experiences that prepare us to accomplish the "greater work" He calls us to do.

After sharing experiences from his life, **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency testified: "Your life is carefully watched over, as was mine. The Lord knows both what He will need you to do and what you will need to know. He is kind and He is all-knowing. So you can with confidence expect that He has prepared opportunities for you to learn in preparation for the service you will give. You will not recognize those opportunities perfectly, as I did not. But when you put the spiritual things first in your life, you will be blessed to feel directed toward certain learning, and you will be motivated to work harder. You will recognize later that your power to serve was increased, and you will be grateful" ("Education for Real Life" *Ensign,* Oct. 2002, 18–19).

When have you felt that the Lord prepared you for callings, assignments, or significant events in your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 35:4–6. Like John the Baptist, Sidney Rigdon was "sent forth … to prepare the way"



Like John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus Christ, the work that Sidney Rigdon performed as a Reformed Baptist minister prepared the way for the preaching of the restored gospel.

The Lord compared Sidney Rigdon's work as a Protestant minister to that of John the Baptist in the New Testament (see D&C 35:4). Through their ministry, both of these individuals prepared people to hear and accept the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained how Sidney Rigdon had prepared the way for others to receive the message of the restored gospel: "It should be carefully noted that a great number of forceful, intelligent men who became leaders in the Church had been gathered by Sidney Rigdon, with the help of the Lord, in this part of the land. … When, therefore, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson and their companions came to Kirtland they found the way prepared for them through the preaching, very largely, of Sidney Rigdon, so that it was not a difficult matter for these missionaries to convince this group of the truth. While Sidney was preaching and baptizing by immersion without authority, which the Lord informed him in this revelation, yet it all resulted in good when the Gospel message reached them. These men were not only convinced and ready for baptism, but were in a condition by which the Priesthood could be given them, and this was done" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:160).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 35:7–19, looking for what the Lord taught Sidney about miracles and about those whom He calls to His work.

Doctrine and Covenants 35:8–11. The Lord works miracles according to the faith of those who believe in Him

The Lord taught Sidney Rigdon that "miracles, signs, and wonders" are given in response to faith (D&C 35:8; compare D&C 63:7–12). It is important to remember that miracles and wonders "should not be regarded as deviations from the ordinary course of nature so much as manifestations of divine or spiritual power. Some lower law was in each case superseded by the action of a higher" (Bible Dictionary, "Miracles"). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described two types of "genuine miracles":

"First, miracles worked by the power of the priesthood are always present in the true Church of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon teaches that 'God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles' (Mosiah 8:18). The 'means' provided is priesthood power (see James 5:14–15; D&C 42:43–48), and that power works miracles through faith (see Ether 12:12; Moro. 7:37). …

"A second type of genuine miracle is the miracle worked through the power of faith, without specifically invoking the power of the priesthood. Many of these miracles occur in our Church, such as by the prayers of faithful women, and many occur outside it. As Nephi taught, God 'manifesteth himself unto all those who believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost; yea, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, working mighty miracles, signs, and wonders, among the children of men according to their faith' (2 Ne. 26:13; see also 1 Ne. 7:12; James 5:15)" ("Miracles," *Ensign,* June 2001, 8–9).

Elder Oaks further explained why some miracles may not happen even when our faith is sufficient: "I have been speaking of miracles that happen. What about miracles that don't happen? Most of us have offered prayers that were not

answered with the miracle we requested at the time we desired. Miracles are not available for the asking. … The will of the Lord is always paramount. The priesthood of the Lord cannot be used to work a miracle contrary to the will of the Lord. We must also remember that even when a miracle is to occur, it will not occur on our desired schedule. The revelations teach that miraculous experiences occur 'in his own time, and in his own way' (D&C 88:68)" ("Miracles," 9).

Doctrine and Covenants 35:13. "I call upon the weak things of the world"

The "weak things of the world" (D&C 35:13) refer to those who are considered weak by worldly standards such as influence, wealth, and education, but who are considered by the Lord to have spiritual strength because they are meek, humble, full of love, and rely upon the strength and inspiration of God. **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency explained why the Lord calls such individuals to accomplish His great work:

"The Lord has a great work for each of us to do. You may wonder how this can be. You may feel that there is nothing special or superior about you or your ability. …

"The Lord can do remarkable miracles with a person of ordinary ability who is humble, faithful, and diligent in serving the Lord and seeks to improve. … This is because God is the ultimate source of power" ("Acting for Ourselves and Not Being Acted Upon," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 47).

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "The work in the Church today is performed by ordinary men and women called and sustained to preside, to teach, and to administer. It is by the power of revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost that those called are guided to know the Lord's will" ("Guided by the Holy Spirit," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 31).

Doctrine and Covenants 35:13. What does it mean to "thresh the nations by the power of [the] Spirit"?

The word *thresh* in Doctrine and Covenants 35:13 refers to the practice of threshing grain. Threshing is the process by which grain, such as wheat, is separated from its stalk and husk. The grain is kept, and the stalk and husk are discarded. Therefore, "to thresh the nations" refers to the work of preaching the gospel so that converts can be gathered in as grain. (*Note:* In previous English editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, D&C 35:13 used the word *thrash* instead of *thresh.* In the 2013 edition the word was changed to *thresh* to reflect the wording of the original revelation.)



As grain must be separated from the chaff, the Lord's servants are sent to "thresh the nations" to separate out the poor and the meek of the earth and preach the gospel to them (see D&C 35:13, 15).

Doctrine and Covenants 35:14. "Their arm shall be my arm"

The Lord used the imagery of battle to help His called servants understand how He will help them "fight manfully" (D&C 35:14), or courageously, for His cause. As used in D&C 35:14, the arm denotes power or strength. The Lord promised that His power and strength will be with those whom He calls to accomplish His work. Moreover, the Lord assured His servants that He "will be their shield and their buckler" (D&C 35:14), meaning that He will defend and protect them. The Lord will also "gird up their loins" (D&C 35:14). This phrase refers to the custom in ancient Israel of gathering up and securing loose clothing under a belt or girdle in preparation for work or battle. Using this imagery, the Lord promised to help His servants gather scattered Israel through the preaching of the gospel.

President Thomas S. Monson taught that the Lord will help us accomplish the work He calls us to do: "Some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to a calling. Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. It is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. Remember that the Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it" ("To Learn, to Do, to Be," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 62).

How can the truths taught in Doctrine and Covenants 35:13–14 help when you feel inadequate to serve the Lord?

Doctrine and Covenants 35:17. "In weakness have I blessed him"

The Lord calls "the weak things of the world" to do His work (D&C 35:13), including Joseph Smith. The translation of the Book of Mormon illustrates one way in which the Lord blessed Joseph in his weakness. Near the end of her life, **Emma Smith** (1804–1879) testified:

"Joseph Smith [as a young man] … could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter, let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me, 'a marvel and a wonder,' as much so as to anyone else. …

"My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscript unless he was inspired; for, when [I was] acting as his scribe, [Joseph] would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible" ("Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saints' Herald,* Oct. 1, 1879, 290).

Doctrine and Covenants 35:18. "The keys of the mystery"

"The mystery of those things which have been sealed" (D&C 35:18) refers to divine light and knowledge that can only be known through revelation. Joseph Smith held the keys of the priesthood, which allowed him to receive, by the Spirit, divine truths that God had hidden from the world (see D&C 84:19). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) stated:

"[The Melchizedek Priesthood] is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven. …

"… It is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which He will make known His purposes to the end of time" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 108–9).

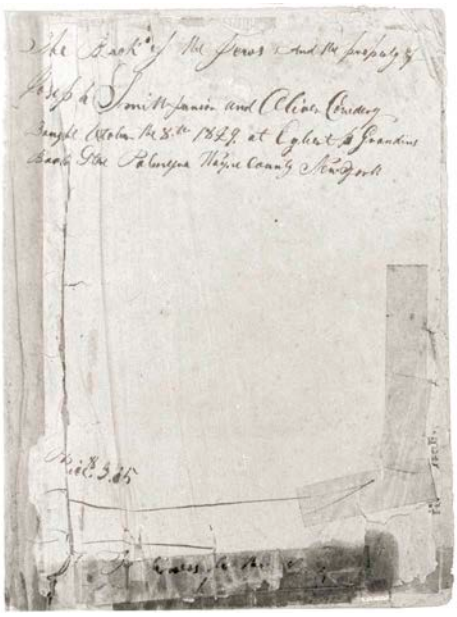
Read Doctrine and Covenants 35:20–27, looking for additional commandments and counsel that the Lord gave to Sidney Rigdon.

Doctrine and Covenants 35:20. "Thou shalt write for him"

John Whitmer, who had served as a scribe to the Prophet Joseph Smith during the Bible translation, was called on a preaching mission (see D&C 30:9–11). At about this same time, Sidney Rigdon was baptized and, thereafter, became the principal scribe for this sacred labor. In response to the Lord's instruction in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 35, Sidney promptly commenced writing for

the Prophet as Joseph dictated a lengthy inspired translation of Genesis 5:22–24 (as recorded in Moses 6:26–8:4; see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 223, note 147).

The Lord stated that the translation of the Bible would "be given, even as they are in mine bosom" (D&C 35:20). The Prophet Joseph Smith did not "translate" the Bible in the traditional sense of the word. He did not study ancient languages in order to make a new translation into English. Rather, he received the spiritual gift to make inspired revisions. While some of the revisions the Prophet made to the text restored original biblical passages that had been lost, other changes corrected, expanded, and supplemented existing biblical text. Overall, through revelation, Joseph revised passages to reflect the meaning God intended. The changes found today in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible restore plain and precious truths and covenants once found in the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:28–36). The Lord explained that the inspired translation would do far more than provide information or even edification for the Saints. He said it was also given for "the salvation of mine own elect" (D&C 35:20). Furthermore, several revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants were received as a direct result of Joseph's work of translation (see D&C 76; 77; 91). The inspired translation of the Bible is further witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith's divine calling and ministry.



Joseph Smith wrote the following inside the King James Version of the Bible that he used for his inspired translation: "The Book of the Jews And the property of Joseph Smith Junior and Oliver Cowdery Bought October the 8th 1829, at Egbert Grandins Book Store Palmyra Wayne County New York Price $3.75 Holiness to the Lord."

Doctrine and Covenants 35:22. "Tarry with him, … forsake him not"

Sidney Rigdon fulfilled the Lord's command to "tarry with" the Prophet Joseph Smith (D&C 35:22) until the Prophet's martyrdom. He was the only counselor in the First Presidency who served during the entire administration of the Prophet. He was also the scribe for several of the revelations, some of which were received conjointly with Joseph Smith (see D&C 40; 44; 71; 73; 76; 100). He fulfilled the command to "forsake him not" (D&C 35:22) when he endured the tarring and feathering at Hiram, Ohio, in 1832 and suffered in Liberty Jail with the Prophet during the winter of 1838–39.

Doctrine and Covenants 35:24. "I will cause the heavens to shake for your good"

The Lord promised Sidney Rigdon that He would "cause the heavens to shake for [his] good" (D&C 35:24). One meaning of *shake* is to dislodge or release something from a support or a container. Thus, one interpretation of this verse could be that when the heavens shake "for [our] good," revelations and blessings are released and poured out upon us.

Doctrine and Covenants 36: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith described Edward Partridge as "a pattern of piety, and one of the Lord's great men" (in Manuscript History of the Church, 1838–1856, vol. A-1, page 78). Edward was a successful businessman from Painesville, Ohio, who was well respected in his community. He and his wife, Lydia, heard the restored gospel taught by Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and their companions. Lydia was soon baptized, but Edward remained skeptical. Lydia wrote that her husband "partly believed but he had to take a journey to New York State and see the Prophet" before he could be satisfied (account of Lydia Partridge, in Edward Partridge genealogical record, 1878, 6, Church History Library, Salt Lake City). Edward traveled with Sidney Rigdon to New York, arriving in December 1830. After hearing the Prophet Joseph Smith preach, Edward declared his belief in the restored gospel and said he was ready to be baptized if the Prophet would baptize him. Soon thereafter, the Prophet dictated a revelation, now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 36, for Edward. Two days later, on December 11, 1830, Joseph Smith baptized Edward Partridge.



After meeting Edward Partridge, Joseph Smith said he was "a pattern of piety, and one of the Lord's great men" (D&C 36, section heading).

Doctrine and Covenants 36

The Lord forgives Edward Partridge and calls him to preach the gospel

Consider the blessings you have received through the gift of the Holy Ghost. Read Doctrine and Covenants 36, looking for how the gift of the Holy Ghost would help Edward Partridge accomplish the work the Lord called him to do.

Doctrine and Covenants 36:2. "I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant"

In Doctrine and Covenants 36:2, the Lord said He would "lay [His] hand upon" Edward Partridge through His "servant Sidney Rigdon" and give him the gift of the Holy Ghost. **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) referred to this verse as an example of the way in which the Lord manifests His power through His servants: "The Lord here [in D&C 36:2] is saying that when one of his authorized servants puts his hands by authority upon the head of one to be blessed, it is as though he himself was putting his hand on with them to perform that ordinance. So we begin to see how he manifests his power among men through his servants to whom He has committed the keys of authority" (*Be Secure in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,* Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Feb. 11, 1958], 6).

Doctrine and Covenants 36:2–3. "The peaceable things of the kingdom"

The Lord instructed Edward Partridge to declare His gospel, or "the peaceable things of the kingdom," which the Holy Ghost would teach him (see D&C 36:1–2). **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how the gospel of Jesus Christ brings peace: "Peace—real peace, whole-souled to the very core of your being—comes only in and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When that precious truth is discovered and gospel principles are understood and applied, great peace can distill in the hearts and souls of our Heavenly Father's children. Said the Savior through Joseph Smith, 'He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come' (D&C 59:23)" ("The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom," *Ensign,* May 2002, 88).

Why do you think the gift of the Holy Ghost is essential to helping you learn "the peaceable things" of God's kingdom? What are some examples of gospel principles that, when obeyed, have blessed you with peace?

Doctrine and Covenants 36:6. What does it mean to "come forth out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted with the flesh"?

The Saints are commanded to hate "the garments spotted with the flesh" (D&C 36:6; see also Jude 1:23; Revelation 3:4). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained: "This is symbolic language, yet is plain to understand. This is [a wicked] generation, walking in spiritual darkness, and the punishment for sin is spoken of as punishment in fire. Garments spotted with flesh are garments defiled by the practices of carnal desires and disobedience to the commandments of the Lord. We are commanded to keep our garments unspotted from all sin, from every practice that defiles. We are therefore commanded to come out of the world of wickedness and forsake the things of this world" (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 1:163).

Doctrine and Covenants 39: Additional Historical Background

When the Saints gathered in Fayette, New York, in the early part of January 1831, for the third conference of the Church, they discussed the Lord's command for them to move to Ohio (see D&C 37:3; 38:32). A Methodist minister named James Covel may have attended that conference and afterward spoke with Church leaders. It appeared as though he was prepared to convert to the restored gospel. According to John Whitmer, James Covel "covenanted with the Lord that he would obey any commandment that the Lord would give through his servant Joseph" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 233–34). The Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation for James Covel on January 5, 1831.

The earliest copy of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 39 indicated only that it was a revelation given for someone named James. The published copy of the revelation expanded the name of the recipient to "James (C.,)." In the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, his name was identified as "James Covill." In the 1981 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, he was identified as a Baptist minister. However, recent research indicates that this revelation was given to James Covel, who was a Methodist minister.

Doctrine and Covenants 39

Jesus Christ commands James Covel to be baptized and to labor in His vineyard

Read Doctrine and Covenants 39:1–12, looking for what the Lord expects of those who desire to follow Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 39:5–6. "He that receiveth my gospel receiveth me"

To receive Jesus Christ, a person must be willing to believe and obey His gospel, which includes repenting, being baptized, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Because he had been a Methodist preacher for about 40 years, James Covel may have felt that he had already received the Savior and His gospel. Nevertheless, the Lord's message to James Covel was to repent of his sins and be baptized into His restored Church. The Lord's message is the same today. Regardless of a person's professed beliefs or previous baptism into another Christian denomination, the Lord commands people everywhere to receive Him by accepting the restored gospel, repenting of their sins, and receiving baptism from His authorized servants.



"He that receiveth my gospel receiveth me" (D&C 39:5).

Doctrine and Covenants 39:7–9. "Thine heart is now right before me"

The Lord revealed that in the past, James Covel had struggled with pride and with being caught up in the cares of the world (see D&C 39:9). However, at the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 39 was received, his heart was right before God (see D&C 39:8). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that we can educate the desires of our hearts, which will make our heart right with God:

"When is our heart right with God? Our heart is right with God when we truly desire what is righteous, when we desire what God desires.

"Our divinely granted willpower gives us control over our desires, but it may take many years for us to be sure that we have willed and educated them to the point that all are entirely righteous.

"President Joseph F. Smith taught that the 'education … of our desires is one of far-reaching importance to our happiness in life.' (*Gospel Doctrine,* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 297.)

"How do we educate our desires? We begin, I suppose, with our feelings. The desires of our hearts are deep-seated and fundamental. But our feelings are closer to the surface and easier for us to identify and influence. …

"In order to have righteous desires, we have to control our thoughts and achieve appropriate feelings. My widowed mother understood that principle. 'Pray about your feelings,' she used to say. She taught her three children that we should pray to have the right kind of feelings about our experiences—positive or negative—and about the people we knew. If our feelings were right, we would be more likely to take righteous actions and to act for the right reasons" ("The Desires of Our Hearts," *Ensign,* June 1986, 65).

Doctrine and Covenants 39:9. "Thou hast rejected me many times because of pride"

In the Lord's eyes, James Covel struggled with pride and had rejected Him in the past. **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) taught how pride can prevent us from accepting God's word and authority in our lives:

"The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives. (See Hel. 12:6.) They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works.

"… The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's. …

"The proud do not receive counsel or correction easily. (See Prov. 15:10; Amos 5:10.) Defensiveness is used by them to justify and rationalize their frailties and failures. (See Matt. 3:9; John 6:30–59.) …

"… The proud are not easily taught. (See 1 Ne. 15:3, 7–11.) They won't change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 232, 236).

Doctrine and Covenants 39:12. "Power shall rest upon thee … and I will be with thee"

The Lord promised James Covel that if he would be baptized, he would receive power, great faith, and support from God. **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how the Lord's promise to James Covel in Doctrine and Covenants 39:12 applies to Church members today: "What is said here to James [Covel] in this dispensation, when the Church was only nine months old, applies with equal force to us now—and is a remarkable and powerful reiteration of the promise made by the Savior during his earthly ministry. His pledge that he will be in our midst when two or three are gathered together in his name is a wonderful declaration of his unbounded love for each of us and assures us of his presence in our church services, in our individual lives, and in the intimate circles of our families" ("There Am I in the Midst of Them," *Ensign,* May 1976, 55).

In what ways have you seen the Lord's promise to be with us fulfilled in your own life?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 39:13–24, looking for the commandment the Lord gave to James Covel that may have been difficult for him to obey.

Doctrine and Covenants 39:21. "The day or the hour no man knoweth"

In January 1831, the Lord repeated what He taught His disciples in Jerusalem—that no one knows the time of His Second Coming (see D&C 39:21; see also Matthew 24:36). **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated:

"I am called as one of the Apostles to be a special witness of Christ in these exciting, trying times, and I do not know when He is going to come again. As far as I know, none of my brethren in the Quorum of the Twelve or even in the First Presidency knows. And I would humbly suggest that if we do not know, then nobody knows, no matter how compelling their arguments or how reasonable their calculations. The Savior said that 'of that day, and hour, no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only' (JST, Matt. 1:40).

"I believe that when the Lord says 'no one' knows, He really means that no one knows" ("When Shall These Things Be?" *Ensign,* Dec. 1996, 56).

Doctrine and Covenants 40: Additional Historical Background

On January 6, 1831, the day after the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 39 was received, James Covel abruptly left Fayette, New York. On that same day the Lord gave the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 40, "explaining why [James Covel] obeyed not the word." The Prophet Joseph Smith later said that James had "rejected the word of the Lord, and returned to his former principles and people" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 237).

Doctrine and Covenants 40

The Lord reveals why James Covel rejected His words

Read Doctrine and Covenants 40, looking for reasons why James Covel did not obey the word of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 40:2. "The fear of persecution and the cares of the world caused him to reject the word"

Using language similar to that in His New Testament parable of the sower, the Lord described James Covel as having "received the word with gladness," but then "the fear of persecution and the cares of the world caused him to reject the word" (D&C 40:2; see Matthew 13:20–22). The Lord revealed that James's heart "*was* right before [Him]" (D&C 40:1; italics added) and that the word had genuinely taken root in his heart, but he had nevertheless chosen to break his covenant with the Lord (see D&C 40:3).

At the time James Covel heard the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, he was about 60 years old. He was a prominent leader of the Methodist reform movement and had built extensive associations over his 40-year career as a traveling preacher. Furthermore, two of his sons were Methodist preachers. To become a member of the Church and move west to Ohio to fulfill the Lord's call to preach the gospel would have required leaving his home in New York and cutting ties with his former associates. The sacrifice required by the Lord was apparently too much for him to accept. The adversary tempted him, and the fear of persecution and personal loss caused him to reject God's word.

President Thomas S. Monson exhorted Church members to have courage when faced with ridicule and opposition: "We will face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God's approval. Courage becomes a living and an attractive virtue when it is regarded not only as a willingness to die manfully, but also as a determination to live decently. A moral coward is one who is afraid to do what he thinks is right because others will disapprove or laugh. Remember that all men have their fears, but those who face their fears with dignity have courage as well" ("The Call for Courage," *Ensign,* May 2004, 55–56).

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recounted an experience in which the cares of the world could have led him to become casual in his efforts to keep the commandments:

"In 1980 we moved as a family across the street from the hospital where I trained and worked. I worked every day, including Sundays. If I finished my Sunday work by 2:00 p.m., I could join my wife and daughter and drive to church for meetings that began at 2:30.

"One Sunday late in my first year of training, I knew that I would likely finish by 2:00. I realized, however, that if I stayed in the hospital just a little longer, my wife and daughter would depart without me. I could then walk home and take a needed nap. I regret to say that I did just that. I waited until 2:15, walked home slowly, and lay down on the couch, hoping to nap. But I could not fall asleep. I was disturbed and concerned. I had always loved going to church. I wondered why on this day the fire of testimony and the zeal that I had previously felt were missing.

"I did not have to think long. Because of my schedule, I had become casual with my prayers and scripture study. I would get up one morning, say my prayers, and go to work. Often day blended into night and into day again before I would return home late the following evening. I would then be so tired that I would fall asleep before saying a prayer or reading the scriptures. The next morning the process began again. The problem was that I was not doing the basic things I needed to do to keep my mightily changed heart from turning to stone.

"I got off the couch, got on my knees, and pleaded with God for forgiveness. I promised my Heavenly Father that I would change. The next day I brought a Book of Mormon to the hospital. On my to-do list that day, and every day since, were two items: praying at least morning and evening and reading in the scriptures. Sometimes midnight would come, and I would have to quickly find a private place to pray. Some days my scripture study was brief. I also promised Heavenly Father that I would always try to get to church, even if I missed part of the meeting. Over the course of a few weeks, the zeal returned and the fire of testimony burned fiercely again. I promised to never again fall into the spiritual death trap of being casual about these seemingly small actions and thereby jeopardizing things of an eternal nature, regardless of circumstances" ("Preserving the Heart's Mighty Change," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 98–99).

How does Elder Renlund's experience illustrate how the cares of the world can prevent a person from faithfully living the gospel? What has helped you to resist "the fear of persecution and the cares of the world" (D&C 40:2) in order to remain faithful to God and your covenants?

Compare and contrast the ways in which Sidney Rigdon and James Covel responded to the message of the restored gospel. Think about your own decisions and whether they are influenced by the cares of the world. Consider what changes you may need to make.

CHAPTER 15

Doctrine and Covenants 37–38; 41

Introduction and Timeline

In late December 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith continued working on his inspired translation of the Bible. During this time, Joseph received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 37. In this revelation, the Lord commanded the Prophet to temporarily lay aside the Bible translation and to preach the gospel and strengthen the Church. He also commanded the Saints to gather to Ohio.

At a Church conference held on January 2, 1831, Joseph Smith announced the Lord's commandment for the Saints to gather to Ohio. Many of the Saints desired to know more about the commandment, so the Prophet inquired of the Lord during the conference. Joseph received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 38 in the presence of the congregation. In this revelation the Lord revealed His reasons for commanding the Saints to gather to Ohio and explained the promised blessings for doing so.

Most of the Saints accepted the commandment and began preparations to move to Ohio. Near the end of January 1831, the Prophet Joseph; his wife, Emma; and others traveled by sleigh from New York to Ohio and arrived in Kirtland in the early part of February. On February 4, Joseph received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 41, in which the Lord instructed the Prophet and other Church leaders to pray to receive His law. In addition, the Lord called Edward Partridge as the first bishop of the Church.

December 1830

Sidney Rigdon began acting as a scribe for Joseph Smith during the inspired translation of the Bible.

December 1830

While translating the Bible Joseph Smith received part of the ancient record of Enoch (Moses 7).

December 30, 1830

Doctrine and Covenants 37 was received.

January 2, 1831

During the third conference of the Church, Joseph Smith announced that the Saints were to gather to Ohio.

January 2, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 38 was received.

January–February 1831

Joseph and Emma Smith moved to Kirtland, Ohio, arriving in early February.

February 4, 1831

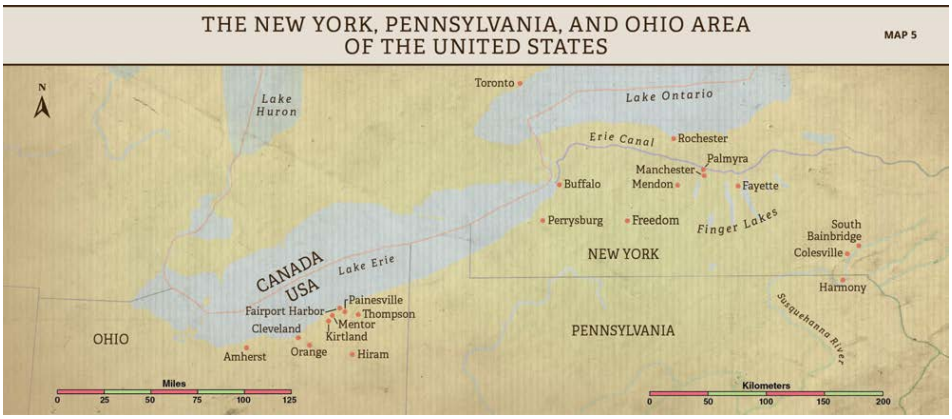
Doctrine and Covenants 41 was received.

Consider which commandments may be difficult for you to obey. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 37–38, think about reasons why it may have been difficult for the Saints in New York to obey the Lord's command to move to Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 37: Additional Historical Background

Sidney Rigdon was converted to the gospel when he heard the preaching of Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and the other missionaries who had stopped in Ohio on their way to the western border of Missouri. In the space of just a few weeks, the missionaries had baptized over 100 converts in the Kirtland area, including Sidney Rigdon. After his baptism, Sidney, along with Edward Partridge, traveled to New York and met the Prophet Joseph Smith. Sidney was called by revelation to assist Joseph Smith as a scribe while the Prophet continued an inspired translation of the

Bible. With Sidney as his scribe, Joseph dictated Moses 7 in the Pearl of Great Price. In December 1830 the Lord instructed them to stop translating and to strengthen the Church members in New York. The Lord also commanded the Saints to gather to Ohio and join with those who had been converted there. Although the Lord had previously said that His people would need to gather together in one body to be protected from tribulation (see D&C 29:8), this revelation (D&C 37) was the first commandment concerning a literal gathering of the Saints to a central location in this dispensation.



Doctrine and Covenants 37

The Lord commands His Church to gather to Ohio

Read Doctrine and Covenants 37, looking for evidence that the Lord does not force His children to obey His commandments.

Doctrine and Covenants 37:1. "It is not expedient in me that ye should translate any more"

In June 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith began an inspired revision of the Bible that he referred to as a translation. From June to December 1830, the Prophet focused on the Old Testament book of Genesis, with Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Emma Smith, and Sidney Rigdon assisting him as scribes. In December 1830 the Lord commanded Joseph and Sidney to stop their work on the translation at that time and instructed them to resume it after arriving in Kirtland, Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 37:1–3. "Go to the Ohio"

From April to October 1830, essentially all of the membership of the Church resided in New York, in the areas of Palmyra, Fayette, and Colesville. That changed when missionaries who were sent to preach to the American Indians on the western border of Missouri stopped in Kirtland, Ohio. The missionaries found that the Lord had prepared many people there to receive the message of the restored gospel. Over 100 individuals were converted within a few weeks. The commandment for the Saints to "assemble together at the Ohio" (D&C 37:3), meaning the vast Ohio River Valley in northeastern Ohio where Kirtland was

located, required the Saints to travel a distance of approximately 300 miles (480 kilometers) from where they lived in New York.

In September 1830, the Lord explained that the Saints were "called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect" and that "they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land" (D&C 29:7–8). The city of Zion—the New Jerusalem—was designated by the Lord as the place where the Saints were to gather. One purpose of Oliver Cowdery's mission was to prepare for the time when the Lord would identify the location of Zion (see D&C 28:8–9). The Lord eventually revealed that Independence, Missouri, was to become Zion (see D&C 57:1–3). However, the Lord commanded the Saints to gather in Ohio until further information could be obtained from Oliver Cowdery when he returned from his mission. Subsequent teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith and other latter-day prophets have clarified that Zion will expand to fill North and South America and even beyond to fill the whole earth.



The first command for the Saints to gather in this dispensation was to the Kirtland, Ohio, area (see D&C 37:3; photograph ca. 1907).
Courtesy Church History Library and Archives

Doctrine and Covenants 38: Additional Historical Background

On January 2, 1831, shortly after the Prophet Joseph Smith received the commandment for the Church to "assemble together at the Ohio" (D&C 37:3), a conference was held in Fayette, New York. Church members attended from the three areas of New York where members lived: Palmyra, Fayette, and Colesville. The Prophet announced the Lord's command to assemble in Ohio. John Whitmer recorded that "the solemnities of eternity rested on the congregation, and … they

desired to know somewhat more concerning this matter" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 18). Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord, and, in the presence of the congregation, he received a revelation that provided a detailed explanation about why the Saints were to relocate.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:1–22

The Lord declares His omniscience and assures the Saints that He is in their midst

Read Doctrine and Covenants 38:1–22, looking for descriptions of the Lord's nature and character that could have strengthened the faith of the Saints and helped them trust His commandments.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:2. The Lord knows all things

The Lord knows all things (see 2 Nephi 2:24; 9:20). He knows "the end from the beginning" (Abraham 2:8), and He can see and comprehend all things in the past, present, and future (see D&C 88:41; 130:7). Because He knows all things, we can exercise faith in Him. The *Lectures on Faith,* a collection of lessons that were published with the sanction and approval of the Prophet Joseph Smith, contains an explanation of the relationship between God's perfect knowledge and our ability to exercise complete faith in Him: "Without the knowledge of all things God would not be able to save any portion of his creatures; for it is by reason of the knowledge which he has of all things, from the beginning to the end, that enables him to give that understanding to his creatures by which they are made partakers of eternal life; and if it were not for the idea existing in the minds of men that God had all knowledge it would be impossible for them to exercise faith in him" (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 51–52).

Doctrine and Covenants 38:12. "Angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth … ; and, behold, the enemy is combined"

Doctrine and Covenants 38:12 refers to the New Testament parable of the wheat and the tares (see Matthew 13:24–30). The imagery of the angels waiting to reap the earth is an allusion to the destruction of the wicked at the end of the world. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how God's followers can have peace in a deteriorating world:

"Years ago, I wondered over the scriptural imagery of angels waiting 'day and night' for 'the great command' to come down and reap the tares in a wicked and suffering world; it seemed rather eager to me. (See D&C 38:12; 86:5.) Given such massive, needless human suffering, I don't wonder any more!

"Even so, the final reaping will occur only when the Father determines that the world is 'fully ripe.' (D&C 86:7.) Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, the challenge is surviving spiritually in a deteriorating 'wheat and tares' world. [D&C 86:7.]

"Granted, occasionally a few defectors or dissidents may try to vex us as they hyperventilate over their particular concerns, but it is the engulfing effects of that deteriorating world on Church members which is the 'clear and present danger.'

'Evils and designs' really do operate through 'conspiring [individuals] in the last days.' (D&C 89:4.) The Lord has even announced, 'Behold, the enemy is combined.' (D&C 38:12.)

"Yet we must not be intimidated or lose our composure even though the once morally unacceptable is becoming acceptable, as if frequency somehow conferred respectability!" ("'Behold, the Enemy Is Combined' (D&C 38:12)," *Ensign,* May 1993, 76).

Doctrine and Covenants 38:13–15. "I show unto you a mystery"

The revelation that Church members were to relocate to Ohio was unexpected, and great sacrifices were anticipated. The Saints' belief that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God was tested. John Whitmer recorded that some people suspected that "Joseph had invented [the revelation] himself to deceive the people that in the end he might get gain" (in *The Joseph smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* 21).

Although some questioned Joseph Smith's divine role as a prophet, the Lord mercifully shared with Church members something that they did not know, "a mystery, a thing which is had in secret chambers" (D&C 38:13). Joseph Smith and the Saints learned from the Lord that enemies were plotting to bring about their destruction (see D&C 38:13, 28).

Doctrine and Covenants 38:17–20. "A land flowing with milk and honey"

Although the Saints would need to make sacrifices to migrate to Ohio, the Lord shared details about how His righteous children would find "a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey" (D&C 38:18), meaning a place of great abundance (see Exodus 3:8). This promise of a "land of … inheritance" (D&C 38:19) may have temporal fulfillment in the site of the future city of Zion in Missouri, but it also seems to refer to the earth when it will be renewed and receive a paradisiacal glory during the Millennium (see Articles of Faith 1:10; see also D&C 63:20–21, 49). The righteous who live God's laws and who seek to become like Him will receive an eternal land of inheritance on the earth when it becomes a celestial kingdom (see D&C 88:17–20). The Lord told Church members to seek this land of inheritance "with all [their] hearts" (D&C 38:19).

Doctrine and Covenants 38:23–42

The Lord commands the Saints to be one and explains why He called them to gather to Ohio

Read Doctrine and Covenants 38:23–27, looking for a principle that should guide our behavior with other people.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:24–27. "Let every man esteem his brother as himself"

As the Lord prepared the Saints in this dispensation to establish Zion, He taught them about Enoch and the people of Zion anciently. In December 1830 the Prophet

Joseph Smith received a revelation about the city of Zion where Enoch's people "were of one heart and one mind, … and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). In a revelation received on January 2, 1831, the Lord reiterated the timeless principle that would help His children establish a latter-day Zion, including unity, righteousness, and caring for the poor. His commandment to "let every man esteem his brother as himself" (D&C 38:24) applies to everyone because we are all brothers and sisters—children of God. Caring for and respecting others is vital to preparing to live the law of consecration, which was given approximately one month later, after Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio (see D&C 42:30).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles illustrated the importance of considering every person as someone to serve and love:

"Often we can, usually unwittingly, be quite insensitive to the circumstances and difficulties of those around us. We all have problems, and ultimately each individual has to take responsibility for his or her own happiness. None of us is so free of difficulty ourselves or so endowed with time and money that we can do nothing but tend 'the wounded and the weary' ('Lord, I Would Follow Thee,' *Hymns,* no. 220). Nevertheless, in looking to the Savior's life for an example, I suspect we can probably find a way to do more of that than we do. …

"… I wish I could go back to my youth and there have another chance to reach out to those who, at the time, didn't fall very solidly onto my radar scope. Youth want to feel included and important, to have the feeling they matter to others. … It is the associations I didn't have, the friends I didn't reach, that cause me some pain now all these years later.

"Let me cite just one case, which will be guilt enough for now. In 1979 we held in St. George, Utah, our 20-year class reunion for Dixie High School. We had great high school years filled with state football and basketball championships and a host of other 'hometown, USA' memories. An effort was made to find current addresses for the entire class and get everyone to the reunion.

"In the midst of all that fun, I remember the terribly painful letter written by one very bright—but, in her childhood, somewhat less popular—young woman who wrote something like this:

"'Congratulations to all of us for having survived long enough to have a 20-year class reunion. I hope everyone has a wonderful time. But don't reserve a place for me. I have, in fact, spent most of those 20 years trying to forget the painful moments of our school days together. Now that I am nearly over those feelings of loneliness and shattered self-esteem, I cannot bring myself to see all of the class and run the risk of remembering all of that again. Have a good time and forgive me. It is my problem, not yours. Maybe I can come at the 30-year mark.'

"Which, I am very happy to report, she did. But she was terribly wrong about one thing—it was our problem, and we knew it.

"I have wept for her—my friend—and other friends like her in my youth for whom I and a lot of others obviously were not masters of 'the healer's art' (*Hymns,* no. 220). We simply were not the Savior's agents or disciples that he intends people to be. I cannot help but wonder what I might have done to watch out a little more for the ones not included, to make sure the gesture of a friendly word or a listening

ear or a little low-cost casual talk and shared time might have reached far enough to include those hanging on the outer edge of the social circle, and in some cases barely hanging on at all.

"Jesus said in his most remarkable sermon ever: 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?' (Matt. 5:46–47).

"I make an appeal for us to reach beyond our own contentment, to move out of our own comfort and companion zone, to reach those who may not always be so easy to reach" ("Come unto Me," *Ensign,* Apr. 1998, 21–22).

Enoch's people obtained Zion by learning to become one with each other (see Moses 7:17–18). What could you do to better follow the Lord's commandment to "let every man esteem his brother as himself" (D&C 38:25)?

Doctrine and Covenants 38:27. "If ye are not one ye are not mine"

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency taught how we can become one with those around us:

"We know from experience that joy comes when we are blessed with unity. We yearn, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, for that joy which we once had with Him in the life before this one. His desire is to grant us that sacred wish for unity out of His love for us.

"He cannot grant it to us as individuals. The joy of unity He wants so much to give us is not solitary. We must seek it and qualify for it with others. It is not surprising then that God urges us to gather so that He can bless us. He wants us to gather into families. He has established classes, wards, and branches and commanded us to meet together often. In those gatherings, which God has designed for us, lies our great opportunity. We can pray and work for the unity that will bring us joy and multiply our power to serve" ("Our Hearts Knit as One," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 69).

Doctrine and Covenants 38:27, 34–36. Take care of the poor and be united

In Doctrine and Covenants 38, the Lord commanded the Saints to be unified and to take care of the poor. These are two of the fundamental principles upon which Zion is to be established and are part of the law of the celestial kingdom. These two commandments are also emphasized in Moses 7:18 and 4 Nephi 1:2–3. Later, when the Saints attempted to live the law of consecration in Missouri, they were unsuccessful because they "[did] not impart of their substance … to the poor and afflicted among them" and they were "not united" (D&C 105:3–4; see also D&C 105:5). Today there are many opportunities in the Church to care for those in need, including giving a generous fast offering.



The Newel K. Whitney store was central to the Church's effort to "look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief" (D&C 38:35).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 38:28–42, looking for the reasons why the Saints were to assemble in Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:28–32. "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear"

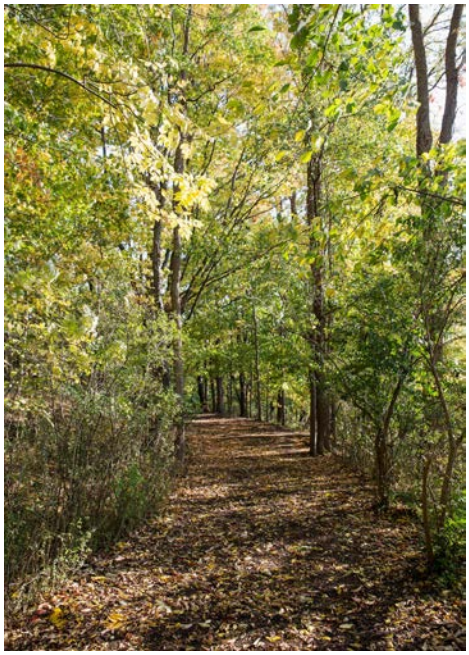
In Doctrine and Covenants 38:28–32, the Lord gently warned the Saints of events that only He knew from His divine perspective and commanded the Saints to go to Ohio. He emphasized that through their obedience and preparation, they would have no need to fear (see D&C 38:15, 30).

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the importance of preparation:

"On a daily basis we witness widely fluctuating inflation; wars; interpersonal conflicts; national disasters; variances in weather conditions; innumerable forces of immorality, crime, and violence; attacks and pressures on the family and individuals; technological advances that make occupations obsolete; and so on. The need for preparation is abundantly clear. The great blessing of being prepared gives us freedom from fear, as guaranteed to us by the Lord in the Doctrine and Covenants: 'If ye are prepared ye shall not fear' [D&C 38:30].

"Just as it is important to prepare ourselves spiritually, we must also prepare ourselves for our temporal needs. Each of us needs to take the time to ask ourselves, What preparation should I make to care for my needs and the needs of my family?" ("If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 35–36).

Doctrine and Covenants 38:31–32. "I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high"



A portion of the Chillicothe Trail, which went through the Isaac Morley farm, traveled by Joseph and Emma Smith as they journeyed to Kirtland, Ohio

In addition to helping His people escape destruction, the Lord also promised that when the Saints gathered together in Ohio, He would give them His law and endow them with power. On February 9, 1831, shortly after arriving in Kirtland, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:1–72. He received further instruction on February 23 (see D&C 42:73–93). Together, these revelations are known as "the law of the Church" (D&C 42, section heading). Later, in June 1833, the Lord reminded the Saints of His command to "build a house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high" (D&C 95:8; see also D&C 88:119). Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were endowed with power on April 3, 1836, when they received priesthood keys of authority from heavenly messengers (see D&C 110:9). The righteous Saints who participated in the temple dedication in Kirtland and in other meetings at the temple received an outpouring of spiritual gifts and manifestations. This endowment of power is not the same as the ordinance that was introduced to the righteous members of the Church later in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:42. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland described the meaning of a phrase found in Doctrine and Covenants 38:42:

"Let me tell you what that phrase 'bear the vessels of the Lord' means. Anciently it had at least two meanings, both related to the work of the priesthood.

"The first refers to the recovery and return to Jerusalem of various temple implements that had been carried into Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. In physically handling the return of these items, the Lord reminded those early brethren of the sanctity of anything related to the temple. Therefore as they carried back to their homeland these various bowls, basins, cups, and other vessels, they themselves were to be as clean as the ceremonial instruments they bore [see 2 Kings 25:14–15; Ezra 1:5–11].

"The second meaning is related to the first. Similar bowls and implements were used for ritual purification in the home. The Apostle Paul, writing to his young friend Timothy, said of these, 'In a great house there are … vessels of gold and …

silver, … of wood and of earth'—these means of washing and cleansing common in the time of the Savior. But Paul goes on to say, 'If a man … purge himself [of unworthiness], *he* shall *be* a vessel … sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' Therefore, Paul says, 'Flee … youthful lusts: … follow righteousness, … call on the Lord out of a pure heart [2 Timothy 2:20–22; emphasis added].

"In both of these biblical accounts the message is that as priesthood bearers not only are we to *handle* sacred vessels and emblems of God's power—think of preparing, blessing, and passing the sacrament, for example—but we are also to *be* a sanctified instrument as well. Partly because of what we are to *do* but more importantly because of what we are to *be,* the prophets and apostles tell us to 'flee … youthful lusts' and 'call on the Lord out of a pure heart.' They tell us to be clean" ("Sanctify Yourselves," *Ensign,* Nov. 2000, 39).

Doctrine and Covenants 41: Additional Historical Background

Joseph and Emma Smith left New York with Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge to go to Kirtland, Ohio. When they arrived in Kirtland in early February 1831, Joseph stopped at the Newel K. Whitney store. Newel Whitney and his wife, Ann, were recent converts to the Church, but they had not yet met the Prophet. Joseph entered the store, reached his hand across the counter, and said, "Newel K. Whitney, thou art the man." When Newel expressed that he was at a disadvantage because he did not know to whom he was speaking, the Prophet replied, "I am Joseph the Prophet; you have prayed me here, now what do you want of me?" (in Mark Staker, "Thou Art the Man," *Ensign,* Apr. 2005, 37).



Joseph Smith first met Newel K. Whitney at Whitney's store in Kirtland, Ohio.

Emma Smith was expecting twins within a couple of months, and the Whitneys invited Joseph and Emma to stay with them in their home. Still, Joseph and Emma needed a more permanent place to live, as did Sidney and Phebe Rigdon. With their conversion to the Church, the Rigdons had given up the opportunity to live in a home being built for them by Sidney's former congregation when he was a minister in Mentor, Ohio. Leman Copley, who had a large farm in Thompson, Ohio, about 20 miles east of Kirtland, offered to provide houses and supplies to Joseph and Sidney. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others, [2013], 241.) Joseph prayed and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 41, which indicated that the Saints should build a home for the Prophet and that Sidney Rigdon "should live as seemeth him good" (D&C 41:8). Joseph and Emma stayed with the Whitneys for only a few weeks, and then they relocated to the home of Isaac Morley while the Saints built a small frame home for them on the Morley farm.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 41, looking for what blessings the Lord promised His servants if they would unite in faith and prayer.

Doctrine and Covenants 41

The Lord teaches that true disciples will keep His law

Doctrine and Covenants 41:5. "He that receiveth my law and doeth it, the same is my disciple"

In a revelation received on February 4, 1831, the Lord said that Church leaders would receive His law "by the prayer of [their] faith" (D&C 41:3). Within a few days of this promise, on February 9, the Lord revealed His law to the Church (see D&C 42:1–72). In anticipation of that revelation, the Lord explained that to become true disciples, His followers must receive His law and do it (see D&C 41:5). Although many may profess to believe in Jesus Christ, not all of them are willing to do what He says. Those who will do what He asks are promised that they will enter into the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew 7:21).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us of what it means to be true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ: "Following Christ is not a casual or occasional practice but a continuous commitment and way of life that applies at all times and in all places" ("Followers of Christ," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2013, 97).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency also testified:

"It is not enough merely to speak of Jesus Christ or proclaim that we are His disciples. It is not enough to surround ourselves with symbols of our religion. Discipleship is not a spectator sport. We cannot expect to experience the blessings of faith by standing inactive on the sidelines any more than we can experience the benefits of health by sitting on a sofa watching sporting events on television and giving advice to the athletes. And yet for some, 'spectator discipleship' is a preferred if not a primary way of worshipping.

"Ours is not a secondhand religion. We cannot receive the blessings of the gospel merely by observing the good that others do. We need to get off the sidelines and practice what we preach" ("The Way of the Disciple," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 76–77).

Doctrine and Covenants 41:9. "I have called … ; and … he should be appointed by the voice of the church, and ordained a bishop"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 41, the Lord not only called Edward Partridge to serve as a bishop in His Church, but He also revealed the pattern pertaining to all who are called to serve in the Church. First, an individual must be called by God through revelation to one in authority. In the calling of Edward Partridge, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that Edward should serve as the first bishop of the Church in this dispensation. Second, those who are properly called by the Lord should be appointed, or sustained, "by the voice of the church." Finally, individuals are to be ordained or set apart to their office or calling by the authority of the priesthood.

Doctrine and Covenants 41:9–11. "My servant Edward Partridge"

Edward Partridge first heard the restored gospel in the fall of 1830, when the missionaries who had been sent to the Lamanites stopped in Kirtland, Ohio, on their way to Missouri (see D&C 28:8; 30:5–8; 32:2–3). He was not baptized, however, until December. Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet's mother, wrote the following about Edward Partridge's decision to be baptized: "In December [1830], Joseph appointed a meeting at our house, and while he was presiding Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge came in and seated themselves in the congregation. When Joseph had finished his discourse, he gave all the privilege of speaking who had any remarks to make. Upon this Mr. Partridge rose and stated that he had been to Manchester, with the view of obtaining information respecting the doctrine which we preached, [but], not finding us, he had made some inquiry of our neighbors concerning our character, which they stated had been unimpeachable until Joseph deceived us relative to the Book of Mormon. He also said that he had walked over our farm and observed the good order and industry which it exhibited, and having seen what we had sacrificed for the sake of our faith, also, having heard that our veracity was not questioned upon any other point than that of our religion, he believed our testimony and was ready to be baptized, 'if,' said he, 'brother Joseph will baptize me' " ("Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845," 191, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling and punctuation standardized). Edward Partridge was baptized by Joseph Smith on December 11, 1830.

In Kirtland, Ohio, Edward Partridge was called to be the first bishop of the Church, and he later suffered many persecutions in Missouri, including being tarred and feathered by an angry mob because he would not renounce his faith in the Book of Mormon. He died a faithful member of the Church in 1840 in Nauvoo, Illinois, at the age of 46. An obituary recorded the following about Edward's death: "He lost his life in consequence of the Missouri Persecutions, and he is one of that number whose blood will be required at their hands" (obituary for Edward Partridge, *Times and Seasons,* June 1840, 128). (For more information about Edward Partridge, see D&C 36; 41:9–11; 42:10; 50:39; 51:1–5, 18; 52:24; 57:7; 58:14–16, 24–25, 61–62;

60:10; 64:17; 124:19; see also *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual,* 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 82.)

Edward Partridge's willingness "to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labors of the church" (D&C 41:9) is confirmed in the following account: "[Edward] Partridge's daughter later recalled that after this revelation was dictated, her father sold his property and 'realized but little' from the transactions. She added, 'My fathers course in joining the mormon religion and sacrificing his property caused his friends of the world to think him insane. They could not see what there was in religion to make a man give up all worldly considerations for it'" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 244).

In Doctrine and Covenants 41:5, the Lord explained that "he that receiveth my law and doeth it" is His disciple. What are some ways that you can show the Lord that you will receive His law and do it? Why is it important for you to seek to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

CHAPTER 16

Doctrine and Covenants 42

Introduction and Timeline

The Lord commanded the Saints living in New York to move to Ohio and promised that they would receive His law there (see D&C 37:3; 38:32). On February 9, 1831, shortly after Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, 12 elders of the Church met and prayed together, as the Lord had commanded them to do (see D&C 41:2–3). As these Church leaders sought the Lord's direction concerning the growing Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:1–72. Two weeks later, on February 23, 1831, the Prophet sought further instruction from the Lord; the additional direction he received is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:74–93. The additional details recorded in verse 73 were added later by the Prophet at the time the Doctrine and Covenants was published. Together, these revelations are known as "the law of the Church" (D&C 42, section heading). In these revelations the Lord introduced spiritual and temporal laws directing Church members to help the poor, finance various Church undertakings, and assist other Saints who would be coming to Ohio. These laws also gave direction to the young Church and helped prepare them to become a Zion people.

January 2, 1831

The Saints in New York were promised that they would receive God's law when they gathered to Ohio (see D&C 38).

Early February 1831

Joseph and Emma Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio.

February 4, 1831

Edward Partridge was called as the first bishop of the restored Church (see D&C 41).

February 9 and 23, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 42 was received.

Think about some of the laws that govern the community in which you live. How do these laws benefit you? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 42, look for specific aspects of the Lord's law and how these commandments can bless God's children.

Doctrine and Covenants 42: Additional Historical Background

When the Prophet Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, at the beginning of February 1831, he discovered that in the absence of prophetic guidance, the Saints there did not fully understand Church doctrine and policies. They had many questions and misconceptions regarding spiritual manifestations, how to live together as a community of Saints, Church leadership, and how the gathering of the Saints should take place.

Before learning of the restored gospel, some of the newly baptized Church members in Kirtland belonged to a communal group known as "the family." This group based their practices on the New Testament descriptions of the early Christian Saints having "all things in common" (see Acts 2:44–45; 4:32). After becoming members of the restored Church, many of these new converts continued to practice their system of communal living. One such group was living on Isaac Morley's farm, outside the village of Kirtland. "When John Whitmer arrived from New York in mid-January [1831], he noted that what they were doing created many problems. For example, Heman Bassett took a pocket watch belonging to Levi Hancock and sold it. When asked why, Heman replied, 'Oh, I thought it was all in the family.' Levi responded that he did not like such 'family doing' and would not

endure it any longer [Levi W. Hancock, 'Levi Hancock Journal,' Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 81]" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual,* 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 95).

Upon arriving in Kirtland, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned of this problematic economic system. He knew that many Church members from New York were sacrificing much to leave their homes and join with the Saints in Ohio. He also knew that the Church would need money, goods, and property in order to help the poor and assist immigrants who were gathering in Ohio. Joseph began planning for this influx of Saints from the East and for the establishment of Zion in Missouri "on the borders by the Lamanites" (D&C 28:9).

In obedience to the Lord's direction recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 41:2–3, the Prophet Joseph Smith and 12 elders met on February 9, 1831, and prayed together, supplicating the Lord to manifest His law. These brethren asked the Lord about five matters in particular: (1) whether the various communities of Saints should gather in one place or remain separate for the time being, (2) what the Lord's law was for governing and regulating the Church, (3) how they should care for the families of those called to serve as missionaries, (4) how the Saints living under the principles of consecration should deal with nonmembers, and (5) what preparations should be made in order to care for the Saints arriving from the East (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 246–47, note 42). In response, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:1–72, which is a composite of revelatory answers that the Lord gave these brethren in answer to the first three questions. The revealed answers to the remaining questions were not published as part of the Doctrine and Covenants.



The Newel K. Whitney home in Kirtland, Ohio

Two weeks later, on February 23, 1831, Joseph Smith and seven elders approached the Lord with further questions regarding implementing the law of the Church. The Lord gave these men additional direction. This direction was added to the February 9 revelation and is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:74–93. The additional details recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:73 were added later by the Prophet at the time the Doctrine and Covenants was prepared for publication. It is important to note that the Prophet Joseph Smith occasionally made changes or additions to previously recorded revelations to clarify or reflect additional understanding that the Lord had revealed. These inspired revisions illustrate the ongoing nature of revelation and are an example of the right and authority of the Lord and His prophet to amend or clarify previous revelation.



Doctrine and Covenants 42:1–29

The Lord calls the elders to preach the gospel, instructs them on teaching the gospel, and reveals laws and commandments for the Saints

Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:1–29, looking for the responsibilities of those who are called to teach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:1–3. "Hearken and hear and obey the law"

The Prophet Joseph Smith referred to the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42 as "the law of the Church" (D&C 42, section heading). These revelations fulfilled the Lord's earlier promise to give the Saints His law if Joseph Smith and the Saints living in New York obeyed the commandment to relocate to Ohio. Included in this law were the Lord's teachings on a variety of issues in response to the petitions of the Prophet and 12 elders who met to receive the law. The Lord declared that the truths He revealed would be "[His] law to govern [His] church" (D&C 42:59), and He commanded the Saints to "hearken and hear and obey [this] law" (D&C 42:2).

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901) of the First Presidency taught the following about Doctrine and Covenants 42: "Altogether this was a most important revelation. It threw a flood of light upon a great variety of subjects and settled many important questions. Faithful men and women were greatly delighted at being members of a Church which the Lord acknowledged as His own, and to which He communicated His word through his inspired Prophet as he did at this time" (*Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet* [1958], 109).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:4–9. The Lord gives instructions about the gathering of the Saints

After Church members in New York were commanded to move to Ohio, Church leaders wondered whether those in other growing congregations in northeastern Ohio should also relocate to Kirtland. The Lord indicated that the time would come when the Saints would "be gathered in one" in "the city of the New Jerusalem," but that time had not yet arrived (D&C 42:9). But when the time did come, by gathering to the New Jerusalem the Saints would be fulfilling the promise made to ancient Israel that they would "be [God's] people" and He would "be [their] God" (D&C 42:9; see also Exodus 6:7; 19:5–6; Revelation 21:2–3).

To facilitate this gathering the elders were to go forth from Kirtland, "preaching [the] gospel, two by two" (D&C 42:6) and building up the Church wherever believers were to be found (see D&C 42:8). Those who preached the gospel were to "go forth in the power of [the] Spirit" and "in [Jesus Christ's] name, … declaring [His] word like unto angels of God" (D&C 42:6). Both missionaries and angels perform a similar work; the prophet Mormon explained that the ministry of angels is "to call men unto repentance … by declaring the word of Christ," thus preparing God's children to "have faith in Christ" (Moroni 7:31–32).



Some of the first converts to the Church in Ohio were baptized in the Chagrin River near Kirtland, Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:11. "Known to the church that he has authority"

After Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and the other missionaries left Ohio, the new converts in the Kirtland area were left without strong Church leadership. Some of these new members followed traditions derived from other faiths or cultures and participated in extreme and foolish religious practices. President George A. Smith of the First Presidency later related that during that time some Church members claimed that "they could see angels, and letters would come down from heaven, … and they would be put through … unnatural distortions" ("Historical Discourse, *Deseret News,* Dec. 21, 1864, 90).

When the Prophet Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, he observed that "some strange notions and false spirits had crept in among them [the Ohio Saints]" (in *History of the Church,* 1:146). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:11, the Lord prohibited those who had not been duly called and appointed by Him from assuming roles as teachers, leaders, or revelators in the Church. He clarified that those who are authorized to preach His gospel and build up His Church are those who are "known to the church" and have been "ordained by the heads of the church" (D&C 42:11). **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"There is purpose in members of the Church everywhere in the world being able to identify the general and local authorities. In that way they can know from whom they learn. …

"There have been too many names presented, too many sustaining votes taken, too many ordinations and settings apart performed before too many witnesses; there have been too many records kept, too many certificates prepared, and too many pictures published in too many places for anyone to be deceived as to who holds proper authority" ("From Such Turn Away," *Ensign,* May 1985, 34).

"We always know who is called to lead or to teach and have the opportunity to sustain or to oppose the action. It did not come as an invention of man but was set out in the revelations [D&C 42:11]. … In this way, the Church is protected from any imposter who would take over a quorum, a ward, a stake, or the Church" ("The Weak and the Simple of the Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2007, 6).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:12–15. "Teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon"

The Lord declared that those who are called to teach His gospel should "teach the principles of [His] gospel" as found in the scriptures (D&C 42:12). At the time that this revelation was given, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, along with a growing number of latter-day revelations, were the only scriptures available to Church members. Eventually, more of God's scriptures would be given, including the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Bible (see D&C 42:15, 56–58). In our day, the scriptural sources from which we are to teach are referred to as the standard works.



The Lord expects us to teach "the fulness of the gospel" from the Bible and the Book of Mormon (D&C 42:12).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) explained why the scriptures are called the standard works: "'The Standard Works' … are the reservoir of our doctrine from which flows the waters of gospel light. They provide the standard by which all gospel doctrine is measured. All other books, manuals, and study courses should spring from the word of the Lord as set forth in these volumes" ("Cornerstones of Responsibility" [address given at the Regional Representatives' seminar, Apr. 5, 1991], 1).

Think about the opportunities you have to teach the gospel. As you read Doctrine and Covenants 42:12–15, look for some things that you can do to be better prepared to teach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:14. "The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith"

Inspired and effective teaching helps God's children become strengthened and converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord promised that His Spirit would "be given … by the prayer of faith" to those called to teach, and He emphasized that those who do not have the Spirit "shall not teach" (D&C 42:14). In other words, true gospel learning will not take place unless the Spirit is present, even if the teacher is using effective teaching techniques. **Elder L. Tom Perry** (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated, "It is our privilege to have the Holy Ghost, a member of the Godhead, as our constant companion, to edify and inspire us in our preparation as teachers. We should prepare ourselves through obedience to God's commandments, that our confidence will wax strong when we call upon the Lord, that His Spirit might magnify us as we teach. When we have the Spirit to direct us, we are capable of teaching with great power" ("Teach Them the Word of God with All Diligence," *Ensign,* May 1999, 8).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"If we have the Spirit of the Lord to guide us, we can teach any person, no matter how well educated, any place in the world. The Lord knows more than any of us, and if we are his servants, acting under his Spirit, he can deliver his message of salvation to each and every soul.

"President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: 'The Spirit of God speaking to the spirit of man has power to impart truth with greater effect and understanding than the truth can be imparted by personal contact even with heavenly beings. Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fibre and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten' (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:47–48)" ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign,* Mar. 1997, 7).

Think about the experiences you have had while learning and teaching the gospel by the power of the Holy Ghost. What have the outcomes usually been when the Spirit is present in gospel learning?

Doctrine and Covenants 42:18–29. "My laws … are given in my scriptures"

In Doctrine and Covenants 42:18–29 the Lord reviewed many of the commandments or laws that He gave to ancient Israel, as contained in the Bible and in the Book of Mormon. He reminded the Saints that those who love Him must serve Him and keep His commandments (see D&C 42:29).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:18. "Shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come"

One law that the Lord reaffirmed in our day is the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (D&C 42:18). Those who shed innocent blood, meaning that they commit

murder, "shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come" (D&C 42:18). Furthermore, they should be "delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land" (D&C 42:79).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained the Lord's warning that those who kill will not be forgiven: "John says there are two kinds of sins [see 1 John 5:16–17]. One kind that can be forgiven; the other kind a sin unto death, for which there is no forgiveness. Murder is one of the latter class. That is where one deliberately sheds innocent blood. … The mercy of the Almighty, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, reaches out and embraces every soul who will forsake his sins, except those who have wilfully sinned, as John says, 'unto death'" (*The Restoration of All Things* [1945], 204–5).

Handbook 2: Administering the Church gives the following counsel regarding two issues related to this commandment that some may wonder about:

"As far as has been revealed, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion" ([2010], 21.4.1).

"It is wrong to take a life, including one's own. However, a person who commits suicide may not be responsible for his or her acts. Only God can judge such a matter" (21.4.14).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:22. Spouses are to "cleave unto [each other] and none else"

Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Seventy explained: "The happiest marriages I have seen radiate obedience to one of the happiest commandments—that we 'live together in love' [D&C 42:45]. Speaking to husbands, the Lord commanded, 'Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart and shalt cleave unto her and none else" [D&C 42:22]. A Church handbook teaches: 'The word *cleave* means to be completely devoted and faithful to someone. Married couples cleave to God and one another by serving and loving each other and by keeping covenants in complete fidelity to one another and to God.' Both the husband and wife 'leave behind their single life and establish their marriage as [their] first priority. … They allow no other person or interest to have greater priority … than keeping the covenants they have made with God and each other' [*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 1.3.1]. Watch and learn: successful couples love each other with complete devotion" ("Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2013, 85).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:23. The consequences of lust

In Doctrine and Covenants 42:23, "to lust after" means to have unrighteous sexual desires toward another person. The scriptures clarify that when a person looks on another to lust after him or her, it is as though he or she has "committed adultery … already in his [or her] heart" (Matthew 5:28; see also 3 Nephi 12:28; D&C 63:16). Impure thoughts, words, or behavior will not only result in the loss of the Spirit but will eventually lead a person to "deny the faith" (D&C 42:23; 63:16). Satan uses sexual lust to erode the spiritual strength of God's children and lead them to destruction.

Elder L. Whitney Clayton warned:

"There's a spiritual snare today called pornography, and many, allured by its provocative messages, enter this deadly trap. Like any trap, it is easy to enter but difficult to escape. Some rationalize that they can casually view pornography without suffering its adverse effects. They say initially, 'This isn't so bad,' or, 'Who cares? It won't make any difference,' or, 'I'm just curious.' But they are mistaken. The Lord has warned, 'And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out' (D&C 42:23). …

"Along with losing the Spirit, pornography users also lose perspective and proportion. … They try to conceal their sin, forgetting that nothing is hidden from the Lord (see 2 Nephi 27:27). Real consequences start to accumulate as self-respect ebbs away, sweet relationships sour, marriages wither, and innocent victims begin to pile up. Finding that what they have been viewing no longer satisfies, they experiment with more extreme images. They slowly grow addicted even if they don't know it or they deny it, and … their behavior deteriorates as their moral standards disintegrate" ("Blessed Are All the Pure in Heart," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2007, 52).

Consider the blessings that can be enjoyed when a person is free from the effects of lust. What can you do to fill your life with light and protect yourself and your family from pornography?

Doctrine and Covenants 42:24–26. "Thou shalt not commit adultery"

Sexual relations between a husband and wife are a sacred expression of love and a manifestation of the most exalted power God has bestowed upon His children—the power to create life. The proper use of this power is central to Heavenly Father's plan of salvation, and He has given strict commandments governing its use. **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"Marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. Complete sexual abstinence before marriage and total fidelity within marriage protect the sanctity of this sacred channel.

"The power of procreation is spiritually significant. Misuse of this power subverts the purposes of the Father's plan and of our mortal existence. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are creators and have entrusted each of us with a portion of Their creative power. Specific guidelines for the proper use of the ability to create life are vital elements in the Father's plan. How we feel about and use that supernal power will determine in large measure our happiness in mortality and our destiny in eternity. …

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a single, undeviating standard of sexual morality: intimate relations are proper only between a man and a woman in the marriage relationship prescribed in God's plan. Such relations are not merely a curiosity to be explored, an appetite to be satisfied, or a type of recreation or entertainment to be pursued selfishly. They are not a conquest to be achieved or simply an act to be performed. Rather, they are in mortality one of the ultimate expressions of our divine nature and potential and a way of strengthening

emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife" ("We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2013, 42).

The sin of adultery often begins with impure or lustful thoughts. **President Howard W. Hunter** (1907–1995) gave the following warning:

"The Lord forbids and his church condemns any and every intimate relationship outside of marriage. Infidelity on the part of a man breaks the heart of his wife and loses her confidence and the confidence of his children (see Jacob 2:35).

"Be faithful in your marriage covenants in thought, word, and deed. Pornography, flirtations, and unwholesome fantasies erode one's character and strike at the foundation of a happy marriage. Unity and trust within a marriage are thereby destroyed. One who does not control his thoughts and thus commits adultery in his heart, if he does not repent, shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear (see D&C 42:23; 63:16)" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* [2015], 215).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:30–55

The Lord gives the principles of the law of consecration and counsels the Saints concerning death and healing

Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:30–42, 53–55, looking for words (such as *consecration, stewardship, bishop,* and *storehouse*) that describe how the Church was to care for the poor and the needy. As you study these verses, think about how the principles of consecration are applied today.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:30–39. The law of consecration

On January 2, 1831, during the final Church conference that was held in New York, the Lord taught, "Let every man esteem his brother as himself" (D&C 38:24). This proved to be an essential principle to prepare the Saints to establish a latter-day Zion. On February 4, 1831, after the Prophet Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, the Lord instructed him to call Edward Partridge as the first bishop of the Church, "to see to all things as it shall be appointed him in my laws in the day that I shall give them" (D&C 41:10). Five days later, on February 9, the Lord revealed to Joseph the essential principles of the law of consecration, outlining His plan to care for the poor and the needy, build up His Church, and prepare His people to build Zion (see D&C 42:30–39).

To *consecrate* means to make holy, to set aside and devote to a sacred purpose. Consecration is the act of dedicating our possessions, time, and resources to God and willingly giving them to Him. Through consecration, true disciples of Jesus Christ can care for the poor and the needy and help build God's kingdom here on the earth. Consecration is based upon the principle of "every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 82:19; see also D&C 38:24–25). **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) explained:

"Consecration is the giving of one's time, talents, and means to care for those in need—whether spiritually or temporally—and in building the Lord's kingdom. …

"*Zion* is a name given by the Lord to his covenant people, who are characterized by purity of heart and faithfulness in caring for the poor, the needy, and the distressed. (See D&C 97:21.) …

"This highest order of priesthood society is founded on the doctrines of love, service, work, self-reliance, and stewardship, all of which are circumscribed by the covenant of consecration" ("Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action," *Ensign,* Nov. 1977, 78).

In the revelations known as the law of the Church, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42, the Lord instructed Church members to help the poor by consecrating their properties "with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken" (D&C 42:30). **President J. Reuben Clark Jr.** (1871–1961) of the First Presidency explained why the Lord's people should be willing to make such a sacrifice: "The basic principle of all the revelations on the [law of consecration] is that everything we have belongs to the Lord; therefore, the Lord may call upon us for any and all of the property which we have, because it belongs to Him. … (D. & C. 104:14–17, 54–57)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 55).

The law of consecration is referred to frequently in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 38; 42; 44; 48; 51; 54; 56; 58; 70; 72; 78; 82–85; 92; 96–97; 104–6; 119–20; 136). Many of the passages include instructions to help the Saints implement this law. While the principles of the law of consecration have remained constant, procedures have sometimes been changed to meet different circumstances and needs. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said, "The law of sacrifice and the law of consecration were not done away with and are still in effect" (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 639). Today, faithful Saints keep the law of consecration when they strive to love God and to dedicate their money, time, and other resources to building God's kingdom and helping to relieve the suffering of the poor and the needy. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"It is written: 'He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.' (D&C 88:22.) The law of sacrifice is a celestial law; so also is the law of consecration. Thus to gain that celestial reward which we so devoutly desire, we must be *able* to live these two laws. …

"We are not always called upon to live the whole law of consecration and give all of our time, talents, and means to the building up of the Lord's earthly kingdom. …

"But what the scriptural account means is that to gain celestial salvation we must be *able* to live these laws to the full if we are called upon to do so. Implicit in this is the reality that we must in fact live them to the extent we are called upon so to do" ("Obedience, Consecration, and Sacrifice," *Ensign,* May 1975, 50).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:32–33. Stewardship

The Lord outlined a pattern for implementing the law of consecration in the early days of the Church. Families were directed to consecrate their money and property to the Church by giving these resources to "the bishop of [the] church and his

counselors" (D&C 42:31). The bishop, serving as the Lord's representative, was then to appoint a portion of land and goods to each family based on the family's "circumstances and … wants and needs" (D&C 51:3; see also D&C 42:32–33). This portion was called a "stewardship" (D&C 42:72). Thus, each family was entrusted with property and resources, which its members privately owned and were to manage using their agency. As stewards of the Lord's resources, families were accountable to Him and fully responsible for what He entrusted to them. Any surplus beyond the needs and wants of the family remained with the bishop to be used "to administer to those who [had] not" (D&C 42:33).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:34–35, 55. The Lord's storehouse

In the pattern outlined by the Lord, any "residue," or surplus, of consecrated money or properties was to be kept in the storehouse (D&C 42:34; see also verse 55). The bishop would then use these resources "to administer to the poor and the needy" (D&C 42:34) and to accomplish other objectives, such as purchasing property for the Church, building houses of worship, and "building up … the New Jerusalem" (D&C 42:35). Today, the storehouse is defined as "a place where a bishop receives, holds in trust, and dispenses to the poor consecrated offerings of Latter-day Saints. Each storehouse may be as large or as small as circumstances require. Faithful Saints donate talents, skills, materials, and financial means to the bishop to take care of the poor in time of need. Therefore, a storehouse may include a list of available services, money, food, or other commodities. The bishop is the agent of the storehouse and distributes goods and services according to need and as directed by the Spirit of the Lord (D&C 42:29–36; 82:14–19)" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Storehouse," scriptures.lds.org).



The Lord commanded that a storehouse be established to assist the poor and needy (see D&C 42:33–34).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:40–41. "Thou shalt not be proud in thy heart"

The Book of Mormon prophet Moroni spoke of the spiritual challenges that God's children would face in the last days. Among these challenges would be pride manifested through "the wearing of very fine apparel" while neglecting "the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (Mormon 8:36–37). In the early days of the restored Church, the Lord commanded, "Thou shalt not be proud in thy heart" and told the Saints that their "garments [should] be plain" (D&C 42:40). This instruction may mean that as Church members, we should avoid excess or extravagance in our clothing.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught the following about our choices regarding dress and appearance: "For you to fully claim Heavenly Father's blessings and protection, we ask you to stay true to the standards of the gospel of Jesus Christ and *not* slavishly follow the whims of fads and fashions. The Church will never deny your moral agency regarding what you should wear and exactly how you should look. But the Church will always declare standards and will always teach principles" ("To Young Women," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2005, 28–29).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:42. "Thou shalt not be idle"

God has commanded His children to work and labor (see D&C 52:39; 56:17; Moses 4:25). Those who are slothful or lazy are guilty of idleness, which is condemned by the Lord. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** testified of the importance of the gospel principle of work:

"There is no substitute under the heavens for productive labor. It is the process by which dreams become realities. It is the process by which idle visions become dynamic achievements.

"Most of us are inherently lazy. We would rather play than work. We would rather loaf than work. A little play and a little loafing are good. But it is work that spells the difference in the life of a man or woman. It is stretching our minds and utilizing the skills of our hands that lift us from mediocrity. It is work that provides the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the homes in which we live. We cannot deny the need for work with skilled hands and educated minds if we are to grow and prosper individually and if our nation is to stand tall before the world.

"When Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, Jehovah declared: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.' (Gen. 3:19.)" ("I Believe," *Ensign,* Aug. 1992, 4).

What are some ways that you can avoid being idle and experience the benefits and opportunities of work?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:43–52, looking for how our faith can help us through difficult experiences.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:44, 48. "He that … is not appointed unto death, shall be healed"

The duration of a person's mortal life is under God's control. Doctrine and Covenants 42:44, 48 indicates that a person who needs healing and who has sufficient faith and "is not appointed unto death" (verse 48) will be healed. **Elder Lance B. Wickman** of the Seventy explained: "All too often we overlook the qualifying phrase 'and is not appointed unto death' ('or,' we might add, 'unto sickness or handicap'). Please do not despair when fervent prayers have been offered and priesthood blessings performed and your loved one makes no improvement or even passes from mortality. Take comfort in the knowledge that you did everything you could. Such faith, fasting, and blessing could not be in vain! That your child did not recover in spite of all that was done in his behalf can and should be the basis for peace and reassurance to all who love him! *The Lord—who inspires the blessings and who hears every earnest prayer—called him home nonetheless.* All the experiences of prayer, fasting, and faith may well have been more for *our* benefit than for his" ("But If Not," *Ensign,* Nov. 2002, 30–31).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:45–48. "Those that die in me shall not taste of death"

For those who are faithful and endure to the end, death "shall be sweet unto them," while the rebellious and unrepentant will find that "their death is bitter" (D&C 42:46–47). This does not mean that the righteous will not suffer physical pain; rather, they will be free from the spiritual torment that the wicked experience when they die. **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles illustrated this principle:

"A few months ago I had the opportunity of visiting a man who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness. As a devoted priesthood holder, he was confronted with the realities of mortality. He found strength, however, in the example of the Savior, who said, in the Lord's Prayer, 'After this manner therefore pray ye: … Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven' (Matt. 6:9–10). …

"My friend came to accept the phrase 'Thy will be done' as he faced his own poignant trials and tribulations. …

"… We discussed how he had spent his life striving to be faithful, to do what God asked of him, to be honest in his dealings with his fellowmen and all others, to care for and love his family. Isn't that what is meant by enduring to the end? We talked about what happens immediately after death, about what God has taught us about the world of spirits. It is a place of paradise and happiness for those who have lived righteous lives. It is not something to fear.

"After our conversation, he called together his wife and the extended family—children and grandchildren—to teach them again the doctrine of the Atonement that all will be resurrected. Everyone came to understand that just as the Lord has said, while there will be mourning at the temporary separation, there is no sorrow for those who die in the Lord (see Rev. 14:13; D&C 42:46). … He passed away the next afternoon at peace, with all his family at his side. This is the solace and comfort that comes to us when we understand the gospel plan and know that families are forever" ("The Eternal Family," *Ensign,* Nov. 1996, 66).

Like death, grieving for those who die is part of mortality. Though we can experience powerful feelings of love for family and friends, we can also feel deep sadness and heartache when someone we love dies. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that it is natural and appropriate to mourn the loss of loved ones:

"Irrespective of age, we mourn for those loved and lost. Mourning is one of the deepest expressions of pure love. It is a natural response in complete accord with divine commandment: 'Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die.' (D&C 42:45.)

"Moreover, we can't fully appreciate joyful reunions later without tearful separations now. The only way to take sorrow out of death is to take love out of life" ("Doors of Death," *Ensign,* May 1992, 72).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:56–93

The Lord gives the Saints additional laws and teaches them how to implement His law

Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:56–69, looking for principles that will help you receive heavenly help and answers to your prayers.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:56–58. "Thou shalt ask, and my scriptures shall be given"

After settling in the Kirtland area, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon continued to work on the inspired revision or "translation" of the Bible. As indicated in Doctrine and Covenants 42:56, the Prophet did not follow a traditional process of translation in which words in one language are converted into words of another. Rather, Joseph sought the Lord's guidance through prayer, and the Lord directed him accordingly.

The Lord also said that when the Saints had "received them [His scriptures] in full" they were to "teach them unto all men" (D&C 42:57–58; see also D&C 42:15). In a letter from the Prophet Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams to Church leaders in Missouri on July 2, 1833, they wrote, "We this day finished the translating of the Scriptures, for which we returned gratitude to our Heavenly Father" (in *History of the Church,* 1:368). Beginning in 1979, the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible has included hundreds of passages from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible in its study helps. Since that time, selections from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible have also been made available to members of the Church in many languages in the scripture study helps, helping fulfill the Lord's command to teach them "unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people" (D&C 42:58).



Current photograph of the historic Kirtland, Ohio, area that became Church headquarters from 1831–1838

Doctrine and Covenants 42:60–62, 65. "Thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation"

The Lord promised that those who obey His law can receive an increasing amount of divine revelation and knowledge—even to "know[ing] the mysteries" (D&C 42:61). **Elder David A. Bednar** taught:

"The spirit of revelation is available to every person who receives by proper priesthood authority the saving ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—and who is acting in faith to fulfill the priesthood injunction to 'receive the Holy Ghost.' This blessing is not restricted to the presiding authorities of the Church; rather, it belongs to and should be operative in the life of every man, woman, and child who reaches the age of accountability and enters into sacred covenants. Sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives. …

"… Most frequently, revelation comes in small increments over time and is granted according to our desire, worthiness, and preparation. Such communications from Heavenly Father gradually and gently 'distil upon [our souls] as the dews from heaven' (D&C 121:45). …

"Both the history of the Church and our personal lives are replete with examples of the Lord's pattern for receiving revelation 'line upon line, precept upon precept' [2 Nephi 28:30]. For example, the fundamental truths of the restored gospel were not delivered to the Prophet Joseph Smith all at once in the Sacred Grove. These priceless treasures were revealed as circumstances warranted and as the timing was right" ("The Spirit of Revelation," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 87–88).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught that in our search for ongoing revelation, we must understand that there is a difference between continuing revelation and continuous revelation:

"We should recognize that the Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in His own time and in His own way. …

"… We pray continuously for guidance, but we shouldn't expect *continuous* revelation. We expect *continuing* revelation, which is the continuing assurance of revelation whenever we seek guidance and our circumstances are such that a wise and loving Lord chooses to give it to us" ("In His Own Time, in His Own Way," *Ensign,* Aug. 2013, 22, 27).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:70–93, looking for what the Lord instructed Church leaders to do regarding members who commit serious transgressions.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:74–93. The Lord's law governs His Church

After the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:1–72 was received, Church leaders had further questions about how to deal with Church members who had transgressed God's law. Two weeks later, on February 23, 1831, the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42:74–93 was received. The Lord had declared that the "law" of the Church, as found in Doctrine and Covenants 42, was meant to "govern [His] church" (D&C 42:59). Furthermore, members of the Church were to "observe to keep all the commandments and covenants of the church" (D&C 42:78).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:88. "If thy brother or sister offend thee"

Elder David A. Bednar explained how we should respond when someone offends us:

"In some way and at some time, someone in this Church will do or say something that could be considered offensive. Such an event will surely happen to each and every one of us—and it certainly will occur more than once. Though people may not intend to injure or offend us, they nonetheless can be inconsiderate and tactless.

"You and I cannot control the intentions or behavior of other people. However, we do determine how we will act. Please remember that you and I are agents endowed with moral agency, and we can choose not to be offended. …

"Interestingly, the admonition to 'be ye therefore perfect' [Matthew 5:48] is immediately preceded by counsel about how we should act in response to wrongdoing and offense [see Matthew 5:43–44, 46]. Clearly the rigorous requirements that lead to the perfecting of the Saints include assignments that test and challenge us. If a person says or does something that we consider offensive, our first obligation is to refuse to take offense and then communicate privately, honestly, and directly with that individual. Such an approach invites inspiration from the Holy Ghost and permits misperceptions to be clarified and true intent to

be understood" ("And Nothing Shall Offend Them," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2006, 91–92).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:61, 68 again, and consider the blessings of diligently asking the Lord for revelation. What are some reasons why you would want to seek revelation? How can you show the Lord that you are diligently seeking revelation?

CHAPTER 17

Doctrine and Covenants 43–45

Introduction and Timeline

When Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, in February 1831, he found that some converts had been misled by excessive religious ferver and counterfeit revelations. Some claimed to receive revelations, including a woman known as Mrs. Hubble who called herself a prophetess. Because she had deceived some of the Saints, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed about the matter and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 43. In this revelation the Lord provided truths that reminded the Saints of God's pattern for giving revelation to the Church.

The Lord had previously called elders of the Church to declare the gospel (see D&C 42:4–8). Soon after that commandment was given, the Lord gave a revelation, now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 44, instructing the elders to prepare for a conference. The Lord promised them that if they would exercise faith in Him, they would receive His Spirit upon them and overcome their enemies.

As the Church grew in Kirtland, hostility toward the Church increased. Critics attacked the Church in newspapers and made other efforts to oppose the Saints. In March 1831, during this time of opposition, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 45. In this revelation the Lord described the latter days, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and the New Jerusalem, or Zion.

November 1830–February 1831

After the missionaries left, some of the new converts in Kirtland, Ohio, claimed to receive letters or writings from heaven.

Early 1831

False reports about the Saints and their beliefs appeared in Ohio newspapers, such as the *Painesville Telegraph.*

February 1831

"Mrs. Hubble," a recent convert in Ohio, claimed to be a prophetess of the Lord.

February 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 43 was received.

February 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 44 was received.

March 7, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 45 was received.

Early June 1831

A Church conference was held in Kirtland, Ohio.

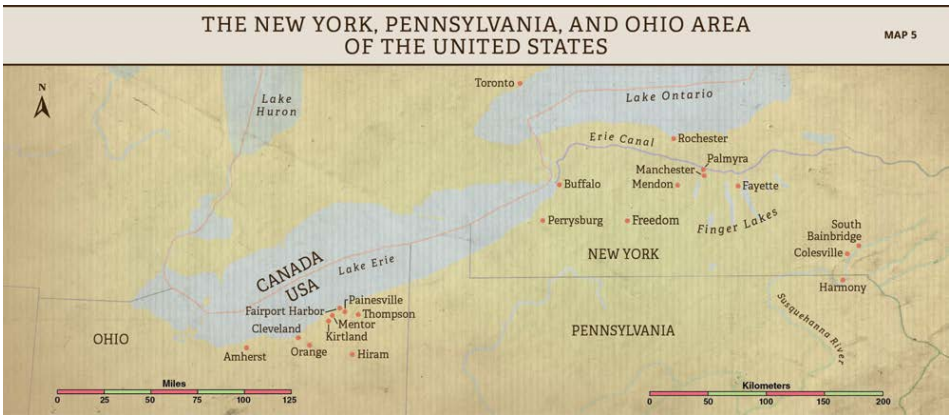
Members of the Church can be deceived and led astray by individuals who are not authorized servants of the Lord. As you read Doctrine and Covenants 43, look for a pattern the Lord follows when giving revelation to His children that can protect you from being deceived.

Doctrine and Covenants 43: Additional Historical Background

When John Whitmer arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, in January 1831, he found that some of the new converts there had been deceived by a few who claimed to receive strange and dramatic communications from heaven. These counterfeit revelations supposedly appeared as "writings on the outside cover of the Bible, and on parchment, which flew through the air, and on the back of their hands, and many such foolish and vain things" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 256).

Concerns increased when a woman called Mrs. Hubble "came with great pretensions to revealing commandments, laws and other curious matters" (Joseph Smith, in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 101, josephsmithpapers.org). John Whitmer, the Church historian at the time, indicated that the influence of this woman led some Church members astray: "About these days there was a woman by the name of Hubble who professed to be a prophetess of the Lord, and professed to have many revelations, and knew that the Book of Mormon was true; and [she believed] that she should become a teacher in the Church of Christ. She appeared [to be] very sanctimonious and deceived some who were not able to detect her in her hypocrisy" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 29; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation standardized; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 257, note 95).

This woman's actions came as a challenge to the doctrine that the Lord revealed to the Church at Fayette, New York, several months earlier: The Prophet Joseph Smith was the only one who could "receive commandments and revelations" for the Church (D&C 28:2). However, few of the Saints from New York who had been made aware of this previous revelation had yet arrived in Kirtland, and none of the previous revelations had been published. The Kirtland Saints were new converts, and they were mostly unaware of the Lord's divinely appointed order for revealing His will to His Church. Thus, the Prophet inquired of the Lord concerning the matter and received a revelation so "that [the Saints] may not be deceived" (D&C 43:6).



Doctrine and Covenants 43:1–7

The Lord declares that revelations and commandments come only through His appointed prophet

Read Doctrine and Covenants 43:1–7, looking for the laws governing how the Lord gives revelation to guide His Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 43:2–7. Revelation for the Church comes through the living prophet

In response to the Prophet's inquiry about Mrs. Hubble and other false revelations occurring in Kirtland, Ohio, the Lord instructed the Saints that "there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations" besides the President of the Church (D&C 43:3). **President J. Reuben Clark Jr.** (1871–1961) of the First Presidency taught the following:

"The President of the Church has a … special spiritual endowment … , for he is the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator for the whole Church.

"Here we must have in mind—must know—that only the President of the Church, the Presiding High Priest, … has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church, or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church. He is God's sole mouthpiece on earth for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the only true Church. He alone may declare the mind and will of God to his people" ("When Are the Writings and Sermons of Church Leaders Entitled to the Claim of Scripture?" [address to Church Educational System religious educators, July 7, 1954], 6, emp.byui.edu/marrottr/ClarkWhenAreWritings.pdf).

There are laws that govern the order in which revelation is received in the Church. Doctrine and Covenants 43 illustrates that although individuals can and should receive personal revelation (see D&C 43:16), there is order in the way that revelation is given for the whole Church. **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency summarized five fundamental truths relating to how God reveals truth in His Church:



Revelations and commandments for the Church come only through the servant appointed by the Lord (see D&C 43:2–7).

"First, the keys and the authority of God have been given by Him to Joseph Smith and each of his successors who have been called as Presidents of the Church.

"Second, those keys and authority are never to be given to another people, and those who have such authority are 'known to the Church' [D&C 42:11].

"Third, continuing revelation and leadership for the Church come through the President of the Church, and he will never mislead the Saints.

"Fourth, individual members of the Church may receive revelation for their own callings and areas of responsibility and for their own families. They may not receive spiritual instruction for those higher in authority.

"Fifth, those who claim direct revelation from God for the Church outside the established order and channel of the priesthood are misguided. This also applies to any who follow them" ("The Prophetic Voice," *Ensign,* May 1996, 7).

Doctrine and Covenants 43:4. "He shall not have power except to appoint another"

The Lord's instructions regarding the order of revelation in the Church included the provision that even if Joseph Smith were to lose the privilege of being the prophet of God, he would still have the power to appoint another as an authorized successor. **President George Q. Cannon** (1827–1901) of the First Presidency explained this special circumstance: "When the Lord spoke to Joseph about falling, he said he would have authority to appoint another in his stead [see D&C 43:4], and that no one would have the right to act except he was ordained by authority, or came in through the gate [see D&C 43:7]. You may know by the revelation I have read that no man can get the authority elsewhere. It must come through the holy Priesthood. Men may say they have heard the voice of Jesus, or heard this, that or the other; but you will find that the power of God will attend the keys [of the priesthood], and His blessing will follow the administration of His servants who hold the authority" ("Discourse by Elder Geo. Q. Cannon," *Deseret News,* Dec. 15, 1869, 532).

Doctrine and Covenants 43:7. "Come in at the gate and be ordained"

Any question about who the Lord has chosen to lead His people has been clearly answered in scripture. The Savior taught:

"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep" (John 10:1–2).

Church members can be confident that no leader will rise up through unusual circumstances or by secret ordination, for the Lord promised that priesthood leaders will "be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church" (D&C 42:11).

Church members should beware of those who claim to have special authority or ordination to lead God's children. **President James E. Faust** cautioned:

"From the beginning some from both inside and outside of the Church have sought to persuade members of the Church against following the inspired declarations of those who hold the keys of the kingdom of God on earth. Some of those seeking to mislead have done so claiming special endowments of intelligence or inspiration beyond the established order of the Church. …

"The Prophet Joseph explained in the winter of 1832–33 that 'no true angel from God will ever come to ordain any man, because they have once been sent to establish the priesthood by ordaining me thereunto; and the priesthood being once

established on earth, with [the] power to ordain others, no heavenly messenger will ever come to interfere with that power by ordaining any more. … You may therefore know, from this time forward, that if any man comes to you professing to be ordained by an angel, he is either a liar or has been imposed upon in consequence of transgression by an angel of the devil, for this priesthood shall never be taken from this church' [Orson Hyde, 'Although Dead, Yet He Speaketh,' *Millennial Star,* Nov. 20, 1846, 139]" ("The Prophetic Voice," 5, 7).

How can the truths revealed by the Lord in Doctrine and Covenants 43:1–7 help you avoid being deceived by those who are not authorized to lead or to receive revelations for the Church?

Doctrine and Covenants 43:8–16

A commandment to instruct and edify each other

Read Doctrine and Covenants 43:8–16, looking for what can help Church members grow in their knowledge and understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 43:8–11. "Bind yourselves to act in all holiness before me"

When Church members meet to "instruct and edify each other" (D&C 43:8), they follow a divinely appointed pattern of teaching and learning gospel truths. Gospel instruction prepares God's children to be sanctified as they act upon what they have learned. It is not sufficient to simply obtain a knowledge of spiritual things. Those who receive the gospel of Jesus Christ make covenants that "bind [them] to act in all holiness before [the Lord]" (D&C 43:9).

General conferences, held twice each year, provide an important opportunity for Church members to receive gospel instruction. **Elder Paul V. Johnson** of the Seventy explained why it is not enough to simply listen to the messages delivered at general conference: "In order for the messages of general conference to change our lives, we need to be willing to follow the counsel we hear. The Lord explained in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith 'that when ye are assembled together ye shall instruct and edify each other, that ye may know … how to act upon the points of my law and commandment' [D&C 43:8]. But knowing 'how to act' isn't enough. The Lord in the next verse said, 'Ye shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness before me' [D&C 43:9]. This willingness to take action on what we have learned opens the doors for marvelous blessings" ("The Blessings of General Conference," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2005, 52).

In addition to referring to our personal responsibility to act upon the laws and commandments we receive from the Lord, Doctrine and Covenants 43:8–9 suggests that as we assemble together to be instructed and edified by the gospel, we bind ourselves together as a body of Saints. **President Lorenzo Snow** (1814–1901) explained:

"We must understand that we have got to act upon certain principles by which we can bind ourselves together as a people, to bind our feelings together that we may become one, and this never can be accomplished unless certain things are done, and things that require an exertion on our part.

"How would you go to work to bind yourselves together? How would a man go to work to unite himself with his neighbor? If two men were associated together who had never been acquainted, how would they go to work to secure each other's friendship, attachment and affection one towards another? Why something would have to be done, and that not by one party only, but would have to be done by one as well as by the other. It would not answer for one to do the business alone; it would not do for one to answer those feelings and do the work himself, but in order to become as one in their sentiments and affection—the action of both would be requisite" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* [2012] 198–99).

Doctrine and Covenants 43:12–14. Upholding the prophet through faith and prayer

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 43:12–14, the Lord told the Saints that they could sustain the Prophet Joseph Smith through faith and prayer and also by providing for the temporal needs of his family. The Prophet was devoting his full attention to the administrative and spiritual affairs of the Church. Providing material support to him would result in blessings for Church members, including doctrinal understanding gained from the inspired translation of the Bible.

Doctrine and Covenants 43:17–35

God's servants are to preach repentance in preparation for the Second Coming and the Millennium

Read Doctrine and Covenants 43:17–35, looking for ways that you can prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 43:17–28. Voices of Warning

"The great day of the Lord" (D&C 43:17) refers to Jesus Christ's Second Coming and the commencement of the Millennium. God commanded His servants to declare repentance to prevent His children from being destroyed with the wicked when the Savior returns. While some will give heed and repent, others will ignore and reject the voice of the Lord's servants. Therefore, the Lord raises the voice of warning to repent through a variety of means: His servants, the ministering of angels, His own voice, and even the destructive power of nature.

Why do you think God uses different means to call people to repent? What truths can you learn from Doctrine and Covenants 43:17–28 about the need to heed the Lord's warnings?

Doctrine and Covenants 43:29–33. The great Millennium

"The great Millennium" (D&C 43:30) refers to the 1,000 years ushered in by the Savior's Second Coming (see Revelation 20:4; D&C 29:11). During the Millennium, "Christ will reign personally upon the earth" (Articles of Faith 1:10). The Lord assured the righteous that they would reign with Him during the Millennium (see D&C 43:29). Satan will be bound during the Millennium and will not have power to tempt those who are living at that time (see D&C 43:31; 101:28).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reflected on the blessings that will be enjoyed when Satan is bound: "Then will begin the great millennium (D&C 43:30) period of a thousand years when Satan shall be bound and the Lord shall reign over his people. Can you imagine the wonder and the beauty of that era when the adversary shall not have influence? Think of his influence upon you now and reflect on the peace of that time when you will be free from such influence. There will be quiet and goodness where now there is contention and evil" ("We Need Not Fear His Coming," *Liahona,* July 1982, 3).

Doctrine and Covenants 44: Additional Historical Background

Soon after arriving in Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 42, which outlined laws guiding the Church. Included was the commandment that the elders should "go forth in the power of my Spirit, preaching my gospel, two by two. … And from this place ye shall go forth" (D&C 42:6, 8). The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 44 called for the elders of the Church to meet together before going forth to preach the gospel.

The Prophet Joseph Smith acted on that instruction and sent a letter on February 22, 1831, to Martin Harris, who was still living in New York. The Prophet made reference to the revelation when he explained to Martin that "the work is here breaking forth on the east, west, north, and south; you will also inform the Elders which are there that all of them who can be spared will come here without delay if possible, this by Commandment of the Lord as he has a great work for them all" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 263; punctuation and spelling standardized).

In subsequent weeks during the spring of 1831, many of the Saints from New York gathered to Kirtland, Ohio. The fourth conference of the Church was held in June 1831, and many elders participated in the meetings of this conference, which prepared them to leave afterward to preach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 44

The Lord commands His servants to assemble together

Read Doctrine and Covenants 44, looking for blessings that the Lord promised to the elders who were called to preach repentance.

Doctrine and Covenants 44:1–2. "I will pour out my Spirit upon them in the day that they assemble themselves together"

The Lord promised the elders of the Church that if they assembled together and exercised faith in Him, He would pour out His Spirit upon them. **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that this is one of the purposes of our Church meetings: "In general conferences and in other Church meetings around the world, we come together seeking companionship—the good company of brothers and sisters in the gospel and the comfort of sweet communion with the Spirit of God. In our worship services, the presence of that Spirit fills our hearts with love for God and for our fellow Saints" ("Valued Companions," *Ensign,* Nov. 1997, 32).



The Lord promised to pour out His Spirit when the faithful assemble together (see D&C 44:2).

Doctrine and Covenants 44:4–5. "Organize yourselves according to the laws of man"

While the Church had been legally organized in the state of New York, similar efforts were needed in Ohio as the Saints gathered to Kirtland. This would permit the Church to be recognized as a religious organization and would make it possible for the Church to own land and enjoy the same privilege given other religious groups in Ohio. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 44, the Lord clarified that this step was needed to prevent enemies from destroying the Church. (See Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelations* [2008], 153.)

Doctrine and Covenants 45: Additional Historical Background

By the spring of 1831, many converts were gathering with the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio. This rapid growth of the Church was met by increasing opposition. The

Prophet Joseph Smith described the challenges the Saints were facing at this time: "At this age of the church many false reports, lies, and fo[o]lish stories, were published in the newspapers, and circulated in every direction, to prevent people from investigating the work, or embracing the faith. … But to the joy of the saints who had to struggle against every thing that prejudice and wickedness could invent, I received the following [Doctrine and Covenant 45]" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 104, josephsmithpapers.org). The Prophet received this revelation on March 7, 1831, and it helped the Saints better understand the opposition they encountered within the context of the latter days, the signs of the times, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:1–14

Jesus Christ emphasizes His roles as Creator, Advocate, and the Light and Life of the World

Read Doctrine and Covenants 45:1–14, looking for how learning more about Jesus Christ can help you face opposition with courage.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:3–5. Jesus Christ is our Advocate, pleading our cause

We are all guilty of sin, and according to the justice of God, no unclean thing can dwell in His presence. However, Jesus Christ came to earth to make salvation possible for each of Heavenly Father's children. Through the Savior's Atonement we can be made clean and can be saved from sin and death. His merits, mercy, and grace make repentance and forgiveness available to all. Because Jesus Christ was perfectly righteous and satisfied the demands of justice for the sins of others, He can be an Advocate for us by pleading our cause before the Father. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"Jesus is our Advocate with the Father (see 1 John 2:1; D&C 29:5; 32:3; 45:3; 110:4). The word *advocate* comes from Latin roots meaning a 'voice for,' or 'one who pleads for another.' Other related terms are used in scripture, such as *intercessor* or *mediator* (see also 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Nephi 2:28; D&C 76:69). …

"… Comprehending him as our advocate-intercessor-mediator with the Father gives us assurance of his unequaled understanding, justice, and mercy (see Alma 7:12)" ("Jesus the Christ—Our Master and More" [Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 2, 1992], 4, speeches.byu.edu).



Because of His suffering and death, Jesus Christ is the Advocate of all those who believe on His name (see D&C 45:3–5).

Significantly, the Savior pleads our cause before the Father and asks that those who believe on Him be spared the eternal demands of justice, not based on our innocence but on His atoning sacrifice. His case for our redemption from the penalty of sin is "the sufferings and death of him who did no sin" (D&C 45:4).

How can knowing that the Savior is your Advocate strengthen your faith and comfort you?

Doctrine and Covenants 45:15–59

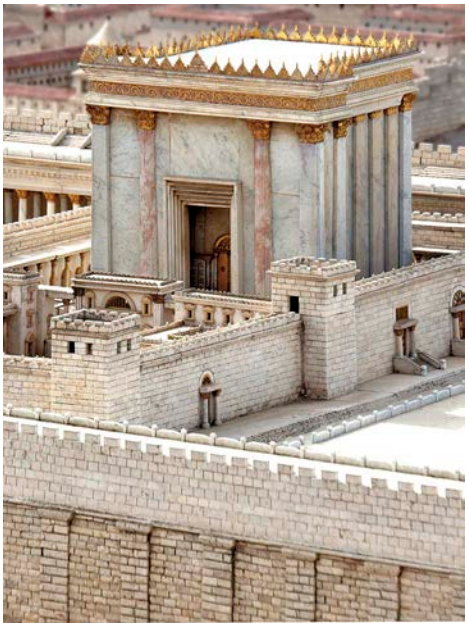
The Savior reveals signs and wonders that would occur shortly after His death and those that will precede His Second Coming

Read Doctrine and Covenants 45:15–59, looking for some of the signs that will signal the approach of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:15–59. "I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh"

Jesus Christ met with His disciples on the Mount of Olives during His last week in mortality. At that time He prophesied of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and His disciples asked when that destruction would occur and when He would return to the earth (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:2–4). In response the Lord revealed the signs that would occur shortly after His death and those that would precede His Second Coming. He repeated this prophecy to His Saints in the latter days, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 45:16–59.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:16–59. Signs of the Second Coming



During His mortal ministry, Jesus Christ prophesied of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem as a sign of His Second Coming (see D&C 45:18–20).

Those who know the signs of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and follow the counsel given through the Lord's prophets will be prepared to deal with the challenges of this momentous time and will be "looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come" (D&C 45:39). They will not be taken by surprise but will be anxiously awaiting the Lord's Second Coming.

The scriptures are the best resource for those who want to study the signs and events of the Second Coming. For example, many details can be learned from the instructions given to the New Testament disciples when they asked the Savior, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3). Jesus Christ's teachings found in Matthew 24:3–51 were greatly expanded through the inspired translation made by the Prophet Joseph Smith, as found in Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:4–55 (in the Pearl of Great Price). Several sections in the Doctrine and Covenants also help to explain the events of the last days and how God's children can prepare for them (examples include D&C 29; 38; 45; 63; 84; 88; 101; 133).

The signs of the Lord's Second Coming may be divided into two main categories: (1) signs that are part of the Restoration of the gospel and its eventual expansion throughout the world and (2) signs that are part of the increase of evils and the calamities and judgments to come upon the world. Some of the signs and events of the Second Coming that are described in Doctrine and Covenants 45:16–59 include the following:

- Gentiles and Jews will be gathered (see D&C 45:25, 30, 43)
- "Wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion" (D&C 45:26)
- The fulness of the gospel will be restored (see D&C 45:28)
- "A desolating sickness shall cover the land" (D&C 45:31)
- The Lord's disciples "shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved" (D&C 45:32)
- "Earthquakes … in divers places, and many desolations" (D&C 45:33)
- "Signs and wonders … shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath" (D&C 45:40)
- "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood" (D&C 45:42)

- The Lord will come "clothed with power and great glory; with all the holy angels" (D&C 45:44)
- "Saints that have slept shall come forth" (D&C 45:45)
- The Lord will appear on the Mount of Olives and converse with the Jews (see D&C 45:48, 51–53)

Doctrine and Covenants 45:32. "My disciples shall stand in holy places"

One of the purposes of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 45 was to help Heavenly Father's children prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. While the wicked will suffer and be destroyed, the Lord's disciples will find peace and blessings if they will "stand in holy places, and … not be moved" (D&C 45:32).

Sister Ann M. Dibb, who served as a Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, explained how we can stand in holy places: "President Ezra Taft Benson counseled, 'Holy places include our temples, our chapels, our homes, and the stakes of Zion, which are … "for a defense, and for a refuge" [D&C 115:6]' ['Prepare Yourself for the Great Day of the Lord,' *New Era,* May 1982, 50]. In addition to these, I believe we can each find many more places. We might first consider the word *place* as a physical environment or a geographic location. However, a *place* can be 'a distinct condition, position, or state of mind' [Merriam-Webster Online, 'place,' merriam-webster.com/dictionary/place]. This means holy places can also include *moments in time*—moments when the Holy Ghost testifies to us, moments when we feel Heavenly Father's love, or moments when we receive an answer to our prayers. Even more, I believe any time you have the courage to stand for what is right, especially in situations where no one else is willing to do so, you are creating a holy place" ("Your Holy Places," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2013, 115).

What are some of the holy places where you may find spiritual safety in the latter days?



Just as emerging leaves on a fig tree indicate the beginning of summer, the appearance of prophesied signs will signify the approach of the Lord's Second Coming (see D&C 45:36–38).

Doctrine and Covenants 45:35. The promises will be fulfilled

While many of the signs of the Second Coming include calamities and terrifying events, the Savior calmed His followers by explaining that these signs would serve as an indication that "the promises which have been made unto you shall be fulfilled" (D&C 45:35). These promises may have reference to the blessings awaiting the righteous as the Millennium is ushered in.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:56–59. The wise receive the truth and take the Holy Spirit as their guide

The parable of the ten virgins was originally given when Jesus gave instructions to his disciples on the Mount of Olives (see Matthew 25:1–13). The Doctrine and Covenants provides some interpretation of this parable, explaining that the blessings promised to those who are wise include the promise to be with the Lord during His Millennial reign on earth (see D&C 45:56–59). The *wise* are described as those who "have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived" (D&C 45:57).



***Five of Them Were Wise,* by Walter Rane. At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the parable of the ten virgins will be fulfilled (see D&C 45:56–57).**

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that every member of the Church has the opportunity to take the Holy Ghost as a guide: "Taking 'the Holy Spirit for [our] guide' (D&C 45:57) is possible and is essential for our spiritual growth and survival in an increasingly wicked world. Sometimes as Latter-day Saints we talk and act as though recognizing the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives is the rare or exceptional event. We should remember, however, that the covenant promise is *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us.* This supernal blessing applies to every single member of the Church who has been baptized, confirmed, and instructed to 'receive the Holy Ghost'" ("That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2006, 30).

Doctrine and Covenants 45:60–75

The Lord describes the New Jerusalem, or Zion

Read Doctrine and Covenants 45:60–75, looking for how the followers of Jesus Christ will be blessed amid the turmoil of the last days.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:60–61. "Until the New Testament be translated"

The inspired translation of the Bible that the Prophet Joseph Smith began in New York in June of 1830 continued after he arrived in Kirtland, Ohio. Since beginning the translation, the Prophet had worked exclusively in the Old Testament. By March 7, 1831, when the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 45 was received, the translation had progressed up through Genesis 19:35. The Lord then instructed Joseph Smith to begin translating the New Testament (see D&C 45:60–61). The Prophet and Sidney Rigdon began work on the Gospel of Matthew the very next day. "Page 1 of the manuscript is dated *March 8th 1831,* followed by the notation 'A

Translation of the New Testament translated by the power of God.' This comment shows how the brethren felt about the work they were doing" (Robert J. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation: Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* [1985], 73).

Doctrine and Covenants 45:62–71. The Saints are commanded to build the New Jerusalem

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 45:62–71, the Lord taught the Saints how to prepare for the troubles and calamities that were prophesied to increase before the Lord's Second Coming. Specifically, they were told to gather together and establish a city of Zion after the pattern of Enoch's city (see Moses 7:18–20). It would be called the "New Jerusalem" and would be "a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety" (D&C 45:66). The word *Zion* is sometimes used to mean slightly different things. Sometimes the word refers to the people of Zion and describes them as "the pure in heart" (D&C 97:21). Elsewhere *Zion* refers to the entire Church and its stakes all over the world (see D&C 82:14). The word *Zion* can also refer to specific geographic locations. In this revelation, *Zion* referred to a physical city that the Saints would establish and to which they would gather.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) made the following statements about Zion in the latter days:

"The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; but they died without the sight; we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory.

"Anyplace where the Saints gather is Zion, which every righteous man will build up for a place of safety for his children.

"There will be here and there a Stake [of Zion] for the gathering of the Saints. … There your children shall be blessed, and you in the midst of friends where you may be blessed. The Gospel net gathers of every kind.

"… We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object. … The time is soon coming, when no man will have any peace but in Zion and her stakes" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 186).

President Brigham Young (1801–1877) focused the Saints on the importance of establishing a latter-day Zion:

"The purpose of our life should be to build up the Zion of our God, to gather the House of Israel, … store up treasures of knowledge and wisdom in our own understandings, purify our own hearts and prepare a people to meet the Lord when he comes. …

"We have no business here other than to build up and establish the Zion of God. It must be done according to the will and law of God [see D&C 105:5], after that pattern and order by which Enoch built up and perfected the former-day Zion, which was taken away to heaven. … We, through our faithfulness, must prepare

ourselves to meet Zion from above when it shall return to earth, and to abide the brightness and glory of its coming" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 111–12).

In what ways has being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided you with safety and peace in the last days? Consider what you can do to help establish and build up Zion in your ward or branch and in your family.

CHAPTER 18

Doctrine and Covenants 46–49

Introduction and Timeline

In the winter of 1831, some Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, became concerned when they saw some new converts acting in a bizarre manner while claiming to be under the Spirit's influence. The Prophet Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord about this behavior as well as about the Kirtland Saints' practice of excluding nonmembers from sacrament meetings and other Church gatherings. In response, on March 8, 1831, the Lord gave the revelation now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 46. In this revelation the Lord explained how to conduct Church meetings and how to avoid deception by seeking after gifts of the Spirit.

Before March 1831, Oliver Cowdery had been Joseph Smith's scribe and recorder for the Church. However, when he was called on a mission, he could no longer perform these duties. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 47, the Lord called John Whitmer to take Oliver's place and to write and keep the Church's history. During this same time, the Saints in Ohio also wanted to know how they should help Church members emigrating from New York. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 48, the Lord told the Saints how to assist these newly arriving converts.

Leman Copley, a recent convert to the Church, wanted missionaries to preach the gospel to members of his former religious group, the Shakers. However, he continued to hold on to some of the Shakers' false beliefs. Concerned about Leman's lingering beliefs, Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord on May 7, 1831, and received the revelation that is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 49. In this revelation the Lord clarified His true doctrine and denounced several false beliefs of the Shakers.

Spring 1831

New converts in Kirtland, Ohio, experienced false spiritual manifestations.

March 8, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 46 was received.

March 8, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 47 was received.

March 10, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 48 was received.

March 1831

John Whitmer was appointed to serve as Church historian and recorder.

Late March 1831

Parley P. Pratt returned to Kirtland from a mission to Indian Territory and Missouri.

May 7, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 49 was received.

May 7, 1831

Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Leman Copley left Kirtland to visit a community of Shakers.

Think about the talents, interests, and skills you possess that make you different from others. Through the gift of the Holy Ghost, Heavenly Father bestows spiritual gifts to help us serve others and build His kingdom. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 46, look for a description of the gifts of the Spirit and how you might obtain them.

Doctrine and Covenants 46: Additional Historical Background

In the early days of the Church, the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, were not allowing those of other faiths to attend worship meetings. This was contradictory to the instruction given in the Book of Mormon that specifically teaches that Christ's followers should not forbid anyone from meeting together with the Saints (see

3 Nephi 18:22). Moreover, in June 1829, when Oliver Cowdery assembled a document called "Articles of the Church of Christ" (which was written to provide direction to the faithful until the Church was officially organized), he alluded to this instruction in the Book of Mormon when he wrote, "'And the church shall meet together oft for prayer [and] supplication casting out none from your places of worship but rather invite them to come' ['Articles of the Church of Christ,' June 1829, p. 372 herein]" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 281; spelling standardized). The practice of excluding unbelievers from public meetings was, therefore, a concern, and, according to John Whitmer, "the Lord deigned to speak on this subject, that his people might come to understanding" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 34). The revelation that followed (Doctrine and Covenants 46) made clear the Lord's will. He commanded the Saints "never to cast any one out from [their] public meetings" (D&C 46:3).

In addition to these exclusionary practices, some of the new Church members were exhibiting unusual behaviors as part of their worship. John Whitmer recorded: "Some would fancy to themselves that they had the sword of Laban [see 1 Nephi 4:8–9], and would wield it as expert as a [soldier], … some would slide or scoot … [on] the floor, with the rapidity of a serpent, which the[y] termed sailing in the boat to the Lamanites, preaching the gospel. And many other vain and foolish manoeuvers that are unseeming, and unprofitable to mention. Thus the devil blinded the eyes of some good and honest disciples" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* 38). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 46, the Lord taught the Saints how to discern between the influence of the Spirit and that of false spirits and clarified the true purpose and nature of gifts of the Spirit.



Doctrine and Covenants 46

The Lord instructs the Saints concerning Church meetings and the gifts of the Spirit

Read Doctrine and Covenants 46:1–6, looking for the counsel the Lord gave about how Church meetings should be conducted.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:2. "Conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit"

At the time the Church was organized, the Lord commanded His Saints to "meet together often" (D&C 20:55). In accordance with this commandment, the Saints gathered frequently for sacrament meetings and occasionally for conferences. They also met together for "confirmation meetings," in which individuals who had recently been baptized were confirmed members of the Church (see D&C 46:6). These early members had read that Christ's followers in the Book of Mormon conducted their meetings "after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, … for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or to exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done" (Moroni 6:9). The Lord reemphasized this principle in our day, commanding that meetings be conducted "as [Church leaders] are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit" (D&C 46:2; see also D&C 20:45).



Church leaders are to "conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit" (D&C 46:2).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:3–6. "Never … cast any one out"

In Doctrine and Covenants 46:3–6, the Lord corrected the early Saints' practice of excluding those of other faiths from sacrament meetings and confirmation meetings. Church members should help all who desire to attend public Church meetings feel welcome. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "Because we invite all to come unto Christ, friends and neighbors are always welcome but not expected to take the sacrament. However, it is not forbidden. They choose for themselves. We hope that newcomers among us will always be made to feel wanted and comfortable. Little children, as sinless beneficiaries of the Lord's Atonement, may partake of the sacrament as they prepare for covenants that they will make later in life" ("Worshiping at Sacrament Meeting," *Ensign,* Aug. 2004, 28).

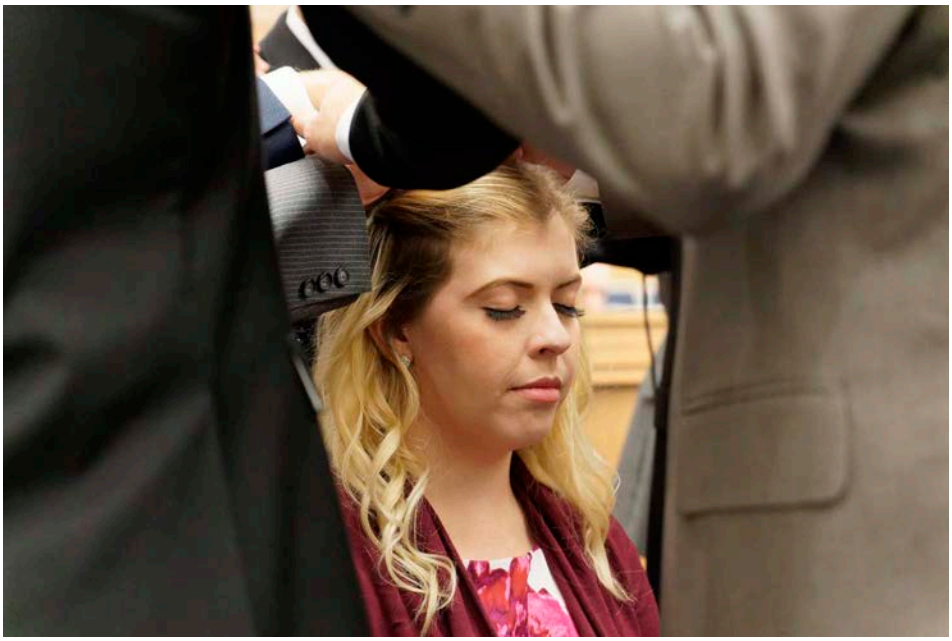
Read Doctrine and Covenants 46:7–33, looking for the various gifts of the Spirit described in these verses, and consider which gifts you have experienced in your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:7–8. "That ye may not be deceived seek ye earnestly the best gifts"

Some of the Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, were engaging in strange behaviors when they attended Church meetings, claiming that their actions were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Some Church members believed them, while others felt that these behaviors were not of God. The day before the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 46 was given, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 45. In this revelation the Lord reminded Church members that they can avoid being deceived if they "have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide" (D&C 45:57). The adversary seeks to deceive the Saints so that he can "destroy the work of God" and "the souls of men" (D&C 10:23, 27). His tactics include using "evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men" (D&C 46:7). But the Lord promised that we will not be deceived if we do things "in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before [Him]" and "seek … earnestly the best gifts" (D&C 46:7–8). The "best gifts" refer to the spiritual gifts that are available to those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:9–11. Spiritual gifts are for the benefit of those who love God and seek to keep His commandments

God does not force His spiritual gifts upon His children, but He invites them to "seek … earnestly" for them (D&C 46:8). The Lord explained that these gifts are for the benefit of those who love Him and strive to keep His commandments (see D&C 46:9). He bestows spiritual gifts in order to bless individuals and the Church as a whole (see D&C 46:12), not to prove the truthfulness of the gospel to those who are seeking signs.



The gifts of the Spirit are given to those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 46:9–11).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about who can receive spiritual gifts:

"The Spirit of Christ is given to all men and women that they may know good from evil, and manifestations of the Holy Ghost are given to lead earnest seekers to repentance and baptism. These are preparatory gifts. What we term *spiritual gifts* come next.

"Spiritual gifts come to those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, the gifts of the Spirit 'are obtained through that medium' [the Holy Ghost] and 'cannot be enjoyed without the gift of the Holy Ghost.' … (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 243, 245; see also Elder Marion G. Romney in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 72.)" ("Spiritual Gifts," *Ensign,* Sept. 1986, 68).

All faithful Church members have at least one spiritual gift. While "all have not every gift given unto them" (D&C 46:11), all spiritual gifts are found collectively among Church members, "that all may be profited thereby" (D&C 46:12). **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how we can seek gifts of the Spirit:

"A prerequisite for seeking after the gifts may require that we find out which gifts we have been given. …

"To find the gifts we have been given, we must pray and fast. Often patriarchal blessings tell us the gifts we have received and declare the promise of gifts we can receive if we seek after them. I urge you each to discover your gifts and to seek after those that will bring direction to your life's work and that will further the work of heaven" ("Gifts of the Spirit," *Ensign,* Feb. 2002, 16).

Bestowing gifts of the Spirit is one way that Heavenly Father helps us to become more like Him. **President George Q. Cannon** (1827–1901) of the First Presidency explained: "If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. Have I imperfections? I am full of them. What is my duty? To pray to God to give me the gifts that will correct these imperfections. If I am an angry man, it is my duty to pray for charity, which suffereth long and is kind. Am I an envious man? It is my duty to seek for charity, which envieth not. So with all the gifts of the Gospel. They are intended for this purpose. No man ought to say, 'Oh, I cannot help this; it is my nature.' He is not justified in it, for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things, and to give gifts that will eradicate them. If a man lack wisdom, it is his duty to ask God for wisdom. The same with everything else. That is the design of God concerning His Church. He wants His Saints to be perfected in the truth. For this purpose He gives these gifts, and bestows them upon those who seek after them, in order that they may be a perfect people upon the face of the earth, notwithstanding their many weaknesses, because God has promised to give the gifts that are necessary for their perfection" ("Discourse by President George Q. Cannon," *Millennial Star,* Apr. 23, 1894, 260–61).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:13–27. Spiritual gifts

Doctrine and Covenants 46:13–27 lists a number of key spiritual gifts that are similar to those listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8–11 and Moroni 10:8–17. The early Saints needed a proper understanding of spiritual gifts in order to correct the counterfeit spiritual expressions that some of the new converts in Kirtland, Ohio, had been exhibiting through extreme religious behaviors. The Lord explained that by remembering these gifts and seeking for them, Church members would not be deceived (see D&C 46:7–8). He commanded the Saints to "always retain in your minds what those gifts are" (D&C 46:10). Years later, the Prophet Joseph Smith reaffirmed the importance of spiritual gifts in the Church when he wrote the seventh article of faith, which named several of the gifts.

The gifts of the Spirit can be manifest in countless ways in our lives. While Doctrine and Covenants 46:13–27 lists approximately 14 spiritual gifts, as **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated, "These are by no means all of the gifts. In the fullest sense, they are infinite in number and endless in their manifestations" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 315).

Speaking of additional spiritual gifts **Elder Marvin J. Ashton** (1915–1994) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Let me mention a few gifts that are not always evident or noteworthy but that are very important. Among these may be your gifts—gifts not so evident but nevertheless real and valuable.

"Let us review some of these less-conspicuous gifts: the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of

offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost" ("There Are Many Gifts," *Ensign,* Nov. 1987, 20).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:13–14. "To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know. … To others it is given to believe on their words"

The Lord taught the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, that some are blessed to know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ (see D&C 46:13). Others are blessed to believe in their words (see D&C 46:14) until they come to know for themselves. Belief, not doubt, is always the first step toward testimony and conviction. Belief in the testimony of others is a gift of the Spirit.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:23, 27. The gift of discernment

Through the gift of the Holy Ghost, we can qualify for guidance and spiritual insight to discern or to see things clearly. **President George Q. Cannon** explained why it is important for Church members to seek the gift of discernment: "The gift of discerning of spirits not only gives men and women who have it the power to discern the spirit with which others may be possessed or influenced, but it gives them the power to discern the spirit which influences themselves. They are able to detect a false spirit and also to know when the Spirit of God reigns within them. In private life this gift is of great importance to the Latter-day Saints. Possessing and exercising this gift they will not allow any evil influence to enter into their hearts or to prompt them in their thoughts, their words or their acts. They will repel it; and if perchance such a spirit should get possession of them, as soon as they witness its effects they will expel it or, in other words, refuse to be led or prompted by it" (*Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of George Q. Cannon,* comp. Jerreld L. Newquist [1987], 157).

To Church leaders the Lord gives the gift "to discern all those gifts lest there shall be any among you professing and yet be not of God" (D&C 46:27). This special gift makes it possible for those who preside in the Church to discern between false spirits and legitimate manifestations of the Holy Ghost.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:24. The gift of tongues

There are differing manifestations of the gift of tongues:

- There have been occasions throughout the Church's history when persons have been moved upon by the Spirit to speak the language of God—the Adamic language described in modern revelation as "pure and undefiled" (see Moses 6:5–6, 46). During events surrounding the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, many of the Saints spoke and interpreted tongues.
- On the day of Pentecost, when the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out in an unusually powerful manner, men and women were empowered by the Spirit to speak and understand foreign but known languages (see Acts 2:1–6). The servants of the Lord throughout the world are granted special privileges on a regular basis in learning languages, speaking them fluently, and communicating the message of salvation to those of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

- People speak in tongues when they speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, when they "speak with the tongue of angels," or, in other words, "speak the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 31:13; 32:2–3).

Elder Robert D. Hales summarized some cautions regarding the gift of tongues:

"We are told by prophets in this dispensation that revelation for the direction of the Church will not be given through the gift of tongues. The reason for this is that it is very easy for Lucifer to falsely duplicate the gift of tongues and confuse the members of the Church.

"Satan has the power to trick us as it pertains to some of the gifts of the Spirit. One in which he is the most deceptive is the gift of tongues. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young … explained the need to be cautious when considering the gift of tongues.

" 'You may speak in tongues for your own comfort, but I lay this down for a rule, that if anything is taught by the gift of tongues, it is not to be received for doctrine' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 229).

" 'Speak not in the gift of tongues without understanding it, or without interpretation. The devil can speak in tongues' (*Teachings,* 162).

" 'The gift of tongues is not … empowered to dictate … the Church. All gifts and endowments given of the Lord to members of his Church are not given to control the Church; but they are under the control and guidance of the Priesthood, and are judged of by it' (*Discourses of Brigham Young,* comp. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 343)" ("Gifts of the Spirit," 14–15).

Our Heavenly Father wants to bless you with spiritual gifts. Express gratitude in your prayers for the gifts you have been given, and pray to develop the gifts that will bless your life and your family and help you better serve others.

Doctrine and Covenants 47: Additional Historical Background



John Whitmer was called to serve as Church historian and recorder (see D&C 47).

John Whitmer, one of the Eight Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, had assisted the Prophet Joseph Smith as a scribe during a portion of the Book of Mormon translation and later during the Prophet's inspired translation of the Bible. John's duties increased after Oliver Cowdery departed in October 1830 for his mission to the Lamanites. John helped take notes at Church conferences and continued to compile the revelations Joseph Smith had received and copy them into a manuscript record book that would become known as the Book of Commandments and Revelations. In March 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith appointed John Whitmer to write the history of the Church. John later recounted, "I would rather not do it but observed that the will of the Lord be done, and if he desires it, I desire that he would manifest it through Joseph the Seer" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* 36). The subsequent revelation to the Prophet affirmed John Whitmer's calling to "write and keep a regular history" of the Church (D&C 47:1). John accepted the Lord's will and eventually prepared "a ninety-six-page narrative history that primarily described events from fall 1830 through the mid-1830s" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 285).

Doctrine and Covenants 47

The Lord calls John Whitmer to keep a history of the Church and to write for the Prophet

Read Doctrine and Covenants 47, looking for the help the Lord promised to John Whitmer in his assignment to keep the history of the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 47:1. "Write and keep a regular history"

The Lord has commanded the Church to keep accurate records (see D&C 21:1; 47:1–3; 72:5–6; 123:1–6; 127:6–9; 128:4–9). Today, keeping and preserving records is a high priority in the Church. In 2009 the Church dedicated a new Church History Library for the purpose of preserving manuscripts, books, Church records, photographs, oral histories, patriarchal blessings, architectural drawings, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, maps, microfilm, and audiovisual materials.

Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy explained why the efforts to preserve Church history continue:

"The primary purpose of Church history is to help Church members build faith in Jesus Christ and keep their sacred covenants. In fulfilling this purpose, we are guided by three main considerations:

"First, we seek to bear witness of and defend the foundational truths of the Restoration.

"Second, we desire to help Church members remember the great things God has done for His children.

"Third, we have a scriptural charge to help preserve the revealed order of the kingdom of God. This includes the revelations, documents, procedures, processes, and patterns that provide order and continuity for the exercising of priesthood keys, the proper functioning of priesthood quorums, the performance of ordinances, and so on—those things that are essential to salvation" ("There Shall Be a Record Kept among You," *Ensign,* Dec. 2007, 28–29).

Doctrine and Covenants 48: Additional Historical Background

Edward Partridge had been called by revelation to be the Church's first bishop and was given the responsibility "to administer to the poor and the needy" (D&C 42:34; see also D&C 41:9). Anticipating the arrival of Saints emigrating from New York to Ohio, Bishop Partridge was "anxious to know something" about how to prepare to meet their needs (John Whitmer, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* 35). Questions also arose regarding where the city of Zion was to be established. New Church members wondered whether they should plan to stay in Ohio permanently or prepare to move again to wherever Zion would be located. For these reasons the Prophet Joseph Smith sought the Lord's direction and consequently received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 48.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 48, looking for how the Lord prepared His people to build Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 48

The Lord tells the Saints how to assist Church members who will be moving from New York to Ohio

Doctrine and Covenants 48:1–3. Impart to others

The Lord counseled the Saints in Kirtland to use their means to help new converts who would be arriving in Ohio. This instruction gave Church members an opportunity to practice the principles of consecration outlined in previous revelations (see D&C 38:24–25, 35; 41:5; 42:30). **President Thomas S. Monson** shared an experience that illustrates how we can help those in need today:

"On a cold winter's night in 1951, there was a knock at my door. A German brother from Ogden, Utah, announced himself and said, 'Are you Bishop Monson?' I answered in the affirmative. He began to weep and said, 'My brother, his wife, and

family are coming here from Germany. They are going to live in your ward. Will you come with us to see the apartment we have rented for them?'

"On the way to the apartment, he told me he had not seen his brother for many years. Through the holocaust of World War II, his brother had been faithful to the Church, once serving as a branch president before the war took him to the Russian front.

"I observed the apartment. It was cold and dreary. The paint was peeling, the wallpaper soiled, the cupboards empty. A forty-watt bulb, suspended from the living room ceiling, revealed a linoleum floor covering with a large hole in the center. I was heartsick. I thought, 'What a dismal welcome for a family which has endured so much.' …

"… The next morning was Sunday. In our ward welfare committee meeting, one of my counselors said, 'Bishop, you look worried. Is something wrong?'

"I recounted to those present my experience of the night before, revealing the details of the uninviting apartment. There were a few moments of silence. Then Brother Eardley, the group leader of the high priests, said, 'Bishop, did you say that apartment was inadequately lighted and that the kitchen appliances were in need of replacement?' I answered in the affirmative. He continued, 'I am an electrical contractor. Would you permit the high priests of this ward to rewire that apartment? I would also like to invite my suppliers to contribute a new stove and a new refrigerator. Do I have your permission?' …

"Then Brother Balmforth, the seventies president, responded, 'Bishop, as you know, I'm in the carpet business. I would like to invite my suppliers to contribute some carpet, and the seventies can easily lay it and eliminate that worn linoleum.'

"Then Brother Bowden, the president of the elders quorum, spoke up. He was a painting contractor. He said, 'I'll furnish the paint. May the elders paint and wallpaper that apartment?'

"Sister Miller, the Relief Society president, was next to speak. 'We in the Relief Society cannot stand the thought of empty cupboards. May we fill them?'

"The three weeks which followed are ever to be remembered. It seemed that the entire ward joined in the project. The days passed, and at the appointed time, the family arrived from Germany. Again at my door stood the brother from Ogden. With an emotion-filled voice, he introduced to me his brother, his brother's wife, and their family. Then he asked, 'Could we go visit the apartment?' As we walked up the staircase leading to the apartment, he repeated, 'It isn't much, but it's more than they have had in Germany.' Little did he know what a transformation had taken place and that many who had participated were inside waiting for our arrival.

"The door opened to reveal a newness of life. We were greeted by the aroma of freshly painted woodwork and newly papered walls. Gone was the forty-watt bulb, along with the worn linoleum it had illuminated. We stepped on carpet deep and beautiful. A walk to the kitchen presented to our view a new stove and new refrigerator. The cupboard doors were still open; however, they now revealed every shelf filled with food. As usual, the Relief Society had done its work.

"… The father, realizing that all of this was his, took me by the hand to express his thanks. His emotion was too great. …

"It was time to leave. As we walked down the stairs and out into the night air, snow was falling. Not a word was spoken. Finally, a young girl asked, 'Bishop, I feel better than I have ever felt before. Can you tell me why?'

"I responded with the words of the Master: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' (Matt. 25:40.)" ("A Provident Plan—A Precious Promise," *Ensign,* May 1986, 64–65).

Doctrine and Covenants 48:4–6. "The place is not yet to be revealed"

The Lord urged the Saints to save money for the time when they would need to purchase land to build the city of Zion. At that time the Lord had not yet revealed Zion's location other than declaring that it would be located "on the borders by the Lamanites" (D&C 28:9). Within a few months of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 48, the Lord revealed to Church leaders that Zion would be built in Independence, Missouri (see D&C 52:2–3; 57:1–5).

Doctrine and Covenants 49: Additional Historical Background

Approximately 15 miles southwest of Kirtland, Ohio, was a congregation belonging to the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming. They were commonly known as Shakers because of their manner of worship, which involved shaking their bodies as they sang, danced, and clapped their hands to music. The Shakers believed that Christ had returned to the earth in the form of a woman, Ann Lee, who was the leader of the Shaker movement. The Shakers believed in total celibacy (abstaining from marriage and sexual relations). They did not consider baptism to be essential, and some forbade the eating of meat. In early 1831, a member of the Shakers, Leman Copley, converted to the Church and hoped that elders in the Church would go preach the gospel among his former associates. However, like some new converts may, he continued to hold to some of his earlier false beliefs. The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 49, which the Prophet Joseph Smith received on May 7, 1831, refuted several beliefs of the Shakers. In addition, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Leman Copley were called to go preach among the Shaker community. Soon after the revelation was given, these three men visited the Shakers and were permitted to read it to an assembled congregation, but the group rejected their message.

Leman Copley covenanted under the principles of consecration to allow many of the immigrating Saints from New York to live on his farm, located in Thompson, Ohio. However, after a brief time, he broke his covenant and demanded that they leave his property. Leman's faith in the Restoration waivered, and he did not fully associate with the Saints after that time.



In March 1831, missionaries from the Church visited the Shaker community at this location in North Union (Shaker Heights), Ohio (see D&C 49:1).

Doctrine and Covenants 49

The Lord calls Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Leman Copley to preach to the Shakers in northern Ohio.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 49, looking for what this revelation teaches about the true identity and mission of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 49:1–4. "They desire to know the truth in part, but not all"

The Lord explained that the Shakers "desire[d] to know the truth in part, but not all" (D&C 49:2). Although the Shakers sought to follow God, they eventually rejected the message of the Restoration as taught by the missionaries who were called to declare the word of the Lord to them. It is essential that God's children accept all of the doctrinal truths that are part of the everlasting gospel. **Elder Glenn L. Pace** (1940–2017) of the Seventy described how some members of the Church today choose to only "know the truth in part":

"There are some of our members who practice selective obedience. A prophet is not one who displays a smorgasbord of truth from which we are free to pick and choose. … A prophet doesn't take a poll to see which way the wind of public opinion is blowing. He reveals the will of the Lord to us. …

"In 1831, some converts wanted to bring a few of their previous beliefs into the Church with them. Our problem today is with members who seem very vulnerable to the trends in society (and the pointing fingers which attend them) and want the

Church to change its position to accommodate them. The doctrinal grass on the other side of the fence looks very green to them.

"The Lord's counsel in 1831 is relevant today: 'Behold, I say unto you, that they desire to know the truth in part, but not all, for they are not right before me and must needs repent.' (D&C 49:2.)

"We need to accept the full truth—even all of it—'put on the whole armour of God' (Eph. 6:11), and get to work building up the kingdom" ("Follow the Prophet," *Ensign,* May 1989, 26).

As **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** taught, the gospel of Jesus Christ requires us to renounce practices that are contrary to gospel teachings when we become members of the Church:

"As a way to help us keep the commandments of God, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have what we call a gospel culture. It is a distinctive way of life, a set of values and expectations and practices common to all members. This gospel culture comes from the plan of salvation, the commandments of God, and the teachings of the living prophets. It guides us in the way we raise our families and live our individual lives. …

"To help its members all over the world, the Church teaches us to give up any personal or family traditions or practices that are contrary to the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ and to this gospel culture" ("The Gospel Culture," *Ensign,* Mar. 2012, 42).

Doctrine and Covenants 49:7. No one knows the hour or day of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

The Shakers believed that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ had already occurred and that He had returned in the form of a woman named Ann Lee. This belief is an example of the false teachings that the Savior prophesied would be prevalent in the last days:

"Behold … if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not;

"For in those days there shall also arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant. …

"Wherefore, if they shall say unto you: Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not;

"For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:21–22, 25–26).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) warned about those who claim to know the time of the Savior's Second Coming: "Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come [see Matthew 24:36; D&C 49:7]. Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and all that say so are false teachers" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith,* 253).

Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17. Marriage is ordained of God

The Shakers created a community in which men and women lived separately and abstained from marrying and having children. The Apostle Paul described false teachings that would lead to apostasy in the last days, including "forbidding to marry" (see 1 Timothy 4:1, 3).

In an official proclamation issued in 1995, the **First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles** declared that "marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 129).

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why marriage and family are so important:



The Lord revealed that "marriage is ordained of God unto man" (D&C 49:15).

"The entire theology of our restored gospel centers on families and on the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. …

"We believe that marriage and family ties can continue beyond the grave—that marriages performed by those who have the proper authority in His temples will continue to be valid in the world to come. Our marriage ceremonies eliminate the words 'till death do us part' and instead say, 'for time and for all eternity.'

"We also believe that strong traditional families are not only the basic units of a stable society, a stable economy, and a stable culture of values—but that they are also the basic units of eternity and of the kingdom and government of God. …

"It is because of our belief that marriages and families are eternal that we, as a church, want to be a leader and a participant in worldwide movements to strengthen them" ("Why Marriage and Family Matter—Everywhere in the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2015, 41).

What did you learn about the Savior and His doctrine from your study of Doctrine and Covenants 49? Which of these truths are you most grateful for? What can you do to help those around you know and understand the true nature of Jesus Christ and come unto Him?

CHAPTER 19

Doctrine and Covenants 50

Introduction and Timeline

When the Prophet Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, in early February 1831, he observed that "some strange notions and false spirits had crept in among" the Saints. He began teaching "with a little caution, and some wisdom" in order to put an end to these false spiritual manifestations (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 93, josephsmithpapers.org). A few months later, Elder Parley P. Pratt returned from a mission and observed similar behavior in branches of the Church outside of Kirtland, so he and several other elders approached Joseph Smith for guidance (see Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 114, josephsmithpapers.org). In May 1831 the Prophet inquired of the Lord regarding this issue and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 50. In this revelation the Lord instructed the Saints to teach and receive the gospel by the Spirit of Truth.

Spring 1831

Some members of the Church in Kirtland were influenced by false spiritual manifestations.

Late March 1831

Parley P. Pratt returned to Kirtland from a mission to Indian Territory and Missouri.

April 30, 1831

Emma Smith gave birth to twins, a son and a daughter, who both died within a few hours.

May 9, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 50 was received.

May 9, 1831

Joseph and Emma Smith adopted the infant twins of John and Julia Murdock, after Julia died giving birth to the twins on April 30.

Consider any questions you may have about the Church's doctrine, history, or position on social issues. What are appropriate ways to obtain the Lord's answers to these kinds of questions? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 50, look for instructions that will help you to invite and be taught by the Spirit as you seek for answers.

Doctrine and Covenants 50: Additional Historical Background

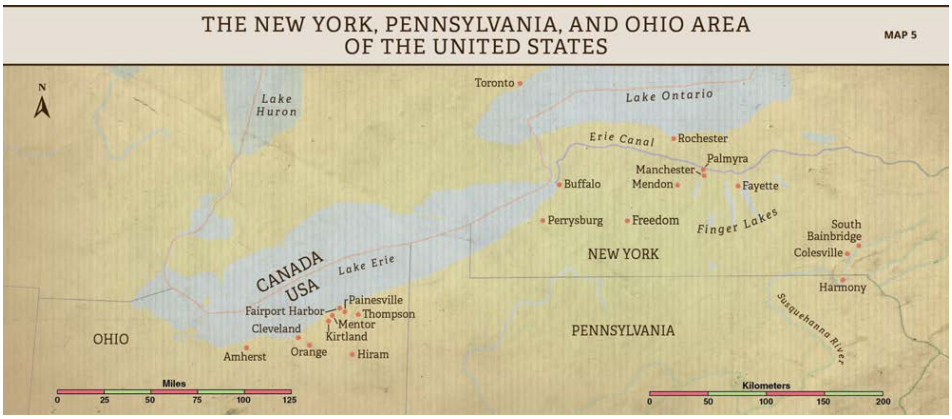


Concerned about the manifestations of false spirits among the Saints, Parley P. Pratt and others approached the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1831 for instruction.

Elder Parley P. Pratt was one of four missionaries who helped to convert more than 100 people in the Kirtland, Ohio, area in late fall of 1830. After continuing his mission to preach the gospel among the American Indians west of Missouri, Elder Pratt returned to Ohio in late March 1831. At that time he witnessed surprising behaviors among Church members in Kirtland. He recounted: "As I went forth among the different branches, some very strange spiritual operations were manifested, which were disgusting, rather than edifying. Some persons would seem to swoon away, and make unseemly gestures, and be drawn or disfigured in their countenances. Others would fall into ecstacies, and be drawn into contortions, cramp, fits, etc. Others would seem to have visions and revelations, which were not edifying, and which were not congenial to the doctrine and spirit of the gospel. In short, a false and lying spirit seemed to be creeping into the Church" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt,* ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 61).

The Prophet Joseph Smith described the false spiritual manifestations that were present during that time: "Soon after the Gospel was established in Kirtland, and during the absence of the authorities of the Church, many false spirits were introduced, many strange visions were seen, and wild enthusiastic notions were entertained; men [ran] out of doors under the influence of this Spirit, and some of them got upon the stumps of trees and shouted, and all kinds of extravagancies were entered into by them: one man pursued a ball that he said he saw flying in the air, until he came to a precipice when he jumped into the top of a tree which saved his life, and many ridiculous things were entered into, calculated to bring disgrace upon the church of God; to cause the Spirit of God to be withdrawn; and to uproot and destroy those glorious principles which had been developed for the salvation of the human family" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. C-1, page 1311, josephsmithpapers.org).

Parley P. Pratt noted that this confusing behavior led some to seek clarification from the Prophet: "Feeling our weakness and inexperience, and lest we should err in judgment concerning these spiritual phenomena, myself, John Murdock, and several other Elders, went to Joseph Smith, and asked him to inquire of the Lord concerning these spirits or manifestations" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt,* 61–62).



Doctrine and Covenants 50:1–9

The Lord warns the elders of the Church about false spirits

Read Doctrine and Covenants 50:1–9, looking for the Lord's warning about Satan's purposes and methods.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:2–3. "Satan hath sought to deceive you"

The Lord warned the Saints that there are false spirits on the earth who, along with Satan, seek to deceive and overthrow God's children. **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cautioned Church members to not be fooled by counterfeit feelings or false spirits:

"Be ever on guard lest you be deceived by inspiration from an unworthy source. You can be given false spiritual messages. There are counterfeit spirits just as there are counterfeit angels. (See Moro. 7:17.) …

"The spiritual part of us and the emotional part of us are so closely linked that [it] is possible to mistake an emotional impulse for something spiritual. We occasionally find people who receive what they assume to be spiritual promptings from God, when those promptings are either centered in the emotions or are from the adversary" ("The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign,* Jan. 1983, 55–56).

On another occasion, **President Packer** spoke of the importance of distinguishing between a temptation from the devil and a true revelation from the Lord:

"There can be counterfeit revelations, promptings from the devil, temptations! As long as you live, in one way or another the adversary will try to lead you astray. …

"The Prophet Joseph Smith said that 'nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God' [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* p. 205]. …

"If ever you receive a prompting to do something that makes you *feel* uneasy, something you know in your *mind* to be wrong and contrary to the principles of righteousness, do not respond to it!" ("Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise," *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 61).

Doctrine and Covenants 50:4–9. "Deceivers and hypocrites"

The Lord warned the Saints in Kirtland about "deceivers and hypocrites" among Church members (D&C 50:6). **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that we must beware of false prophets and false teachers:

"As Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our duty to be watchmen on the tower, warning Church members to beware of false prophets and false teachers who lie in wait to ensnare and destroy faith and testimony. Today we warn you that there are false prophets and false teachers arising; and if we are not careful, even those who are among the faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will fall victim to their deception. …

"When we think of false prophets and false teachers, we tend to think of those who espouse an obviously false doctrine or presume to have authority to teach the true gospel of Christ according to their own interpretation. We often assume that such individuals are associated with small radical groups on the fringes of society. However, I reiterate: there are false prophets and false teachers who have or at least claim to have membership in the Church. There are those who, without authority, claim Church endorsement to their products and practices. Beware of such" ("Beware of False Prophets and False Teachers," *Ensign,* Nov. 1999, 62).

Some members in the Kirtland area were behaving as though they had spiritual power or authority that they did not actually possess. Thus, the Lord identified them as "deceivers and hypocrites" (D&C 50:6). **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles defined hypocrisy and urged us to purge it from our lives:

"Hypocrisy … is the false pretense of virtue or righteousness and pretending to be something that we are not. If we know what is right and profess to live by that knowledge but, in fact, do not, we are hypocrites. The Savior denounced hypocrites in unmistakable language [see Matthew 23:27–28; D&C 50:6, 8]. …

"What are the Latter-day Saints to do? The answer is plain. The Saints are to be absolutely without guile in every aspect of their lives: in their homes and families, Church callings, all business dealings, and, especially, the private and personal parts of their lives into which only they and the Lord see.

"I suggest that we look into our hearts and see whether our motives and actions are pure and above reproach and to see whether we are free of deceit and fraud" ("Without Guile," *Ensign,* May 1988, 82).

Doctrine and Covenants 50:10–36

The Lord instructs the elders how to discern between false spirits and the Spirit of Truth

Read Doctrine and Covenants 50:10–25, looking for principles that will help you better understand how the Spirit influences us.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:13–18. Teaching by the Spirit of Truth

Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, had permitted themselves to be influenced by false spirits, which caused confusion. They had mistaken the strange religious behavior of some to be manifestations of the Holy Ghost. The Lord identified the role of the Holy Ghost as that of a "Comforter" and stated that the Holy Ghost had been "sent forth to teach the truth" (D&C 50:14), not to spread confusion. The Lord also explained that the elders of the Church had been commanded to preach the gospel with the Spirit and that if they attempted to do so by any other way, their teachings would not be of God (see D&C 50:17–18). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave examples of teaching in ways other than by the Spirit:

"If we teach in the manner the Lord has prescribed, he can send his Spirit to edify and enlighten those whom we teach. If we do not teach in his way—if we teach according to our own knowledge and according to our own intellect, and if we slavishly tie ourselves to our own preparation or to someone else's wisdom or text—our teaching 'is not of God' [D&C 50:18]. …

"If we rely on debate techniques or sales methods or group psychology, we are preaching the gospel in some other way, and it is not of God. …

"Intellectual things—reason and logic—can prepare the way, and they can help us in our preparation. But if we are tied to them instead of to the Spirit of the Lord, we are not teaching the gospel in the Lord's way" ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign,* Mar. 1997, 8–9).



Those called to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ must teach by the Spirit of truth (see D&C 50:14, 17).

The Lord described His gospel as "the word of truth" (D&C 50:17); therefore, those who preach the gospel should seek to do so "by the Comforter, in the Spirit of

truth" (D&C 50:17). The Holy Ghost bears witness of the truth as it is being taught. **Elder L. Tom Perry** (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how those who preach the gospel can qualify for this essential help of the Spirit:

"It is our privilege to have the Holy Ghost, a member of the Godhead, as our constant companion, to edify and inspire us in our preparation as teachers. We should prepare ourselves through obedience to God's commandments, that our confidence will wax strong when we call upon the Lord, that His Spirit might magnify us as we teach. When we have the Spirit to direct us, we are capable of teaching with great power. …

"Our teaching will be effective if we approach it humbly through prayer and study. We will then be assisted by the Spirit in imparting the word, consistent and in harmony with what the Lord would have us teach" ("Teach Them the Word of God with All Diligence," *Ensign,* May 1999, 8).

When the gospel is taught with the Spirit, those who are receptive to the Lord's word can be edified and nourished. **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught why every teacher in the Church should seek to be guided by the Holy Ghost:

"The Lord has never given more emphatic counsel to the Church than that we are to teach the gospel 'by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth' [D&C 50:14]. …

"No eternal learning can take place without that quickening of the Spirit from heaven. …

"That is what our members really want when they gather in a meeting or come into a classroom anyway. Most people don't come to church looking merely for a few new gospel facts or to see old friends, though all of that is important. They come seeking a spiritual experience. They want peace. They want their faith fortified and their hope renewed. They want, in short, to be nourished by the good word of God, to be strengthened by the powers of heaven. Those of us who are called upon to speak or teach or lead have an obligation to help provide that, as best we possibly can" ("A Teacher Come from God," *Ensign,* May 1998, 26).

When have you felt the influence and guidance of the Spirit while teaching the gospel? What difference did this make to you as a teacher and to those you were teaching?

Doctrine and Covenants 50:19–22. Receiving the gospel by the Spirit of Truth

Those who hear the gospel of Jesus Christ preached by the Spirit of Truth have the opportunity to feel the Comforter, to be edified, and to receive the truth. When a person teaches truth by the Spirit and the recipient is open to receive it by the Spirit, "both are edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:22).

In order for a person to receive the message of the gospel when it is taught by the Holy Ghost, he or she must be willing to be influenced by the Spirit of Truth. **Brother A. Roger Merrill,** former General Sunday School President, taught how we can best receive or learn the gospel by the Spirit:

"We often focus, appropriately, on the importance of teaching by the Spirit. But we need to remember that the Lord has placed equal, if not greater, importance on receiving by the Spirit. (See D&C 50:17–22.) …

"In our Church meetings, in our personal and family scripture study, and … as we listen to the Lord's prophets and apostles, some of us will receive more than others. Why? I am learning that those who truly receive do at least three things that others may not do.

"First, they *seek.* We live in an entertainment world, a spectator world. Without realizing it, we can find ourselves coming to conference or going to church with the attitude, 'Here I am; now inspire me.' We become spiritually passive.

"When we focus instead on seeking and receiving the Spirit, we become less concerned about a teacher or speaker holding our attention and more concerned about giving our attention to the Spirit. Remember, *receive* is a verb. It is a principle of action. It is a fundamental expression of faith.

"Second, those who receive, *feel.* While revelation comes to the mind and heart, it is most often felt. Until we learn to pay attention to these spiritual feelings, we usually do not even recognize the Spirit. …

"Third, those who receive by the Spirit *intend to act.* As the prophet Moroni instructed, to receive a witness of the Book of Mormon, we must ask 'with real intent' (Moroni 10:4). The Spirit teaches when we honestly intend to do something about what we learn" ("Receiving by the Spirit," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2006, 93–94).



Gospel learners have a responsibility to learn by the Spirit of truth (see D&C 50:19–21).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught the following analogy to help teachers and students understand their role in gospel learning: "Real, true, genuine, Spirit-born worship, in a sacrament meeting for instance, comes when a speaker speaks by the power of the Holy Ghost, and when a congregation hears by the power of the Holy Ghost." Elder McConkie continued by saying that what often happens in our sacrament meetings is that the

congregation comes having spiritually prepared themselves to learn the gospel, "desiring to be fed. They bring a gallon jug. The speaker comes in his worldly wisdom and he brings a little pint bottle and he pours his pint bottle out and it rattles around in the gallon jug. Or else, as sometimes happens, the preacher gets his errand from the Lord and gets in tune with the Spirit and comes with a gallon jug to deliver a message, and there is not anybody in the congregation that brought anything bigger than a cup. And he pours out the gallon of eternal truth and people get just a little sample, enough to quench a moment's eternal thirst, instead of getting the real message that is involved. It takes teacher and student, it takes preacher and congregation, both of them uniting in faith to have a proper preaching or teaching situation" ("The Foolishness of Teaching" [address to Church Educational System religious educators, Sept. 18, 1981], 9–10).

Doctrine and Covenants 50:23–24. "That which doth not edify … is darkness. That which is of God is light"

Darkness represents the evil influences of the adversary and symbolizes all that does not edify (see D&C 50:23–24). The Book of Mormon reminds readers that those who "yield unto the devil and choose works of darkness rather than light" are condemned to "go down to hell" (2 Nephi 26:10). When people disobey the commandments of God, their sins block the light that comes from the Spirit of the Lord and they find themselves "walking in darkness at noon-day" (D&C 95:6). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) taught: "There is no saying of greater truth than 'that which doth not edify is not of God.' And that which is not of God is darkness, it matters not whether it comes in the guise of religion, ethics, philosophy or revelation. No revelation from God will fail to edify" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:201–2).



Those who receive God's light will be given more and more until the perfect day (see D&C 50:23–25).

During His mortal ministry, the Savior said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12; see also D&C 45:7). Those who follow the Lord "receiveth more light" that allows them to "know the truth" and to "chase darkness" away (D&C 50:24–25). **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Light dispels darkness. When light is present, darkness is vanquished and must depart. More importantly, darkness cannot conquer light unless the light is diminished or departs. When the spiritual light of the Holy Ghost is present, the darkness of Satan departs. …

"… If we let the light of the Spirit flicker or fade by failing to keep the commandments or by not partaking of the sacrament or praying or studying the scriptures, the darkness of the adversary will surely come in" ("Out of Darkness into His Marvelous Light," *Ensign,* May 2002, 70–71).

Think about a time when you have been edified in a gospel learning setting, as either a teacher or a learner. Consider writing your thoughts in your journal.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:23–24. "He that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light"

The gospel of Jesus Christ prepares God's children to become perfect through a process of spiritual growth. Those who strive to follow the Lord and to obtain a fulness of His light will eventually become perfect as He is (see Moroni 10:32; D&C

67:13). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught why receiving spiritual light prepares us to become like God: "We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker, and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210–11).

Receiving spiritual light is the process of gaining spiritual knowledge and growing in personal righteousness. **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency explained how the effort to obtain light strengthens and clarifies a person's testimony of the truth:

"The more we incline our hearts and minds toward God, the more heavenly light distills upon our souls. And each time we willingly and earnestly seek that light, we indicate to God our readiness to receive more light. Gradually, things that before seemed hazy, dark, and remote become clear, bright, and familiar to us.

"By the same token, if we remove ourselves from the light of the gospel, our own light begins to dim—not in a day or a week but gradually over time—until we look back and can't quite understand why we had ever believed the gospel was true. Our previous knowledge might even seem foolish to us because what once was so clear has again become blurred, hazy, and distant. …

"It is my testimony that this spiritual light is within the reach of every child of God. It will enlighten your mind and bring healing to your heart and joy to your days. My dear friends, please do not delay the moment to seek and strengthen your own personal testimony of God's divine work, even the work of light and truth.

"Your personal testimony of light and truth will not only bless you and your posterity here in mortality, but it will also accompany you throughout all eternity, among worlds without end" ("Receiving a Testimony of Light and Truth," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 22–23).

In what ways have you experienced an increase in spiritual light as you have been receptive to God's Spirit and direction? What can you do to continue to invite His light more fully into your life?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 50:26–36, looking for the promises the Lord made to His servants to help them become like Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:26–30. "It shall be given you what you shall ask"

The Lord's ordained servants have access to heavenly power to help them accomplish all that He requires. This divine help can only be given to those who are

"purified and cleansed from all sin" (D&C 50:28). **Elder Richard G. Scott** (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why our efforts to be cleansed from sin prepare us to receive answers to our prayers:

"No one would expect to receive a result from physical law without obeying it. Spiritual law is the same. As much as we want help, we must expect to follow the spiritual law that controls that help. Spiritual law is not mysterious. It is something that we can understand. …

"The Lord has the power to bless us at any time. Yet we see that to count on His help, we must consistently obey His commandments. …

"'If ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. But know this, *it shall be given you what you shall ask.*' (D&C 50:29–30; italics added.) …

"Our earnest prayers are answered when they conform to the will of the Lord. Since we cannot perfectly understand His will, we must walk with faith. He is all-knowing, and His decisions are perfect. The fact that our finite capacity does not let us understand all of His dealings with man does not limit Him from blessing us. His will is our best choice in life, whether or not we fully understand it. When we act using our moral agency wisely, the Lord will act according to His will.

"We see such a limited part of the eternal plan He has fashioned for each one of us. Trust Him, even when in eternal perspective it temporarily hurts very much. Have patience when you are asked to wait when you want immediate action. He may ask you to do things which are powerfully against your will. Exercise faith and say, Let Thy will be done. Such experiences, honorably met, prepare you and condition you for yet greater blessings. As your Father, His purpose is your eternal happiness, your continuing development, your increasing capacity. His desire is to share with you all that He has" ("Obtaining Help from the Lord," *Ensign,* Nov. 1991, 84, 86).

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) of the First Presidency explained how our prayers can progress to the point where they express God's will: "The time will come when we shall know the will of God before we ask. Then everything for which we pray will be 'expedient' [D&C 88:64]. Everything for which we ask will be 'right' [3 Nephi 18:20]. That will be when as a result of righteous living, we shall so enjoy the companionship of the spirit that he will dictate what we ask" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1944, 56).

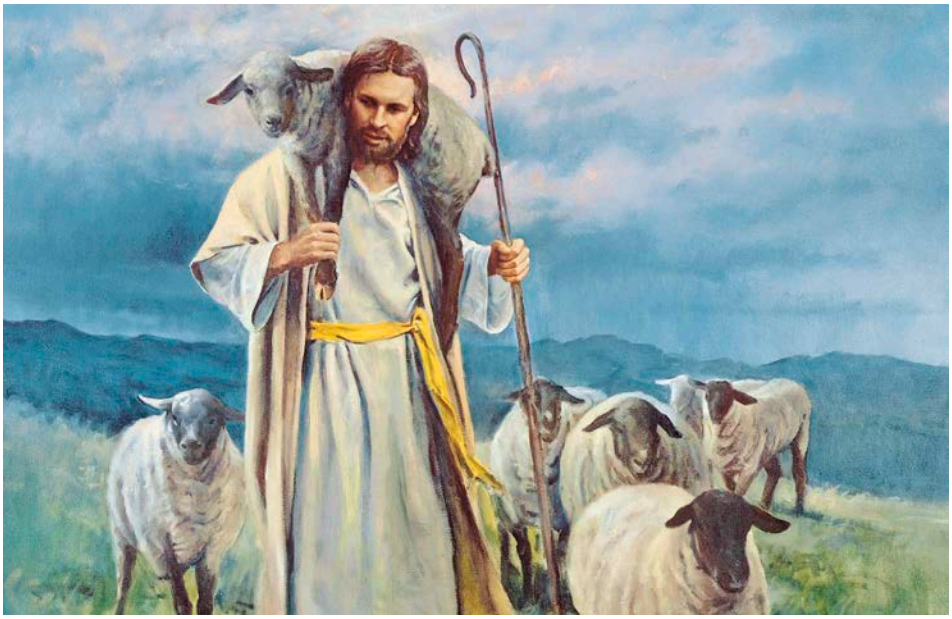
Doctrine and Covenants 50:31–35. "Power to overcome all things which are not ordained of him"

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 50:31–35, the Lord gives His servants the power of discernment to distinguish between false spirits and true spiritual gifts and manifestations from God. With this power, priesthood leaders are to identify or announce when they detect a false or dark spirit, but they should not become boastful in this ability or they might be deceived themselves.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:37–46

The Lord calls His servants to strengthen the Church and promises to be with them

Read Doctrine and Covenants 50:37–46, looking for what the Lord promised to do for those who follow Him.



The Good Shepherd, **by Del Parson. "I am the good shepherd" (D&C 50:44).**

Doctrine and Covenants 50:40–46. "Ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow"

The Lord said that the elders of the Church were like "little children" in their knowledge of the gospel, but He promised that if they received Him, they would "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth" (D&C 50:40) and would someday become one with the Father and the Son (see D&C 50:43). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded the Saints to not become discouraged with slow spiritual growth:

"Paced progress not only is acceptable to the Lord but also is recommended by Him. Divine declarations say: 'Ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now' (D&C 50:40); 'I will lead you along' (D&C 78:18). Just as divine disclosure usually occurs line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, so likewise we will achieve our spiritual progress gradually (see D&C 128:21; 98:12).

"Rather than seeing ourselves as failing simply because we do not become immediately perfect, such as in the attribute of mercy, we should seek to become ever more merciful 'in process of time.' Even amid diligence, there need not be unrealistic expectations. Though imperfect, an improving person can actually know

that the course of his life is generally acceptable to the Lord despite there being much distance yet to be covered (*Men and Women of Christ* [1991], 23).

Review the principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 50 that will help you discern between truth and error. What can you do better to invite the Spirit so that you can avoid deception and spiritual darkness?

CHAPTER 20

Doctrine and Covenants 51–56

Introduction and Timeline

Saints from Colesville, New York, arrived in Ohio in May 1831, and Bishop Edward Partridge was responsible for arranging their settlement. To help guide Bishop Partridge, the Lord gave the Prophet Joseph Smith the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 51. In this revelation the Lord instructed Bishop Partridge on how to organize stewardships of property and money among the Saints.

On June 3–6, 1831, the elders of the Church gathered for a conference. On the last day of the conference, the Lord gave Joseph Smith the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 52. In this revelation the Lord indicated that the next conference should be held in Missouri and promised that He would make known the location of the Saints' land of inheritance there. The Lord appointed certain elders to travel in pairs to Missouri and instructed them on how they might travel and preach the gospel. The Lord also revealed a pattern for recognizing true followers of Jesus Christ.

In the days following the June 1831 conference, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 53–56. These revelations include instructions for some Church members who lived in Ohio but would soon move to Missouri. In these revelations the Lord spoke to Sidney Gilbert, Newel Knight, and William W. Phelps and gave them instructions specific to their Church assignments and talents.

In early June 1831, Ezra Thayre and Thomas B. Marsh were called on a mission to Missouri (see D&C 52:22). However, because of pride and selfishness, Ezra was not prepared to leave with Thomas. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 56, the Lord revoked Ezra Thayre's call and called Selah J. Griffin to accompany Brother Marsh.

May 14, 1831

The Saints from Colesville, New York, arrived in Ohio and were invited to settle as a group on Leman Copley's farm in Thompson, Ohio.

May 20, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 51 was received.

May–June 1831

Leman Copley began to evict the Saints who were living on his property.

June 3–6, 1831

A Church conference was held in Kirtland, Ohio. During the conference Joseph Smith saw God the Father and Jesus Christ and the first high priests in this dispensation were ordained.

June 6–15, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 52–56 were received.

June 19, 1831

Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and others left Ohio for their first journey to Missouri.

Consider the challenging circumstances faced by the members of the Church who followed the Lord's instruction to leave New York and gather to Ohio. Imagine how you might have felt as one of the immigrants who arrived in Ohio with little money or few resources. What would have been some of your concerns? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 51, look for principles that the Lord revealed to Church leaders to meet the needs of the recently arrived Saints.

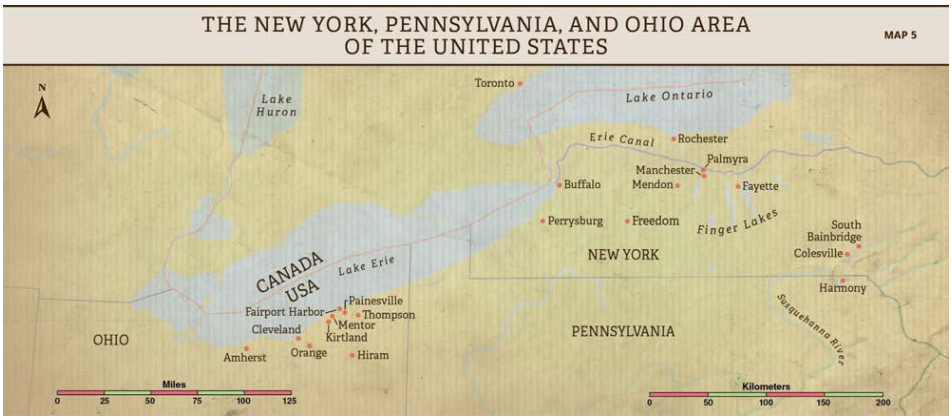
Doctrine and Covenants 51: Additional Historical Background



Many of the early Saints emigrating from New York to Ohio arrived by boat at Fairport Harbor on the shore of Lake Erie, just a few miles from Kirtland.

In late December 1830 and early January 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelations from the Lord instructing the Saints to gather in Ohio (see D&C 37:1, 3; 38:32). The Colesville Branch, consisting of more than 60 Church members, was one of three groups of Saints to leave New York to gather in Ohio. They departed from Colesville, New York, in mid-April 1831 with Newel Knight as their leader. After a month-long journey that included delays due to inclement weather, they arrived in Ohio about mid-May. According to Newel Knight, when they arrived "it was advised that the Colesville Branch remain together and go to [a] neighboring town called Thompson, as a man by the name [Leman] Copley owned a considerable tract of land there which he offered to let the Brethren occupy" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 315; spelling and punctuation standardized). Bishop Edward Partridge sought instruction on how to provide for the newly arrived Saints, so Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord. In response, on May 20, 1831, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 51.





Doctrine and Covenants 51

The Lord instructs Bishop Edward Partridge on overseeing the temporal needs of the Saints

Read Doctrine and Covenants 51:1–8, looking for the duties given to Bishop Edward Partridge to assist the Church members who were arriving from New York.

Doctrine and Covenants 51:1–2. "Organized according to my laws"

Bishop Edward Partridge asked how to best fulfill the temporal needs of the members of the Colesville Branch, and the Lord commanded him to organize them "according to my laws" (D&C 51:2). The Lord gives some of His servants the authority and responsibility to preside and direct the spiritual and temporal work of salvation in the Church. This duty to organize the work is essential; God has declared that His house is "a house of order, … and not a house of confusion" (D&C 132:8; see also D&C 88:119). In this case, Bishop Partridge was instructed to

organize the Saints according to the law of consecration to meet the needs of the Colesville immigrants.

Doctrine and Covenants 51:3–6. "Let my servant Edward Partridge … appoint unto this people their portions, every man equal"

The Lord commanded Bishop Edward Partridge to implement the law of consecration among the families who had emigrated from New York and were living on Leman Copley's property. These families were to consecrate their belongings and resources "with a covenant and a deed" (D&C 42:30). Bishop Partridge was then to "appoint unto this people their portions" (D&C 51:3), meaning that he was to give each family a portion of the resources according to their needs, wants, and circumstances—in some cases this would be more than the family had consecrated. The bishop was to present to each family a written deed indicating that the portion or inheritance that they received was to be their private stewardship. Any surplus was to be preserved by Bishop Partridge and used to assist the poor and the needy of the Church.

The process of consecrating property was to be done according to the principle of agency, as was explained in a June 1833 letter to Bishop Partridge and signed by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Martin Harris: "Every man must be his own judge [of] how much he should receive, and how much he should suffer to remain in the hands of the Bishop. … The matter of consecration must be done by the mutual consent of both parties—For, to give the Bishop power to say how much every man shall have and [each man] be obliged to comply with the Bishop's judgment, is giving to the Bishop more power than a King has, and upon the other hand, to let every man say how much he needs and the Bishop [be] obliged to comply with his judgment, is to throw Zion into confusion and make a Slave of the Bishop. The fact is, there must be a balance or equilibrium of power between the bishop and the people, and thus harmony and good will may be preserved among you. Therefore, those persons consecrating property to the Bishop in Zion, and then receiving an inheritance back, must show reasonably to the Bishop that he [needs] as much as he claims" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 153; spelling and punctuation standardized).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 51:9–20, looking for the Lord's promise to Saints who are faithful and wise in their stewardships.

Doctrine and Covenants 51:15–17. "Let them act upon this land as for years"

Because Leman Copley's faith waivered and he broke his covenant to consecrate his land, the Colesville Saints occupied his farm in Thompson, Ohio, for only a few weeks. Doctrine and Covenants 51:16 indicates that the Lord was aware that their stay would be just "for a little season." Nevertheless, He counseled the Saints to work and live as though they would be there for years. The majority of the Colesville Saints followed these instructions. During their short stay they cleared land, planted crops, and began to build homes, all of which they left behind when

Leman Copley demanded that they leave. The Lord later instructed the Colesville Branch to move to Missouri to help lay the foundation of Zion (see D&C 54; 58:6–7).



Area of the Leman Copley farm in Thompson (now Madison), Ohio, where he invited the Saints from Colesville, New York, to settle.

Doctrine and Covenants 51:19. "A faithful, a just, and a wise steward"

The Saints from the Colesville Branch made many sacrifices to leave their homes in New York and move to Ohio as commanded by the Lord. Not long after they arrived, they were evicted from Leman Copley's land and commanded to move again—this time about 900 miles (1,448 kilometers) west to Jackson County, Missouri. The promise that "whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life" (D&C 51:19) would have certainly helped strengthen the Saints' trust in the Lord during this difficult time.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the terms *steward* and *stewardship* are associated with the law of consecration and refer to the resources or lands given by the Lord to those who have consecrated everything with a covenant. **Elder Quentin L. Cook** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that stewardships are also personal responsibilities and duties we have:

"We live in perilous times when many believe we are not accountable to God and that we do not have personal responsibility or stewardship for ourselves or others. Many in the world are focused on self-gratification, put themselves first, and love pleasure more than they love righteousness. They do not believe they are their brother's keeper. In the Church, however, we believe that these stewardships are a sacred trust. …

"… The principles of accountability and stewardship have great significance in our doctrine.

"In the Church, stewardship is *not* limited to a *temporal* trust or responsibility. President Spencer W. Kimball taught: 'We are stewards over our bodies, minds,

families, and properties. … A faithful steward is one who exercises righteous dominion, cares for his own, and looks to the poor and needy' ['Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action,' *Ensign,* Nov. 1977, 78]. …

"With respect to our stewardship for our families, some have taught that when we report to the Savior and He asks us to give an account of our earthly responsibilities, two important inquiries will relate to our families. The first will be our relationship with our spouse, and the second will be about each of our children. …

"In all of our stewardship efforts, we follow Jesus Christ. We try to emulate what He has asked us to do, both by His teachings and His example. …

"My hope is that each of us will review individually and as families the stewardships for which we have responsibility and accountability. I pray that we will do so knowing we are ultimately accountable to God" ("Stewardship—a Sacred Trust," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 91, 93–94).

Consider the responsibilities the Lord has given you. What does it mean to you to be faithful, just, and wise in fulfilling these responsibilities?

Doctrine and Covenants 52: Additional Historical Background

By the end of May 1831, nearly all of the New York Church members from the Palmyra, Fayette, and Colesville areas had moved to Ohio in obedience to the Lord's commandment. On June 3–6, 1831, a general conference of the Church was held in a series of meetings in Kirtland, Ohio. This conference was likely a fulfillment of a February 1831 revelation in which the Lord declared that "the elders of my church should be called together, from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south" (D&C 44:1). If the elders proved faithful and exercised faith, the Lord promised to "pour out [His] Spirit upon them" (D&C 44:2).

During the conference "the Lord displayed his power to the most perfect satisfaction of the saints" (Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 118, josephsmithpapers.org). Several testified that they saw God in vision during the meeting (see The Life of Levi Hancock, quoted in Karl Ricks Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland: Eyewitness Accounts* [1989], 107–8). Lyman Wight said that he witnessed "the visible manifestations of the power of God as plain as could have been on the day of pentecost," which included "the healing of the sick, casting out devils, speaking in unknown tongues, discerning of spirits, and prophesying with mighty power" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 322; spelling standardized). Church historian John Whitmer wrote: "The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner. And [Joseph] prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel … to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 39; spelling and capitalization standardized).

Also during the conference, the Prophet Joseph Smith ordained some of the elders to the office of high priest. These were the first ordinations to the office of high priest in the restored Church. The Prophet declared, "It was clearly evident that the Lord gave us power in proportion to the work to be done, and strength according to the race set before us, and grace and help as our needs required" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 352).

Although Church members at the conference had joyful spiritual experiences, John Whitmer recorded that the adversary was also present: "While the Lord poured out his spirit upon his servants, the Devil took occasion to make known his power, [and] he bound Harvey Whitlock … so that he could not speak." The Lord revealed the design of the adversary to the Prophet, and Joseph "commanded the devil in the name of Christ and he departed to our Joy and comfort" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* 40–41; spelling and punctuation standardized).

On the last day of the conference, June 6, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 52. A few years later he wrote in a Church newspaper that this revelation had been received "by an heavenly vision" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 327).

Doctrine and Covenants 52

The Lord commands some Church leaders to travel to Missouri and gives a pattern to avoid deception

Read Doctrine and Covenants 52:1–12, looking for the Lord's reasons for sending the Prophet Joseph Smith and others to Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 52:1–5. "The land of your inheritance"

When the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 52 was given, the Saints eagerly anticipated the building of the city of Zion, which had been prophesied in the scriptures (see Ether 13:3–6; D&C 28:9; Moses 7:62). In a revelation given in March 1831, the Lord promised that He would reveal the location of the land that the Saints were to purchase for an inheritance (see D&C 48:4–6). They were to gather on this land and build the city of Zion, or New Jerusalem. This city was to be a place of refuge and safety for the Saints (see D&C 45:64–71). In June 1831 the Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to go to Missouri and to hold the next conference of the Church there. Once there, if they were faithful, the Lord promised to reveal the land of their inheritance. Although the Lord told the Saints the land was currently occupied by "enemies," He promised to "hasten the city [Zion] in its time" (D&C 52:42–43). The Lord's reference to enemies of the Saints foreshadowed the antagonism and hostility that Church members would experience from local Missouri residents as they began to gather in Jackson County, Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 52:9–10, 33–34. Teach what has been revealed to apostles and prophets

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 52, the Lord called 26 men, in addition to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, to travel as missionaries to Missouri. They were instructed to travel the nearly 900-mile (1,448 kilometers) journey by different routes, preaching and baptizing along the way. The Lord directed them to teach "none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written, and that which is taught them by the Comforter through the prayer of faith" (D&C 52:9; see also Mosiah 18:18; 25:21–22). Latter-day prophets have likewise encouraged members of the Church to rely on the words of the prophets and the guidance of the Holy Ghost when teaching the doctrine of the gospel.

Speaking to religious educators in the Church, **President J. Reuben Clark Jr.** (1871–1961) of the First Presidency taught:

"Your chief interest, your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as that has been revealed in these latter days. You are to teach this gospel, using as your sources and authorities the standard works of the Church and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days. You are not … to intrude into your work your own peculiar philosophy, no matter what its source or how pleasing or rational it seems to you to be. …

"You are not … to change the doctrines of the Church or to modify them as they are declared by and in the standard works of the Church and by those whose authority it is to declare the mind and will of the Lord to the Church" (*The Charted Course of the Church in Education,* rev. ed. [booklet 2004; address to Church Educational System religious educators, Aug. 8, 1938], 10).

Have you ever used a pattern to sew or build something? Consider the value of having a pattern to follow. Read Doctrine and Covenants 52:13–21, looking for the pattern that the Lord provided to help the elders of the Church identify His true followers.

Doctrine and Covenants 52:14–21. "I will give unto you a pattern in all things"

During the conference held June 3–6, 1831, the elders of the Church witnessed the contrast between manifestations of evil and the power of God. On the last day of the conference, the Lord revealed to the elders a pattern for distinguishing between those who are deceivers or imposters and those who are righteous servants of God (see D&C 52:14–21). He gave examples of the fruits of those who labor or perform with the Spirit of God. Along with previous instructions (see D&C 43:1–7; 46:7–8; 50:1–25), this revelation helped to alleviate confusion among Church leaders and members regarding false spirits and extreme spiritual behavior or worship practices. **Elder Paul E. Koelliker** of the Seventy taught:

"In June of 1831, as calls were being extended to early Church leaders, Joseph Smith was told that 'Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations.' To combat this distracting influence, the Lord said that He would give us 'a pattern in all things, that [we] may not be deceived' (D&C 52:14).

"Patterns are templates, guides, repeating steps, or paths one follows to stay aligned with God's purpose. If followed, they will keep us humble, awake, and able to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit from those voices that distract us and lead us away" ("He Truly Loves Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 16).

Consider some of the patterns that Heavenly Father has given to guide His children regarding callings and ordinations in the Church (see D&C 20:65), revelation (see D&C 28:1–8), learning and teaching the gospel (see D&C 50:13–23), and missionary work (see D&C 52:9–10). How do the patterns taught in these examples help you to avoid deception and remain spiritually aligned with the Lord?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 52:22–44, looking for the Lord's instructions to Church leaders and to those who were called to preach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 52:33–34. "He that is faithful, the same shall be kept and blessed"

Those who were called to preach the gospel as they traveled to Missouri were promised that if they were faithful the Lord would watch over them and bless them "with much fruit" (D&C 52:34). Bishop Edward Partridge was one of those called to leave his family and travel to Missouri. Bishop Partridge's wife, Lydia, "left an account of the circumstances under which her husband, Edward, received this revelatory injunction. Their children had all contracted the measles from some of the recently arrived New York members who were staying with their family. She wrote that their 'eldest daughter was taken down with lung fever, and while she was at the worst, my husband was called by revelation to go with a number of others to Missouri to locate a place for the gathering of the Saints, the unbelievers thought he must be crazy or he would not go. And I thought myself that I had reason to think my trials had commenced, and so [they] had, but this trial like all others was followed with blessings for our daughter recovered.' (Partridge, Genealogical Record, 6.)" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 330).

Doctrine and Covenants 52:39–40. "Remember in all things the poor and the needy"

The elders of the Church who were not commanded to depart on missions were to care for the members of the Church and, more specifically, were to "remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (D&C 52:40). The Lord explained that caring for the poor and the sick is a characteristic of His disciples. Throughout His mortal ministry, the Savior attended to the sick and afflicted, healing and comforting them. He ministered to the poor and needy, nourishing them both physically and spiritually. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) taught what we can do to remember those in need:

"In remembering together before the Lord the poor, the needy, and the oppressed, there is developed, unconsciously but realistically, a love for others above self, a respect for others, a desire to serve the needs of others. One cannot ask God to

help a neighbor in distress without feeling motivated to do something oneself toward helping that neighbor. …

"I heard a man of prominence say the other day, 'I have amended the language of my prayers. Instead of saying, 'Bless the poor and the sick and the needy,' I now say, 'Father, show me how to help the poor and the sick and the needy, and give me resolution to do so' " (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 457–58).

Ponder what you can do to remember and help "the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (D&C 52:40). Set a goal to help minister to those who are in need.

Doctrine and Covenants 53: Additional Historical Background

Sidney Gilbert was Newel K. Whitney's business partner for the N. K. Whitney and Company store in Kirtland, Ohio. Sidney and his family were among the converts who joined the Church in Kirtland. On June 8, 1831, two days after the conference of the Church, Sidney Gilbert approached the Prophet, desiring to know what the Lord wanted him to do. Joseph inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 53.



Sidney Gilbert was a business partner of Newell K. Whitney. After some of the Saints moved to Missouri, he operated a Church store at this site in Independence, Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 53

The Lord calls Sidney Gilbert to preach the gospel and travel to Missouri

Read Doctrine and Covenants 53, looking for evidence that God hears the prayers of His children.

Doctrine and Covenants 53:1–4. "Forsake the world"

Sidney Gilbert left Kirtland, Ohio, in late June 1831 to follow the Lord's command to preach the gospel and become "an agent" to the Church (D&C 53:4). After arriving in Missouri in the summer of 1831, he established a mercantile store and, as an agent for the Church, assisted Bishop Edward Partridge in purchasing land for stewardships and Church buildings (see D&C 57:6, 8). The Lord commanded Sidney to "forsake the world" (D&C 53:2); he was to keep the commandments, leave his business in Kirtland to travel to Missouri, and use his gift for business to help build God's kingdom in the land of Zion. The Lord's commandment to forsake the world did not mean that Sidney was to isolate himself from the world. **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"In the Church, we often state the couplet: 'Be in the world but not of the world.' …

"Perhaps we should state the couplet … as two separate admonitions. First, *'Be in the world.'* Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement. Second, *'Be not of the world.'* Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right.

"… In spite of all of the wickedness in the world, and in spite of all the opposition to good that we find on every hand, we should *not* try to take ourselves or our children *out* of the world. Jesus said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,' or yeast. (Matt. 13:33.) We are to lift the world and help all to rise above the wickedness that surrounds us" ("The Effects of Television," *Ensign,* May 1989, 80).

Doctrine and Covenants 54: Additional Historical Background

When the Saints from Colesville, New York, arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, in May 1831, they were advised to go to the neighboring area of Thompson, "as a man by the name [Leman] Copley owned a considerable tract of land there which he offered to let the Brethren occupy" (Newel Knight, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 315; spelling standardized). Leman had earlier agreed to allow Saints from New York to live on his property in exchange for making improvements on his land. Shortly after their arrival, the Colesville Branch members began planting and building on the 759-acre farm. Not long afterward, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 51, instructing those who settled in Thompson to practice the law of consecration.

As the Saints began to settle on his property, Leman Copley traveled with other missionaries to North Union, Ohio, to preach the gospel to the United Society of

Believers in Christ's Second Appearing (Shakers), a religious group with which Leman had been associated before he joined the Church (see D&C 49). The mission was unsuccessful, and Leman began to doubt his testimony of the message of the restored Church. Later, he consulted with Ashbel Kitchell, the Shaker leader, and together they went to Leman's farm and told the Saints that they had to leave. Leman broke the covenant he had made with the Lord to consecrate his farm. Joseph Knight Jr. recorded that in spite of making improvements on Leman's land during the brief time that the Saints lived there, "we had to leave his [Copley's] farm and pay sixty dollars damage" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 335). Not knowing what to do, Newel Knight and other elders from the Colesville group went to the Prophet for guidance. Joseph inquired of the Lord on June 10, 1831, and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 54.

Doctrine and Covenants 54

The Lord instructs the Colesville Saints to leave Ohio and relocate to Missouri

Read Doctrine and Covenants 54, looking for truths about the importance of covenants.

Doctrine and Covenants 54:3–6. A broken covenant is "void and of none effect"

Leman Copley's decision to evict the members of the Colesville Branch from his land was also a decision to break the sacred covenant that he had made to consecrate his property to the Lord. The Saints from New York had also made a covenant to consecrate all that they had (see D&C 51). Unfortunately, Leman's refusal to keep his covenant made it impossible for the Colesville Saints to fulfill their covenant; therefore, the Lord declared that the covenant had "become void and of none effect" (D&C 54:4). The Lord also alluded to severe consequences for those who broke their covenants and promised mercy to those who kept their covenants (see D&C 54:5–6).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about the importance of making and keeping covenants:

"Only covenant makers and covenant keepers can claim the ultimate blessings of the celestial kingdom. Yes, when we talk about covenant keeping, we are talking about the heart and soul of our purpose in mortality.

"A covenant is a binding spiritual contract, a solemn promise to God our Father that we will live and think and act in a certain way—the way of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In return, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost promise us the full splendor of eternal life. …

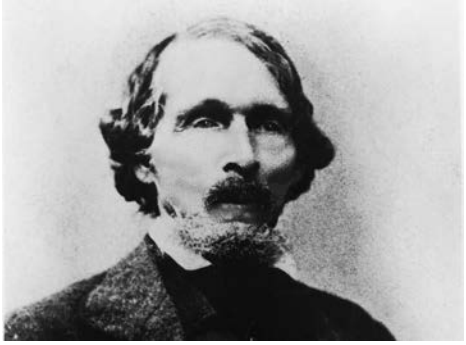
"… If we really want to succeed in our callings, if we want to have access to every help and every advantage and every blessing from the Father, if we want to have the door of heaven thrown open to us that we might receive the powers of godliness, we must keep our covenants!" ("Keeping Covenants: A Message for Those Who Will Serve a Mission," *New Era,* Jan. 2012, 2–4).

Ponder the covenants you have made with the Lord and the blessings you have received for faithfully keeping your covenants with Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 54:7–10. "Go … now and flee the land"

Having left their homes in New York just a month earlier, the members of the Colesville Branch were again without a place to live. In answer to this concern, the Lord provided another commandment for them to move—this time to Missouri, almost 900 miles (1,448 kilometers) away. Although this commandment was difficult for this group of more than 60 faithful Church members, the Lord asked the Saints to "be patient in tribulation until I come" and declared, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me" (D&C 54:10). In obedience to the Lord's commandment, the Colesville Saints, led by Newel Knight, left Ohio and arrived in Independence, Missouri, at the end of July 1831. They were among the first Latter-day Saints who gathered to the land of Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 55: Additional Historical Background



William W. Phelps was a writer, newspaper editor, and publisher when he was baptized a member of the Church in June 1831.

As the Prophet Joseph Smith prepared to go to Missouri in June 1831, William W. Phelps arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, from Canandaigua, New York. William had worked as a newspaper editor, writer, and printer. In April 1830, William purchased a copy of the Book of Mormon from Parley P. Pratt. After reading and comparing the Book of Mormon with the Bible, he decided to join the restored Church. He later wrote, "Notwithstanding my body was not baptized into this church till … June, 1831, yet my heart was there from the time I became acquainted with the book of Mormon" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 337). After William arrived in Kirtland with his wife and children, the Prophet sought the Lord's will concerning William Phelps and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 55. Soon after the Prophet received this revelation on June 14, 1831, William W. Phelps was baptized and ordained an elder. Shortly thereafter he journeyed to Missouri with the Prophet to settle there and begin the work he was called to do.

Doctrine and Covenants 55

The Lord instructs William W. Phelps regarding his calling in the Church

Read Doctrine and Covenants 55, looking for the Lord's instructions to William W. Phelps, who was not a member of the Church at that time.

Doctrine and Covenants 55:4. "The work of printing, and of selecting and writing books"

William W. Phelps is an example of how the Lord prepares individuals to build up His kingdom if they are willing to follow Him. The Lord called upon William to use his talents and experience as a writer, editor, and publisher to assist Oliver Cowdery in doing "the work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools in this church" (D&C 55:4). William was involved in many efforts to write for the Church and publish and print its written works. In Missouri, he printed the Book of Commandments and the first Church newspaper, *The Evening and the Morning Star.* He later helped prepare and print the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants and the first hymnbook of the Church. He also wrote the lyrics to many Latter-day Saint hymns, including "The Spirit of God," "Praise to the Man," and "Redeemer of Israel."

How can you use your talents and gifts to serve the Lord and build His kingdom?

Doctrine and Covenants 56: Additional Historical Background

Ezra Thayre was an early convert to the restored gospel. After moving from New York to Kirtland, Ohio, Thayre was instructed to live and work with Joseph Smith Sr. on the farm of Frederick G. Williams, who was serving a mission in Missouri. On June 6, 1831, the Lord called Thomas B. Marsh and Ezra Thayre to travel to Missouri and preach the gospel along the way (see D&C 52:22). Nine days later, Thomas was ready to depart with other elders traveling to Missouri. Ezra, however, was not ready, leaving Thomas without a companion. Thomas approached the Prophet Joseph Smith, desiring to know what to do. The Prophet inquired of the Lord on June 15, 1831, and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 56. It is not clear what prevented Ezra Thayre from fulfilling his mission. However, in the revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord commanded Ezra to "repent of his pride, and of his selfishness and obey the former commandment" given in a revelation concerning his duties on Frederick G. Williams's farm (D&C 56:8). The revelation also declared that "there shall be no divisions made upon [Williams's] land" (D&C 56:9). Ezra Thayre may have paid to satisfy part of the debt owed on the land and requested a legal title to a portion of the farm. Ezra's possible preoccupation with securing his financial interests may explain his lack of readiness to depart with Thomas B. Marsh on their mission to Missouri. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* 309–14, 339–40.)

Doctrine and Covenants 56

The Lord revokes Ezra Thayre's mission call and warns the Saints about greed and pride

Read Doctrine and Covenants 56:1–13, looking for reasons why Ezra Thayre lost important blessings.

Doctrine and Covenants 56:4–7. "I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good"

God can declare and revoke commandments, but He honors our agency and allows us to choose to obey or disobey His commandments. When we disobey the Lord's commandments, He holds us accountable. Consider how the following examples illustrate the declaration that "I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good" (D&C 56:4): Because Ezra Thayre allowed worldly concerns to prevent him from fulfilling his mission, the Lord revoked his calling and called a different companion for Thomas B. Marsh (see D&C 56:5, 8). The Lord commanded the Colesville Saints to reside in Thompson, Ohio, but because Leman Copley broke his agreement to allow the Saints to stay on his farm, the Lord commanded them to journey to Missouri (see D&C 54:7–8). Newel Knight was called on a mission (see D&C 52:32), but the Lord revoked that call and told him to continue leading the Colesville Saints and help them relocate to Missouri (see D&C 54, section heading; D&C 54:2, 7–8). After the Lord revoked the commandment for Newel to preach the gospel with Selah Griffin, He commanded Selah to accompany Thomas B. Marsh to Missouri instead (see D&C 56:5–6).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 56:14–20, looking for warnings the Lord gave to the selfish rich and the greedy poor.

Doctrine and Covenants 56:14–18. "You have many things to do and to repent of"

The Lord pointed out sins the Saints needed to repent of that had prevented them from living the law of consecration. Rather than seeking to do the Lord's will and build His Church and kingdom in His way, they were seeking their own will.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "Purity of heart is a figure for purity of soul. They are the ones who received a remission of sins in the waters of baptism; who, after baptism, have so lived as to retain a remission of sins; who have had their sins burned out of their souls as though by fire by the power of the Holy Ghost. They are God-fearing and righteous souls; and being pure, they qualify to see and associate with other pure beings, the chief of whom is the Lord of Purity" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 492).

What can you do to receive the blessings promised in Doctrine and Covenants 56:18–20?

CHAPTER 21

Doctrine and Covenants 57–58

Introduction and Timeline

In obedience to the Lord's command to convene a Church conference in Missouri (see D&C 52:2–5), the Prophet Joseph Smith and several others traveled approximately 900 miles from Ohio to Missouri. On July 20, 1831, a few days after arriving in Jackson County, Missouri, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 57. In this revelation the Lord declared that Independence, Missouri, was to be the center place of the city of Zion and its temple, and He instructed several individuals regarding their roles in building Zion.

On August 1, 1831, less than two weeks after Joseph received the revelation designating Independence as the center place of Zion, some Church members approached the Prophet desiring to know the Lord's will concerning their participation in the building of Zion. In response, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 58. In this revelation the Lord instructed the Saints regarding principles on which the city Zion was to be established, including obedience to the commandments, faithfulness in tribulation, the use of agency to bring about righteousness, and repentance and forgiveness.

July 14, 1831

Joseph Smith and his traveling companions arrived in Jackson County, Missouri.

July 20, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 57 was received.

Late July, 1831

The Colesville Saints and several elders arrived in Jackson County.

August 1, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 58 was received.

August 2–3, 1831

Land in Jackson County, Missouri, was dedicated for the establishment of Zion, and a site for the temple was dedicated in Independence, Missouri.

What gives you hope? As the Lord instructed the Saints about establishing Zion, He taught them doctrines and principles that would bring them hope. Look for these truths as you study Doctrine and Covenants 57–58.

Doctrine and Covenants 57: Additional Historical Background

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught that "the building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2011], 186). Many of the early Saints also eagerly anticipated the establishment of Zion. As part of the Restoration, the Lord provided the Saints with incremental revelation about the building up of the city of Zion upon the earth in the last days. For example, from the Book of Mormon the Saints learned that the city of Zion, or the New Jerusalem, would be located on the American Continent (see 3 Nephi 20:22; 21:23–24; Ether 13:2–10).

In a revelation given in September 1830, the Lord explained that He would not reveal the exact location of the city of Zion at that time but that it would be located "on the borders by the Lamanites" (D&C 28:9). In December 1830, as the Prophet

Joseph Smith worked on his inspired translation of the Bible, he learned that during the troubled times of the last days, the Lord would preserve His people and gather them in the "Holy City" of Zion (see Moses 7:60–62). On February 9, 1831, the Lord explained that He would reveal "where the New Jerusalem shall be built" in His "own due time" (D&C 42:62). Just one month later, the Prophet received a revelation indicating that Zion would be "a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety" in a wicked world (D&C 45:66–67). The Saints' anticipation about Zion grew when in June 1831 the Lord commanded that the next Church conference "be held in Missouri, upon the land which I will consecrate unto my people" (D&C 52:2). In this same revelation the Lord promised to reveal "the land of [their] inheritance" if Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon remained faithful (D&C 52:5).

In obedience to the Lord's command to convene a Church conference in Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith and a few traveling companions left Kirtland, Ohio, to go there on June 19, 1831. In addition, the Lord called a number of priesthood holders to travel in pairs to Missouri and to preach the gospel as they traveled (see D&C 52:7–10, 22–33; 56:5–7). After traveling approximately 900 miles, the Prophet and his companions arrived first in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, on July 14, 1831. There they were met by Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., and Ziba Peterson, who had been called in the fall of 1830 as missionaries to preach the gospel to the Lamanites (see D&C 28:8; 30:5–8; 32:2–3). These missionaries were accompanied by a recent convert to the Church, Frederick G. Williams, who asked Oliver Cowdery if he could join them in their travels.

According to Joseph Smith's history, when the Prophet arrived in Independence, he spent time contemplating the establishment of Zion and the situation of the American Indians living across the border of Missouri. His contemplation led him to wonder: "When will the wilderness blossom as the rose; when will Zion be built up in her glory, and where will thy Temple stand unto which all nations shall come in the last days?" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 127, josephsmithpapers.org). Subsequently, on July 20, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 57.



Doctrine and Covenants 57

The Lord reveals the location of Zion and instructs individuals regarding their roles in building it up

Read Doctrine and Covenants 57:1–3, looking for how the Lord responded to the Prophet Joseph Smith's questions concerning the establishment of Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 57:1–3. The Lord declares the location of the city of Zion

In response to the Prophet Joseph Smith's inquiry, the Lord revealed that Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, was "the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion" (D&C 57:2). The site for the city of Zion was located just below a bend in the Missouri River and about 10 miles east of the Missouri-Indian territory line (currently the Missouri-Kansas border). The land that makes up Missouri and several surrounding states had become part of the United States after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. After the purchase, new settlers, mostly from other southern states, moved into Missouri to settle the land. Missouri became a state in 1821, and in 1826 the state legislature created Jackson County. The newly settled town of Independence, which was located along a trade road called the Santa Fe Trail, became the county seat. At the time of this revelation, Jackson County had only a few hundred residents and a few public buildings, including the county courthouse.

Doctrine and Covenants 57:3. "Independence is the center place"

When the Lord designated Jackson County, Missouri, as the place where the city of Zion would be built, He indicated that the city of Independence would be "the center place" (D&C 57:3). Being the center place refers, in part, to the role that Zion, or the New Jerusalem, will have as one of the two capitals (the other being Jerusalem) of the Lord's kingdom during the Millennium (see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 3:71). From this location the Lord Himself will oversee the activity and processes of His kingdom.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized the importance of Zion as the "center place" when he taught the following: "Let Israel gather to the stakes of Zion in all nations. Let every land be a Zion to those appointed to dwell there. Let the fulness of the gospel be for all the saints in all nations. Let no blessing be denied them. Let temples arise wherein the fulness of the ordinances of the Lord's house may be administered. But still there is a center place, a place where the chief temple shall stand, a place to which the Lord shall come, a place whence the law shall go forth to govern all the earth. … And that center place is what men now call Independence in Jackson County, Missouri, but which in a day to come will be the Zion of our God and the City of Holiness of his people. The site is selected; the place is known; the decree has gone forth; and the promised destiny is assured" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 595).

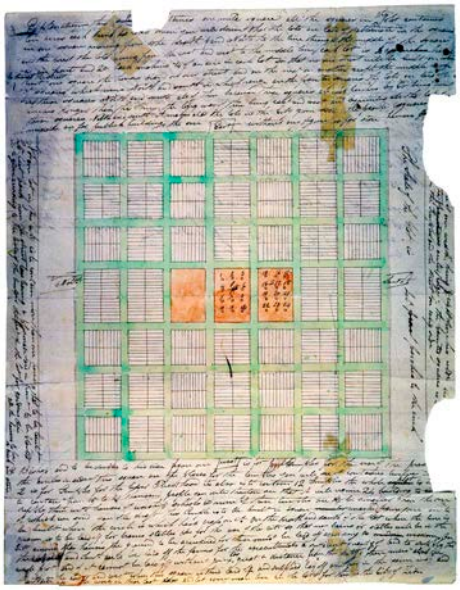


The historic Jackson County Courthouse in Independence, Missiouri, was built on the location of an earlier two-story brick courthouse, one-half mile east of the temple site and mentioned by the Lord in revelation (see D&C 57:3).

Doctrine and Covenants 57:3. "A spot for the temple"

In addition to revealing the place for the city of Zion, the Lord also declared that the spot for the temple was "lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse" (D&C 57:3). This temple will be built in the last days before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** explained the significance of the temple that will be built in Independence, Missouri: "As to the temple unto which all nations shall come in the last days, it shall be built in the New Jerusalem before the Second Coming, all as a part of the preparatory processes that will make ready a people for their Lord's return" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith,* 595).

About two years after he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 57, the Prophet Joseph Smith received additional revelation concerning the spot where the temple would be constructed. In 1833, the Prophet had a plat map drawn for the city of Zion that depicted a temple complex of 24 buildings to be constructed next to each other in Independence (see *History of the Church,* 1:357–59). The gathering to and the building up of the city of Zion, or New Jerusalem, as declared by the Lord, will begin at "the place of the temple" (D&C 84:4).



The plat map for the City of Zion was prepared under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith and sent to the Saints in Missouri in June 1833, along with architectural plans for the first temple in Zion.

Why do you think it would be important for a temple to be located in the center place of Zion? Why is it important to have the temple at the center of our lives?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 57:4–16, looking for what the Lord instructed the elders to do in order to establish Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 57:4–5. "It is wisdom that the land should be purchased by the saints"

In an earlier revelation, the Lord commanded the Saints to "save all the money that [they could] in righteousness" so they could be prepared to purchase land in Zion when the Lord revealed the location to them (D&C 48:4–5). After revealing the location of Zion, the Lord told the elders to buy every tract of land "lying westward, even unto the line running directly between Jew and Gentile" (D&C 57:4). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained that the line running directly between Jew and Gentile "has reference to the line separating the Lamanites [or American Indians] from the settlers in Jackson County. At this time the United States Government had given to the Indians the lands west of the Missouri, only later to take them away again. The Lamanites, who are Israelites, were referred to as Jews, and the Gentiles were the people, many of whom were of the lawless element, living east of the river" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:206).

During this period of time in the western United States, many settlers used the practice of "squatting" in order to acquire property. This meant that they would settle on unoccupied land or property with the intent to later register their claim at the county courthouse. By the summer of 1831 when this revelation was given, most of the land that the Lord commanded the Saints to buy had already been claimed by settlers, thus requiring the Saints to purchase the property from them. In obedience to the Lord's command to purchase property, in December 1831, Bishop Edward Partridge purchased 63 acres from Jones Hoy Flournoy (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times,* 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 129). This piece of property became known as the temple lot because it included the land the Lord designated for the temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 57:7–16. The Lord directs individuals to plant themselves in the land of Zion and instructs them regarding their roles in building Zion

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 57:7–16, the Lord directed several elders to "plant" themselves in Jackson County, Missouri. To be "planted" implies that the Lord intended for these men to remain in Jackson County and develop the area and make it their new home. This commandment may have come as a shock to some of these men who had no idea they would be asked to stay in Missouri when they left their homes in Ohio just one month earlier.



Modern day aerial view of Independence, Missouri, showing some of the land purchased by the Saints in 1831 for the eventual City of Zion and temple (see D&C 57:4–6).

The command to stay in Missouri was not easy. Those asked to stay had to worry about moving their families from Ohio and creating a new life on the American frontier. Bishop Edward Partridge wrote a letter to his wife, Lydia, in which he "broke the news that he wouldn't be returning to Ohio that summer and instead asked that she and their five daughters join him on the Missouri frontier. Additionally, instead of being able to return to Ohio to help them move that fall, he wrote, 'Brother Gilbert or I must be here to attend the sales in Dec. [and] not knowing that he can get back by that time I have thought it advisable to stay here for the present contrary to [my] expectations.' He also warned that once she joined him in Missouri, 'We have to suffer [and] shall for some time many privations here which you [and] I have not been much used to for year[s]' [Letter, Aug. 5, 1831, in Edward Partridge letters, 1831–1835, Church History Library]. … Lydia willingly obeyed the revelation to move, packing her home and gathering her five daughters to travel west to a place she had never seen

before" (Sherilyn Farnes, "A Bishop unto the Church," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 79–80, history.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 58: Additional Historical Background

In the later part of July 1831, some of the elders who had been preaching the gospel while traveling to Missouri, along with the members of the Colesville Branch, began arriving in western Missouri. Some of the new arrivals had expected to find a thriving community of new converts, but they were disappointed by what they found. Oliver Cowdery, Ziba Peterson, Peter Whitmer Jr., and Frederick G. Williams had arrived at the edge of the Missouri frontier in January 1831 and began to have success among the American Indians, but because they had not obtained the proper permits to be in Indian Territory and because of opposition from local Indian agents and ministers, the missionaries were forced to leave. After being expelled from Indian Territory in February 1831, the missionaries preached to the white settlers in Jackson County. Though the missionaries had been working hard, fewer than 10 converts had joined the Church by the time the Prophet Joseph Smith and the elders began arriving in Missouri in July 1831. Rather than finding an organized settlement large enough to accommodate the migrating Saints, the new arrivals found a small frontier community where the land was largely undeveloped (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 12).

During this same time, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Bishop Edward Partridge had a disagreement regarding the land that was to be purchased for the Saints. Bishop Partridge felt that other parcels of land should be purchased instead of the ones designated by the Prophet (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 12–13). In these circumstances, and faced with the prospect of building Zion, the Prophet received the revelation contained in Doctrine and Covenants 58.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:1–13

The Lord counsels the elders to be faithful in tribulation

Read Doctrine and Covenants 58:1–13, looking for truths the Lord taught the elders to help them with the challenges they faced in establishing Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:1–13. The foreknowledge of God

While some of the elders expressed disappointment in what they found in Missouri, many of the recently arrived Colesville Saints and several other elders were eager and anxious to learn what they could do to help establish Zion. Before giving the newly arrived Saints the specific instructions they were seeking, the Lord prophesied the destiny of Zion and the Saints. As part of this prophecy, the Lord told the Saints that they would experience tribulation but promised that if they were "faithful in tribulation" their reward would be "greater in the kingdom of heaven" (D&C 58:2). The Lord also told the Saints that they were "honored in

laying the foundation" of Zion (D&C 58:7), implying that the completion of Zion would not occur in their day but sometime in the future.



Photo of the area in Independence, Missouri, that the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated in August 1831 for the building of a latter-day temple, commonly referred to today as the temple lot

Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the Lord's foreknowledge concerning the establishment of Zion:

"At all events, what occurred must have been foreseen. Divine prescience [foreknowledge] extends to all things connected with the Lord's work. When He commanded his people to build the New Jerusalem, he knew how much, or how little, they were capable of accomplishing in that direction—knew it just as well before as he did after. Such a thing as surprise or disappointment on his part is inconceivable. An all-wise, all-powerful Being who has created, peopled, redeemed and glorified 'millions of earths like this' [Moses 7:30], is not one to be astounded by anything that happens on our little planet.

"… The All-knowing One knew in advance what those Zion-builders would do, or leave undone, and he shaped his plans accordingly. Evidently the time was not ripe for Zion's redemption. The Saints were not ready to build the New Jerusalem" (*Saturday Night Thoughts: A Series of Dissertations on Spiritual, Historical, and Philosophic Themes* [1921], 187).

Why do you think the Lord would command the Saints to build Zion when He knew that they would not be able to do so at that time?

Doctrine and Covenants 58:3. "Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God"

Some of the early Saints had preconceived notions about the establishment of Zion in their day. Many of them believed that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ was imminent. Consequently, some may have believed that the building of Zion and of the temple there would happen quickly and without much difficulty. However, the Lord cautioned the Saints, "Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter" (D&C 58:3). The Lord went on to enlighten the Saints that they would face tribulation, but He promised that ultimately, if they stayed faithful, they would be "crowned with much glory" (see D&C 58:3–6). Similarly, we can sometimes have preconceived notions that may not match God's plan. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared a statement by the author C. S. Lewis, who explained that we do not always understand what God has in store for us:

"C. S. Lewis, in his book *Mere Christianity,* describes our relationship with God in a special way that can help us to appreciate how submitting ourselves to his will is the only way that spiritual growth can occur:

"'Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. …' (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952, p. 160.)" ("The Value of Home Life," *Ensign,* Feb. 1972, 5).

Along with wanting the Saints to build the city of Zion, the Lord had additional reasons for commanding them to settle in western Missouri. He revealed that His purposes included preparing the hearts of His people, teaching them obedience, and preparing them to bear testimony of His work (see Doctrine and Covenants 58:5–13).

How might knowing that we cannot know all the designs of God help you remain faithful even when you are going through difficult times?

Doctrine and Covenants 58:8–11. "A feast of fat things, of wine on the lees"

The Lord told the Saints that one of the reasons that He wanted them to lay the foundation of Zion was to help prepare "a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined" (D&C 58:8). This parallels Isaiah's prophecy that the Lord would "make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees" (Isaiah 25:6). These two symbols of the feast—"fat things" and "wine on the lees"—are signs of richness, indicating that this feast is of great importance. The Lord also told

the early Saints that "all nations shall be invited" to this feast, "the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble; … the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf" (D&C 58:9–11; see also Matthew 22:1–10). This prophecy teaches that all nations will be invited to partake of the rich blessings of the gospel in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:14–33

The Lord outlines the duties of a bishop, commands the Saints to keep the laws of the land, and counsels them to use their agency to do good

Read Doctrine and Covenants 58:14–23, looking for what the Lord said about Bishop Edward Partridge and the counsel the Lord gave to those who were asked to remain in Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:14–16. "Let him take heed lest he fall"

In response to the disagreement between Bishop Edward Partridge and the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning the quality of the land to be purchased in Zion, the Lord rebuked Bishop Partridge and warned him that his "unbelief and blindness of heart" could lead to his fall if he did not repent (D&C 58:15). Bishop Partridge accepted the Lord's warning and rebuke with humility. In a letter to his wife, Lydia, a few days after this revelation was received, Bishop Partridge illustrated his humility: "You know I stand in an important station, … [and] as I am occasionally chastened I sometimes feel as though I must fall, not to give up the cause, but I fear my station is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my heavenly father. … Pray for me that I may not fall" (quoted in Farnes, "A Bishop unto the Church," 81, history.lds.org).

In a revelation given on September 11, 1831, the Lord indicated that Edward Partridge had sinned, but He said that if he repented he would be forgiven (see D&C 64:17). Bishop Partridge was later penitent and ultimately forgiven. According to the minutes of a meeting held in March 1832, Bishop Partridge acknowledged that "he [was] & [had] always been sorry" for the disagreement between him and the Prophet Joseph Smith (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 62).

Doctrine and Covenants 58:16–20. "Appointed to be a judge in Israel"

The Lord called Bishop Edward Partridge to direct the efforts to establish and build up the city of Zion. He also instructed Bishop Partridge and Sidney Gilbert to stay in Missouri to manage the properties of the Church and to purchase land in and around Independence, Missouri. Bishop Partridge's chief responsibility was to administer the law of consecration by receiving the consecrations of the Saints and giving them their stewardships (see D&C 41:9–11; 42:30–35, 71–73; 51; 57:7, 15). He was also responsible for judging God's people according to God's law (see D&C 58:17–18). **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) explained some of the ways bishops judge the people: "It is a fearsome and awesome responsibility to stand as a judge of the people. You must be their judge in some instances as to worthiness to hold membership in the Church, worthiness to enter the house of the Lord, worthiness to be baptized, worthiness to receive the priesthood,

worthiness to serve missions, worthiness to teach and to serve as officers in the organizations. You must be the judge of their eligibility in times of distress to receive help from the fast offerings of the people and commodities from the storehouse of the Lord" ("The Shepherds of Israel," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2003, 61).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 58:24–33, looking for doctrines and principles that would have helped those who were charged to establish Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:24–25. "They shall counsel between themselves and me"

The Lord told Bishop Edward Partridge and his counselors to make the land of Missouri their place of residence. These men were also told to bring their families to Missouri, "as they shall counsel between themselves and me" (D&C 58:25). The instruction to counsel together and with the Lord is a pattern that we as Latter-day Saints should follow as we seek inspiration and guidance from the Lord. **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that "great spiritual power and inspired direction" can come from properly counseling together. He also promised that "there is no problem in the family, ward, or stake that cannot be solved if we look for solutions in the Lord's way by counseling—really counseling—with one another" (*Counseling with Our Councils* [1997], 2, 4).

How can the Lord's instructions on counseling with Him and others help you in your life now?

Doctrine and Covenants 58:26–29. The Lord counsels the Saints to use their agency to do good

As the early Saints sought the Lord's instructions to accomplish the divine mandate to establish and build up Zion, the Lord told them, "It is not meet that I should command in all things" (D&C 58:26). He also instructed them to use their agency to "do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27). The Lord had commanded these early Saints to establish Zion and had provided them with guiding principles, but He left the specifics of how to do it up to them. **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) explained:

"Usually the Lord gives us the overall objectives to be accomplished and some guidelines to follow, but he expects us to work out most of the details and methods. The methods and procedures are usually developed through study and prayer and by living so that we can obtain and follow the promptings of the Spirit. Less spiritually advanced people, such as those in the days of Moses, had to be commanded in many things. Today those spiritually alert look at the objectives, check the guidelines laid down by the Lord and his prophets, and then prayerfully act—without having to be commanded 'in all things.' This attitude prepares men for godhood. …

"Sometimes the Lord hopefully waits on his children to act on their own, and when they do not, they lose the greater prize, and the Lord will either drop the entire matter and let them suffer the consequences or else he will have to spell it out in greater detail. Usually, I fear, the more he has to spell it out, the smaller is our reward" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1965, 121–22).

Why do you think the Lord does not tell us everything that we should do?

Doctrine and Covenants 58:30–33. "I command and men obey not"

The Lord told the Saints that if they did not obey His command, He would revoke it and take away the blessing they would have received if they had been obedient (see D&C 58:32). This truth served as a warning to the early Saints who were commanded to establish Zion. If they did not obey His commandments, the Lord would revoke the command to establish Zion and the Saints would lose the blessings they might have received.

The Lord also prophesied that if He revoked the command to establish Zion and withheld blessings because of the Saints' disobedience, some would claim that it was "not the work of the Lord" (D&C 58:33). The Lord warned those who would make this claim that their reward would come from "beneath, and not from above" (D&C 58:33).

Doctrine and Covenants 58:34–65

The Lord gives additional instructions regarding Zion, teaches principles of repentance and forgiveness, and commissions the elders to take the gospel into all the world

Read Doctrine and Covenants 58:34–43, looking for what the Lord taught about repentance and forgiveness.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:38–42. "The same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more"

The Lord declared that those who repent will be forgiven and He will "remember [their sins] no more" (D&C 58:42). **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2014) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ this promise is true no matter what sins we have committed:

"No matter what our transgressions have been, no matter how much our actions may have hurt others, that guilt can all be wiped out. To me, perhaps the most beautiful phrase in all scripture is when the Lord said, 'Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more' [D&C 58:42].

"That is the promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Atonement" ("The Atonement," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2012, 77).

Some mistakenly believe that if they can remember their sins, they have not been forgiven. **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency explained why we might remember our sins even after we have been forgiven: "Satan will try to make us believe that our sins are not forgiven because *we* can remember them. Satan is a liar; he tries to blur our vision and lead us away from the path of repentance and forgiveness. God did not promise that *we* would not remember our sins. Remembering will help us avoid making the same mistakes again. But if we stay true and faithful, the memory of our sins will be softened over time. This will be part of the needed healing and sanctification process" ("Point of Safe Return," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 101).

What difference could it make in someone's life if he or she believed the principle taught in Doctrine and Covenants 58:42? What difference would it make in your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 58:43. "Behold, he will confess them and forsake them"

After teaching the Saints that they can be forgiven of their sins, the Lord revealed the requirements for repentance: confessing and forsaking sin. **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described what it means to confess sin: "Confessing and forsaking are powerful concepts. They are much more than a casual, 'I admit it; I'm sorry.' Confession is a deep, sometimes agonizing acknowledgement of error and offense to God and man" ("The Divine Gift of Repentance," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 40).

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what it means to forsake our sins: "The forsaking of sins implies never returning. Forsaking requires time. To help us, the Lord at times allows the residue of our mistakes to rest in our memory. It is a vital part of our mortal learning" ("Repent … That I May Heal You," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov 2009, 42).

Ponder what you might need to do to confess and forsake your sins. Make it a goal to repent of your sins promptly and often. If you have committed serious sins, seek out your bishop or branch president so that he can help you along the road of repentance to complete forgiveness.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 58:44–65, looking for the instructions the Lord gave the elders who were not to remain in Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:50–52. The Lord commands Sidney Rigdon to write a description of the land of Zion

The Lord commanded Sidney Rigdon to "write a description of the land of Zion … as it [was] made known by the Spirit unto him" (D&C 58:50). This description, along with a letter and a subscription, was to be presented to members of the Church to raise money to purchase lands in Missouri (see D&C 58:51). Because

photographs were unavailable at the time, Sidney's description could help members visualize the land and encourage them to donate money.



The Prophet Joseph Smith and 11 other men carried an oak log to begin the foundation for the first Church building and school in Zion, which is commemorated by this monument in Kansas City, Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:57. "Let my servant Sidney Rigdon consecrate and dedicate this land"

The Lord commanded Sidney Rigdon to dedicate the land of Zion and the spot for the temple (see D&C 58:57). The Prophet Joseph Smith's history describes the events of the dedication that took place after this revelation was received: "On the [second] day of August, I assisted the Colesville branch of the Church to lay the first log for a house as a foundation of Zion, in Kaw township, twelve miles west of Independence. The log was carried and placed by twelve men in honor of the twelve tribes of Israel. At the same time, through prayer, the land of Zion was consecrated and dedicated by Elder [Sidney] Rigdon; and it was a season of joy to those present, and afforded a glimpse of the future, which time will yet unfold to the satisfaction of the faithful" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 137, josephsmithpapers.org). The next day, August 3, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the spot for the temple (see Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1," page 139).

Doctrine and Covenants 58:46–47, 59, 63–64. The gospel must be preached to everyone

The Lord instructed the elders who had not been commanded to stay in Zion to "preach the gospel in the regions round about; and after that … return to their

homes" (D&C 58:46). The Lord charged these early missionaries, just as He had done with His ancient Apostles before His Ascension into heaven (see Matthew 28:19–20), to take the gospel "into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—the gospel must be preached unto every creature" (D&C 58:64).

Regarding this charge, **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Devoted disciples of Jesus Christ always have been and always will be valiant missionaries. A missionary is a follower of Christ who testifies of Him as the Redeemer and proclaims the truths of His gospel.

"The Church of Jesus Christ always has been and always will be a missionary church. The individual members of the Savior's Church have accepted the solemn obligation to assist in fulfilling the divine commission given by the Lord to His Apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. …

"Latter-day Saints take seriously this responsibility to teach all people in all nations about the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. We believe the same Church founded by the Savior anciently has been reestablished on the earth by Him in the latter days. The doctrine, principles, priesthood authority, ordinances, and covenants of His gospel are found today in His Church. …

"Indeed, we feel a solemn responsibility to carry this message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" ("Come and See," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 107).

Ponder the doctrine and principles you have learned in Doctrine and Covenants 57–58 that you think would have brought hope to the early Latter-day Saints. Consider teaching a family member or friend one of the truths that you discovered.

CHAPTER 22

Doctrine and Covenants 59–62

Introduction and Timeline

On Sunday, August 7, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 59 while in Jackson County, Missouri. In this revelation the Lord set forth His expectations for the Saints who had recently arrived in Zion, including proper Sabbath day observance. The Lord also confirmed that those who keep His commandments will receive temporal and spiritual blessings.

The following day Joseph Smith and several elders prepared to leave Independence, Missouri, and return to Ohio. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 60, the Lord instructed the elders to preach the gospel as they traveled. On the third day of their journey, the company experienced danger on the Missouri River. During the next two days, August 12 and 13, the Prophet received two revelations, which are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 61 and 62. They include words of instruction, warning, comfort, and encouragement.

August 2–3, 1831

Land in Jackson County, Missouri, was dedicated for the establishment of Zion, and a site for the temple was dedicated in Independence, Missouri.

August 4, 1831

A Church conference was held in Jackson County, Missouri.

August 7, 1831

After falling ill while traveling from Ohio to Missouri with the Colesville Saints, Polly Knight, the wife of Joseph Knight Sr., died in Jackson County, Missouri.

August 7, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 59 was received.

August 8, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 60 was received.

August 9, 1831

Joseph Smith and ten elders left Missouri for Kirtland, Ohio, traveling by way of the Missouri River.

August 12–13, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 61 and 62 were received.

August 27, 1831

Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio.

What evidence do you see of a widening gap between the Lord's standards and the world's standards? What can be challenging about living in the world while striving to live the standards of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 59, look for principles that can help you remain "unspotted" from the sins and temptations of the world.

Doctrine and Covenants 59: Additional Historical Background

On Sunday, August 7, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith attended the funeral service for Polly Knight, the wife of Joseph Knight Sr. and the first Church member to die in Zion. Polly was a member of the Colesville Branch and had left Ohio determined to see the land of Zion. Despite her failing health, "she would not consent to stop traveling," her son Newel recalled. "Her only, or her greatest desire, was to set her feet upon the land of Zion, and to have her body interred in that land. … The Lord gave her the desire of her heart, and she lived to stand upon that land" ("Newel Knight's Journal," in *Scraps of Biography: Tenth Book of the Faith Promoting Series* [1883], 70; see also *History of the Church,* 1:199, footnote). On the same day as Polly

Knight's funeral, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 59, which promises eternal blessings for the faithful Saints in Zion.

During the summer of 1831, as Church members settled in Jackson County, Missouri, they encountered a frontier community whose conduct sharply contrasted with the laws and standards of the gospel. Gambling, drinking, and violence were prevalent among the residents, some of whom had come to the Missouri frontier to avoid the justice of the law. These residents also had a blatant disregard for the Sabbath day that was noticed not only by the Saints but by other travelers who came to Missouri. One Protestant missionary observed: "Christian Sabbath observance here appears to be unknown. It is a day for merchandising, jollity, drinking, gambling, and general anti-Christian conduct" (in T. Edgar Lyon, "Independence, Missouri, and the Mormons, 1827–1833," *BYU Studies,* vol. 13, no. 1 [1972], 16). A traveler passing through western Missouri in 1833 observed that "the only indications of its being Sunday [were] the unusual Gambling & noise & assemblies around taverns" (Edward Ellsworth, in John Treat Irving Jr., *Indian Sketches: Taken during an Expedition to the Pawnee Tribes (1833),* ed. John Francis McDermott, new ed. [1955], xxii). In this environment the Lord outlined standards of conduct for those Saints gathering to Zion.



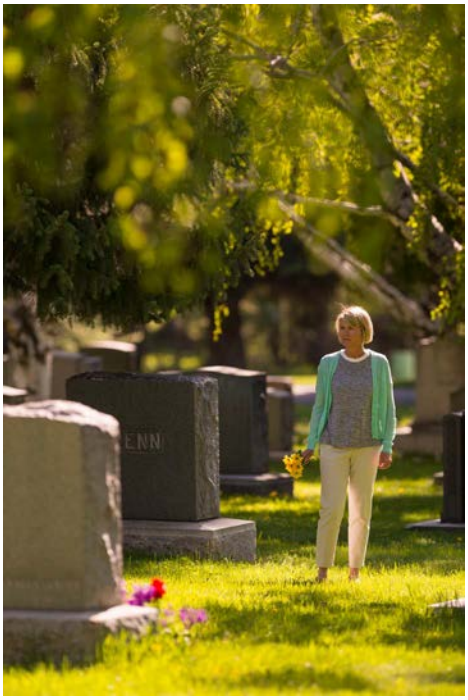
Doctrine and Covenants 59

The Lord teaches the Saints about the Sabbath day and promises earthly and eternal blessings to the faithful

Read Doctrine and Covenants 59:1–8, looking for the Lord's commandments to the Saints in Zion and the blessings He promised if they obeyed.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:1–4. "Crowned … with commandments not a few"

The Lord promised eternal blessings to the Saints who obeyed His gospel and came to the land of Zion with an eye single to His glory. He also promised to crown, or reward, His faithful Saints "with commandments not a few and with revelations in their time" (D&C 59:4). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that the Lord's commandments are blessings:



The faithful who die "shall rest from all their labors" and be crowned in heaven (D&C 59:2).

"Commandments are a blessing … because our Father in heaven has given them to us in order to help us grow and develop the qualities we must have if we are to obtain eternal life and dwell with him. By keeping his commandments, we qualify for his blessings. …

"We should rejoice in the commandments of God and recognize them as valuable gifts from a loving Father to his children" ("The Blessings of Commandments," [Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 10, 1974], 2, 4, speeches.byu.edu).

In what ways have God's commandments been a blessing in your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 59:5–8. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"

After explaining that the faithful will be crowned with blessings, commandments, and revelations, the Lord emphasized several commandments to the Saints, beginning with the commandment to love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) explained that the commandment to love God encompasses all areas of our lives:

"To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is all-consuming and all-encompassing. It is no lukewarm endeavor. It is total commitment of our very being—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—to a love of the Lord.

"The breadth, depth, and height of this love of God extend into every facet of one's life. Our desires, be they spiritual or temporal, should be rooted in a love of the Lord. Our thoughts and affections should be centered on the Lord. …

"We must put God in the forefront of everything else in our lives. He must come first, just as He declares in the first of His Ten Commandments: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' (Exodus 20:3).

"When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities" ("The Great Commandment—Love the Lord," *Ensign,* May 1988, 4).

When we love God with all our hearts, we naturally desire to obey His commandments, serve Him, and love our neighbor as ourselves (see D&C 59:6). If we truly love God and our neighbor, we will not desire to sin against others by stealing, committing adultery, killing, or doing "anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). If we love God we will recognize His hand in our lives and give thanks to Him "in all things" (D&C 59:7) and will gladly offer Him a broken, or repentant, heart and a contrite, obedient spirit (see D&C 59:8).

Doctrine and Covenants 59:8. "Thou shalt offer a sacrifice … of a broken heart and a contrite spirit"

Following His death and Resurrection, the Savior told the Nephites that they should no longer offer blood sacrifices to Him; they were now to offer sacrifices of a broken heart and a contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:19–20). The Lord reiterated this new sacrifice numerous times in modern revelation, including revelation to the Saints who sought to establish Zion (see D&C 59:8; see also D&C 20:37; 56:17–18; 97:8).

To have a broken heart and a contrite spirit means that we are humble and submissive to God's will. It means that we feel sorrow for sin and sincerely desire to repent and live in harmony with God's plan. **Elder Bruce D. Porter** (1952–2016) of the Seventy explained how the Savior's life exemplified what that means:

"What are a broken heart and a contrite spirit? And why are they considered a sacrifice?

"As in all things, the Savior's life offers us the perfect example: though Jesus of Nazareth was utterly without sin, He walked through life with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, as manifested by His submission to the will of the Father. 'For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me' (John 6:38). To His disciples He said, 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart' (Matthew 11:29). And when the time came to pay the ultimate sacrifice entailed in the Atonement, Christ shrank not to partake of the bitter cup but submitted completely to His Father's will.

"The Savior's perfect submission to the Eternal Father is the very essence of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Christ's example teaches us that a broken heart is an eternal attribute of godliness. When our hearts are broken, we are completely open to the Spirit of God and recognize our dependence on Him for all that we have and all that we are. The sacrifice so entailed is a sacrifice of pride in all its forms. Like malleable clay in the hands of a skilled potter, the brokenhearted can be molded and shaped in the hands of the Master" ("A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2007, 31–32).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested one way we can offer this sacrifice to the Lord:

"You can offer the Lord the gift of your broken, or repentant, heart and your contrite, or obedient, spirit. In reality, it is the gift of yourself—what you are and what you are becoming.

"Is there something in you or in your life that is impure or unworthy? When you get rid of it, that is a gift to the Savior. Is there a good habit or quality that is lacking in your life? When you adopt it and make it part of your character, you are giving a gift to the Lord" ("When Thou Art Converted," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 12).

Are there any areas of your life that are not in harmony with the will of the Lord? What can you do to submit your heart and will more fully to Him?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–15, looking for what the Lord commanded the Saints to do in order to keep themselves "unspotted from the world" (D&C 59:9).

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–15. "That thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world"

During His final hours in mortality, the Savior prayed that the Father would not take His disciples "out of the world" but "keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Nearly two thousand years later, His Saints in Missouri found themselves amidst lawless and profane individuals, and the Lord promised that they could remain unspotted from the sin and unrighteousness of the world if they would worship and honor Him "upon [His] holy day" (D&C 59:9).

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how honoring the Sabbath day helps keep us unspotted from the world: "Honoring the Sabbath is a form of righteousness that will bless and strengthen families, connect us with our Creator, and increase happiness. The Sabbath can help separate us from that which is frivolous, inappropriate, or immoral. It allows us to be in the world but not of the world" ("Shipshape and Bristol Fashion: Be Temple Worthy—in Good Times and Bad Times," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 41–42).

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9. "Offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day"

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that "a sacrament could be any one of a number of gestures or acts or ordinances that unite us with God and his limitless powers" ("Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments," in Jeffrey R. Holland and Patricia T. Holland, *On Earth As It Is in Heaven* [1989], 193). Acts that bring us close to God and fill us with His power include praying, singing hymns, giving and receiving priesthood blessings, sharing testimonies, studying the scriptures, giving service, and renewing covenants through the partaking of the sacrament.



By participating in the ordinance of the sacrament and worshipping on the Sabbath day, we gain strength against temptation and sin.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:10. Why does the Lord command us to rest from our labors?

The Lord has designated the Sabbath day as a day to rest from the rigors of our daily labors. It is a day for both spiritual and physical renewal. **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency highlighted some of the blessings of resting from our labors on the Sabbath day: "Over a lifetime of observation, it is clear to me that the farmer who observes the Sabbath day seems to get more done on his farm than he would if he worked seven days. The mechanic will be able to turn out more and better products in six days than in seven. The doctor, the lawyer, the dentist, the scientist will accomplish more by trying to rest on the Sabbath than if he tries to utilize every day of the week for his professional work. I would counsel all students, if they can, to arrange their schedules so that they do not study on the Sabbath. If students and other seekers after truth will do this, their minds will be quickened and the infinite Spirit will lead them to the verities they wish to learn. This is because God has hallowed his day and blessed it as a perpetual covenant of faithfulness. (See Ex. 31:16.)" ("The Lord's Day," *Ensign,* Nov. 1991, 34).

It is important to remember that the Lord's commandment to rest from temporal labors on the Sabbath is not an invitation for laziness. In Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–13, the Lord instructed the Saints on what they should do on the Sabbath day. **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) taught: "The Sabbath is a holy day in which to do worthy and holy things. Abstinence from work and recreation is important, but insufficient. The Sabbath calls for constructive thoughts and acts, and if one merely lounges about doing nothing on the Sabbath, he is breaking it" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 170).

Doctrine and Covenants 59:10. "Pay thy devotions unto the Most High"

To pay our devotions to the Most High God is to remember, worship, and serve the Lord with all our hearts. The devotions we render the Lord on His holy day reflect our affection and reverence for and faith in Him. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"How do we *hallow* the Sabbath day? In my much younger years, I studied the work of others who had compiled lists of things to do and things *not* to do on the Sabbath. It wasn't until later that I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a *sign* between me and my Heavenly Father. With that understanding, I no longer needed lists of dos and don'ts. When I had to make a decision whether or not an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, 'What *sign* do I want to give to God?' That question made my choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear. …

"How can you ensure that your behavior on the Sabbath will lead to joy and rejoicing? In addition to your going to church, partaking of the sacrament, and being diligent in your specific call to serve, what other activities would help to make the Sabbath a delight for you? What sign will you give to the Lord to show your love for Him?" ("The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2015, 130).

Doctrine and Covenants 59:12. "Confessing thy sins … before the Lord"

The Sabbath is a day to be reflective and introspective and to acknowledge our sins before the Lord. **Elder L. Tom Perry** (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"We acknowledge that all of us make mistakes. Each of us has a need to confess and forsake our sins and errors to our Heavenly Father and to others we may have offended. The Sabbath provides us with a precious opportunity to offer up these—our sacraments—to the Lord. …

"Elder Melvin J. Ballard has suggested, 'We want every Latter-day Saint to come to the sacrament table because it is the place for self-investigation, for self-inspection, where we may learn to rectify our course and to make right our own lives, bringing ourselves into harmony with the teachings of the Church and with our brethren and sisters' [in Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard* (1949), 150]" ("The Sabbath and the Sacrament," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 8).



The Lord is merciful to those who "confess their sins with humble hearts" (D&C 61:2).

Doctrine and Covenants 59:13–14. "That thy fasting may be perfect"

On the Sabbath day we are to dedicate our hearts completely to the Lord. The Lord commands that we should even prepare meals "with singleness of heart" (D&C 59:13), with our desires and thoughts focused on the things of God. As we devote ourselves wholly to the Lord, our fasting becomes perfect.

The Sabbath itself is a fast—a fast from temporal labors and worldly concerns. Just as we abstain from food and drink when fasting, we refrain from our own pleasures on the Sabbath day in order to worship and serve the Lord more fully. **President Russell M. Nelson** taught: "Not pursuing your 'own pleasure' [Isaiah 58:13] on the Sabbath requires self-discipline. You may have to deny yourself of something you might like. If you choose to delight yourself *in the Lord,* you will not permit yourself to treat it as any other day" ("The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2015, 132).

Consider what you can do to better show your devotion to the Lord by keeping His Sabbath day holy. Write a goal on a piece of paper, and place it somewhere you will see it often.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 59:16–24, looking for additional blessings the Lord promised the Saints if they kept the commandments, including honoring the Sabbath day.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:16–21. "Those who confess not his hand in all things"

The Lord promises the blessings of the earth to those who keep His Sabbath day holy, "and it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man" (D&C 59:20). However, we offend, or displease, God when we do not acknowledge His hand in all He has given us and express our gratitude to Him. **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency explained the importance of recognizing the hand of the Lord in all things:

"Have we not reason to be filled with gratitude, regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves? …

"How blessed we are if we recognize God's handiwork in the marvelous tapestry of life. Gratitude to our Father in Heaven broadens our perception and clears our vision. It inspires humility and fosters empathy toward our fellowmen and all of God's creation. Gratitude is a catalyst to all Christlike attributes! A thankful heart is the parent of all virtues" ("Grateful in Any Circumstances," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2014, 77).

In what ways has the Lord blessed you? Take time in your prayers to acknowledge His hand in all areas of your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:23. "Peace in this world"

The Lord promises "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" to those who bring forth works of righteousness (D&C 59:23). **Elder Quentin L. Cook** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the type of peace that comes from righteous obedience to the Lord's commandments:

"We earnestly hope and pray for universal peace, but it is as individuals and families that we achieve the kind of peace that is the promised reward of righteousness. This peace is a promised gift of the Savior's mission and atoning sacrifice. …

"The peace to which I am referring is not just a temporary tranquility. It is an abiding deep happiness and spiritual contentment.

"President Heber J. Grant described the Savior's peace this way: 'His peace will ease our suffering, bind up our broken hearts, blot out our hates, engender in our breasts a love of fellow men that will suffuse our souls with calm and happiness' [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 226]" ("Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2013, 33).

Doctrine and Covenants 60: Additional Historical Background

During the first week of August 1831, the elders who traveled to Missouri attended a Church conference and participated in the dedication of the land of Zion and the site where the temple would be built. With their work completed, many of the elders wanted to return to Kirtland, Ohio (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 35). The elders asked the Prophet Joseph Smith what they should do, and he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 60.

Doctrine and Covenants 60

The Lord commands the elders to preach the gospel as they travel back to Ohio

Read Doctrine and Covenants 60:1–3, looking for why the Lord was not pleased with some of the elders. What truths can you learn from the Lord's teachings in verses 2–3 about sharing the gospel with others?

Doctrine and Covenants 60:2. "They hide the talent which I have given unto them"

The Lord chastened the elders who did not fulfill their responsibility to preach the gospel. Referencing His parable of the talents (see Matthew 25:14–30), the Lord said, "They hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of [their] fear of man" (D&C 60:2). In this revelation, "the talent" refers to a knowledge and testimony of the restored gospel. With these spiritual gifts comes the obligation to share one's knowledge and testimony with others.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught that our "greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph*

Smith [2007], 330). **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** explained ways we can fulfill this responsibility:

"My dear young friends, perhaps the Lord's encouragement to 'open [your] mouths' [D&C 60:2] might today include 'use your hands' to blog and text message the gospel to all the world! But please remember, all at the right time and at the right place.

"… With the blessings of modern technology, we can express gratitude and joy about God's great plan for His children in a way that can be heard not only around our workplace but around the world. Sometimes a single phrase of testimony can set events in motion that affect someone's life for eternity.

"The most effective way to preach the gospel is through example. If we live according to our beliefs, people will notice. If the countenance of Jesus Christ shines in our lives, if we are joyful and at peace with the world, people will want to know why. One of the greatest sermons ever pronounced on missionary work is this simple thought attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi: 'Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words' [in William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (1999), 22]" ("Waiting on the Road to Damascus," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 76–77).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 60:4–17, looking for what the Lord instructed the elders to do as they journeyed back to Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 60:8. "The congregations of the wicked"

The phrase "congregations of the wicked" as used in Doctrine and Covenants 60:8 and other revelations (see also D&C 61:33; 62:5) does not necessarily mean that all people in these places were guilty of gross wickedness. Rather, the phrase likely refers to people who did not have a knowledge or understanding of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Without a knowledge of gospel principles and saving ordinances, they were living outside God's covenant. For this reason the Lord called missionaries to preach the gospel to the congregations or communities of people and invite them to repent and receive the ordinances of salvation.

Doctrine and Covenants 60:13–14. "Thou shalt not idle away thy time"

The Lord commanded the elders to preach the gospel as they traveled back to Ohio and warned them to not "idle away [their] time" (D&C 60:13). **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles illustrated some of the ways we idle away our time and the dangers of doing so:

"One of the ways Satan lessens your effectiveness and weakens your spiritual strength is by encouraging you to spend large blocks of your time doing things that matter very little. I speak of such things as sitting for hours on end watching television or videos, playing video games night in and night out, surfing the Internet, or devoting huge blocks of time to sports, games, or other recreational activities.

"Don't misunderstand me. … Games, sports, recreational activities, and even television can be relaxing and rejuvenating, especially in times when you are under stress or heavily scheduled. You need activities that help you to unwind and rest your minds. …

"But I speak of letting things get out of balance. …

"One devastating effect of idling away our time is that it deflects us from focusing on the things that matter most. Too many people are willing to sit back and let life just happen to them. It takes time to develop the attributes that will help you to be a well-balanced person. …

"… So focus the best that you can on those things in life that will lead you back to the presence of God—keeping all things in their proper balance" ("Be Strong in the Lord," *Ensign,* July 2004, 13–14).

Doctrine and Covenants 61: Additional Historical Background

On August 9, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith and 10 elders departed Independence, Missouri, in canoes heading down the Missouri River for St. Louis. The river was difficult to navigate due to the many fallen trees submerged in the river. During the first few days of traveling, there was some conflict that arose in the group, and feelings of discord were present for a time. On the third day of the journey, a submerged tree nearly capsized the canoe that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were in. At the Prophet's urging, the group camped on the banks of the Missouri River at a place called McIlwaine's Bend. After leaving the river to make camp, William W. Phelps saw in broad daylight "the Destroyer, in his most horrible power, ride upon the face of the waters" (Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 142, josephsmithpapers.org). That evening the group discussed their difficulties, resolved their contentious feelings, and forgave one another. The next morning the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 61.



The Prophet Joseph Smith and others camped somewhere near this location, referred to as McIlwaine's Bend, by the Missouri River while traveling by water to St. Louis, Missouri, in August 1831.

Doctrine and Covenants 61

The Lord provides warning and direction to Joseph Smith and the elders journeying to Ohio

Read Doctrine and Covenants 61:1–3, looking for what the Lord said that may have comforted these elders.

Doctrine and Covenants 61:3. "Moving swiftly upon the waters, whilst the inhabitants on either side are perishing in unbelief"

When the elders traveled "swiftly upon the waters" of the Missouri River, they weren't able to preach the gospel to the people living on both sides of the river who were "perishing in unbelief" (D&C 61:3). Similarly, at times we might neglect the needs of those around us because we are so busy "moving swiftly" along in our lives. **President Thomas S. Monson** taught:

"How many times has your heart been touched as you have witnessed the need of another? How often have you intended to be the one to help? And yet how often has day-to-day living interfered and you've left it for others to help, feeling that 'oh, surely someone will take care of that need.'

"We become so caught up in the busyness of our lives. Were we to step back, however, and take a good look at what we're doing, we may find that we have immersed ourselves in the 'thick of thin things.' In other words, too often we spend

most of our time taking care of the things which do not really matter much at all in the grand scheme of things, neglecting those more important causes" ("What Have I Done for Someone Today?" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 85).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 61:4–39, looking for the Lord's counsel to these elders.

Doctrine and Covenants 61:4–19. "In the last days … I cursed the waters"

The Lord's words in Doctrine and Covenants 61:4–19 do not prohibit Latter-day Saints from traveling on or swimming in water. In describing the curse on the waters in the last days, the Lord may have been referring to passages in the book of Revelation in which the Apostle John described destruction that will occur in the waters before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see Revelation 8:8–11; 16:2–6). In Doctrine and Covenants 61, the Lord refers specifically to the danger of "these waters," meaning the Missouri River (see D&C 61:5, 18). At the time of this revelation, the dangers of the Missouri River included accidents due to difficulties in navigating the waters and contracting cholera, a disease most commonly spread by contaminated water (see "The Way of Journeying for the Saints of Christ," *Evening and Morning Star,* Dec. 1832, 105).

Doctrine and Covenants 62: Additional Historical Background

On August 13, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith and the elders traveling with him to Kirtland, Ohio, met Hyrum Smith, John Murdock, Harvey Whitlock, and David Whitmer at Chariton, Missouri. These elders had not yet reached Independence, Missouri, partly because they had been preaching the gospel along the way and partly because John Murdock's illness delayed travel. Joseph Smith later recounted that "after the joyful salutations with which brethren meet each other" he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 62 (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 145, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 62

The Lord commends the faithfulness of a group of elders traveling to Independence, Missouri

Consider what decisions in your life might matter more to the Lord than other decisions. Read Doctrine and Covenants 62, looking for which of the elders' decisions mattered to the Lord and which ones did not.

Doctrine and Covenants 62:3. "Ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven"

The Lord commended the elders who had not yet gone to Zion for the faithful testimonies they had shared during their traveling. Unlike some of the elders traveling with the Prophet Joseph Smith, whom the Lord chastened for not preaching the gospel (see D&C 60:2–3), this group of missionaries diligently and

successfully proclaimed the gospel and built up the Church as they journeyed to Zion. Included among these faithful missionaries were Levi Hancock, Zebedee Coltrin, Simeon Carter, and Solomon Hancock. They baptized more than one hundred individuals along the way (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 46). The Lord blessed the faithfulness of these missionaries, saying their testimonies were "recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon" (D&C 62:3). Furthermore, the Lord declared that the sins of these missionaries were forgiven.

Though forgiveness comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ as we repent and live according to His commandments, proclaiming the gospel and helping others come to the Savior can help us receive a reemission of our sins. **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) taught: "The Lord has told us that our sins will be forgiven more readily as we bring souls unto Christ and remain steadfast in bearing testimony to the world, and surely every one of us is looking for additional help in being forgiven of our sins" ("It Becometh Every Man," *Ensign,* Oct. 1977, 5).



The Lord is pleased with those who open their mouths and share the testimony He has given them (see D&C 62:3).

What principles can you learn from Doctrine and Covenants 62:5–8 that can help guide you when making decisions?

Doctrine and Covenants 62:5–8. "Judgment and the directions of the Spirit"

On a number of occasions various groups of elders had inquired as to how they should travel, what route to take, what mode of travel to use, or whether to travel all together or two by two. In each of these instances the Savior declared, "It mattereth not unto me" (D&C 60:5; 61:22; 62:5).

Concerning this response, **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"The Lord's statement that such things 'mattereth not unto me' initially may seem surprising. Clearly, the Savior was not saying to these missionaries that He did not care about what they were doing. Rather, He was emphasizing the importance of putting first things first and focusing upon the right things. … They were to exercise faith, use good judgment, act in accordance with the direction of the Spirit, and determine the best way to travel to their assignments. The essential thing was

the work they had been called to perform; how they got there was important but was not essential. …

"The most demanding judgments we ever make are seldom between good or bad or between attractive and unattractive alternatives. Usually, our toughest choices are between good and good. In this scriptural episode [referring to D&C 62:7–9], horses, mules, and chariots may have been equally effective options for missionary travel. In a similar way, you and I also might identify at various times in our lives more than one acceptable opportunity or option that we could choose to pursue. We should remember this pattern from the scriptures as we approach such important decisions. If we put essential things first in our lives—things such as dedicated discipleship, honoring covenants, and keeping the commandments—then we will be blessed with inspiration and strong judgment as we pursue the path that leads us back to our heavenly home" ("A Reservoir of Living Water," [Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 4, 2007], 5–6, speeches.byu.edu).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained why our Heavenly Father leaves many decisions to our own judgment:

"A desire to be led by the Lord is a strength, but it needs to be accompanied by an understanding that our Heavenly Father leaves many decisions for our personal choices. Personal decision making is one of the sources of the growth we are meant to experience in mortality. …

"We should study things out in our minds, using the reasoning powers our Creator has placed within us. Then we should pray for guidance and act upon it if we receive it. If we do not receive guidance, we should act upon our best judgment" ("Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall," *Ensign,* Oct. 1994, 13–14).

Consider how the principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 62:5–8 and the teachings by Elder Bednar and Elder Oaks can help guide you when making decisions. Ponder what you can do to rely more fully upon wise judgment and the guidance of the Spirit when making decisions.

CHAPTER 23

Doctrine and Covenants 63

Introduction and Timeline

In the summer of 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith was overseeing the dedication of land in Independence, Missouri, where the Saints were to build Zion. When the Prophet returned to Kirtland, Ohio, on August 27, the Saints there were anxious to learn more about this new land and their role in establishing Zion.

Unfortunately, during the Prophet's absence, some members of the Church in Kirtland had turned away from the Lord's commandments and committed serious sins. On August 30, 1831, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63, in which the Lord warned the Saints about the consequences of wickedness and rebellion. The Lord also told the Saints how to prepare to gather to Zion and prepare for His Second Coming.

July 14, 1831

Joseph Smith and others arrived in Independence, Missouri.

August 2–3, 1831

Land in Jackson County, Missouri, was dedicated for the establishment of Zion, and a site for the temple was dedicated in Independence, Missouri.

August 27, 1831

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery returned to Kirtland, Ohio.

August 30, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 63 was received.

Think of the numerous opportunities you have each day to follow the Lord's commandments or to disregard them. What helps you to choose to be faithful to the Lord and follow His commandments? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 63, look for truths that can help you remain faithful to the Lord and the blessings that come from doing so.

Doctrine and Covenants 63: Additional Historical Background

When the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders returned to Ohio from Missouri on August 27, 1831, they announced to the Church members there that the Lord had identified Jackson County, Missouri, as the location for the city of Zion. The Prophet recorded: "In these infant days of the church, there was a great anxiety to obtain the … word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation; and as 'the land of Zion' was now the most important temporal object in view, I inquired of the Lord for further information upon the gathering of the Saints and the purchase of the land and other matters" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 146, josephsmithpapers.org). On August 30, in answer to his inquiry, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63. The "other matters" the Prophet inquired about may have included his concern for several Church members in Ohio who had committed serious sins and fallen away while he and other leading elders had been in Missouri. The revelation helped clarify that only those who were faithful followers of Jesus Christ were to go and help establish Zion in Missouri.



Doctrine and Covenants 63:1–21

The Lord warns about the consequences of rebellion and wickedness and promises the faithful an inheritance

Read Doctrine and Covenants 63:1–21, looking for principles relating to faith and signs.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:1–6. "Listen, you that call yourselves the people of the Lord"

In earlier revelations the Lord had told the Saints that in order to establish and inhabit Zion they must be a righteous people (see D&C 58:19; 59:1, 3). He opened the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63 with a solemn reminder that His commandments are not to be taken lightly and that those who ignore them or rebel against them will be punished. This reminder was necessary because many Church members claimed to be anxious to build Zion but were not obeying God's laws.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:7–13. "Signs follow those that believe"

During the summer and autumn of 1831, some Church members lost faith in the restored gospel and spoke out publicly against the Prophet Joseph Smith. Two particularly vocal critics apostatized and began to publish anti-Mormon material in newspapers beginning in September and October of 1831. One of the critics was Ezra Booth, a former Methodist preacher who had joined the Church in early 1831 after reading the Book of Mormon, meeting with Joseph Smith, and witnessing the Prophet heal Alice (Elsa) Johnson's crippled arm. After his baptism, Ezra Booth was ordained a high priest and called to serve a mission to Missouri. He expected to convert many by displaying great signs and performing miracles. However, after preaching for a short time without seeing the results he anticipated, Booth "turned away, and … became an apostate" (Joseph Smith, in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 154, josephsmithpapers.org).



Healing of Elsa Johnson's Shoulder, **by Sam Lawlor. Alice (Elsa) Johnson's shoulder was miraculously healed by the Prophet Joseph Smith.**

The other critic was Symonds Ryder (or Simonds Rider), who was introduced to the Church by Ezra Booth. Ryder traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, to investigate the Church, and while he was there heard a Church member predict an earthquake in China. A few weeks later, in April 1831, Symonds read a newspaper account of a destructive earthquake in Peking, China, and believed that he had witnessed a miraculous prophecy. He was baptized soon thereafter, but just a few months later he came out in open opposition to the Church.

The instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63 about those who seek for signs help clarify that while Latter-day Saints should seek spiritual gifts, they should not seek signs to satisfy a curiosity, to convince others of the truth, or to sustain their own faith. Rather, signs and miracles come as a result of faith in Jesus Christ in combination with the will of God (see also D&C 35:8; 58:64).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled Church members about seeking signs:

"In bearing testimonies and in our public addresses we rarely mention our most miraculous experiences, and we rarely rely on signs that the gospel is true. We usually just affirm our testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel and give few details on how we obtained it. Why is this? Signs follow those that believe. Seeking a miracle to convert someone is improper sign seeking. …

"There are good reasons why we do not seek conversions by exhibiting signs. 'The viewing of signs or miracles is not a secure foundation for conversion. Scriptural history attests that people converted by signs and wonders soon forget them and again become susceptible to the lies and distortions of Satan and his servants (Hel. 16:23; 3 Ne. 1:22; 2:1; 8:4.). …

"'In contrast to the witness of the Spirit, which can be renewed from time to time as needed by a worthy recipient, the viewing of a sign or the experiencing of a miracle is a one-time event that will fade in the memory of its witness and can dim in its impact upon him or her' [Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way* (1991), 87]" ("Miracles," *Ensign,* June 2001, 10).



Ezra Booth, a Methodist minister, became a member of the Church after witnessing a miraculous healing in this room in the Newel K. Whitney home in Kirtland, Ohio.

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how faith prepares a person to believe:

"In a world filled with skepticism and doubt, the expression 'seeing is believing' promotes the attitude, 'You show me, and I will believe.' We want all of the proof and all of the evidence first. It seems hard to take things on faith.

"When will we learn that in spiritual things it works the other way about—that believing is seeing? Spiritual belief precedes spiritual knowledge. When we believe in things that are not seen but are nevertheless true, then we have faith" ("What Is Faith?" in *Faith* [1983], 43).

Why do you think lasting faith does not come by viewing signs and miracles? What are some examples from the scriptures that illustrate that signs or miracles come as a result of faith and God's will?

Doctrine and Covenants 63:14–19. The sin of adultery

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63:14–19, the Lord warned that some of the Saints were guilty of the sin of adultery. The term *adultery* refers to a person

having sexual relations with someone other than his or her spouse (see D&C 42:22–26; 59:6; 66:10). Those who are guilty "shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith" (D&C 63:16), meaning that if adulterers do not repent, they will eventually find themselves turning in opposition to God's work. Because immorality and adultery are among the most serious of sins, those who choose to persist in wickedness rather than repent will suffer searing emotional pain—"that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"—and spiritual death, also known as the "second death" (D&C 63:17; see also Alma 12:16; Helaman 14:16–19; D&C 29:27–29; 76:36–38).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:16. "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her … shall not have the Spirit"

The Lord explained that those who look with lust upon another "shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith" (D&C 63:16). In an earlier revelation known as "the law of the Church," the Lord issued a similar warning to the Saints against lust and the sin of adultery (see D&C 42:22–24). In general, lust is an intense longing or craving. However, in the context of these passages, *lust* refers to the inappropriate carnal desire to commit sexual sin. In today's world, the availability of pornography has led many people to suffer the destructive effects of lust. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** described how pornography destroys spirituality:

"'Pornographic or erotic stories and pictures are worse than filthy or polluted food. The body has defenses to rid itself of unwholesome food. With a few fatal exceptions, bad food will only make you sick but do no permanent harm. In contrast, a person who feasts upon filthy stories or pornographic or erotic pictures and literature records them in this marvelous retrieval system we call a brain. The brain won't vomit back filth. Once recorded, it will always remain subject to recall, flashing its perverted images across your mind and drawing you away from the wholesome things in life' [Dallin H. Oaks, *Challenges for the Year Ahead* (pamphlet, 1974), 4–5; reprinted in "Things They're Saying," *New Era,* Feb. 1974, 18)]. …

"… Those who seek out and use pornography forfeit the power of their priesthood. …

"Patrons of pornography also lose the companionship of the Spirit. Pornography produces fantasies that destroy spirituality. …

"The scriptures repeatedly teach that the Spirit of the Lord will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle. When we worthily partake of the sacrament, we are promised that we will 'always have his Spirit to be with [us].' To qualify for that promise we covenant that we will 'always remember him' (D&C 20:77). Those who seek out and use pornography for sexual stimulation obviously violate that covenant. They also violate a sacred covenant to refrain from unholy and impure practices. They cannot have the Spirit of the Lord to be with them. …

"Pornography also inflicts mortal wounds on our most precious personal relationships. …

"Pornography impairs one's ability to enjoy a normal emotional, romantic, and spiritual relationship with a person of the opposite sex. It erodes the moral barriers that stand against inappropriate, abnormal, or illegal behavior. As conscience is

desensitized, patrons of pornography are led to act out what they have witnessed, regardless of its effects on their life and the lives of others.

"Pornography is also addictive. It impairs decision-making capacities and it 'hooks' its users, drawing them back obsessively for more and more. …

"… When persons entertain evil thoughts long enough for the Spirit to withdraw, they lose their spiritual protection and they are subject to the power and direction of the evil one" ("Pornography," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2005, 88–89).

In our day, the spread of pornography has exposed many to the temptation to lust after others. **Elder Richard G. Scott** (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles affirmed that the use of pornography is a lustful activity that will limit a person's ability to enjoy the blessings of the Spirit:

"I share a warning. Satan is extremely good at blocking spiritual communication by inducing individuals, through temptation, to violate the laws upon which spiritual communication is founded. With some, he is able to convince them that they are not able to receive such guidance from the Lord.

"Satan has become a master at using the addictive power of pornography to limit individual capacity to be led by the Spirit. The onslaught of pornography in all of its vicious, corroding, destructive forms has caused great grief, suffering, heartache, and destroyed marriages. It is one of the most damning influences on earth. Whether it be through the printed page, movies, television, obscene lyrics, vulgarities on the telephone, or flickering personal computer screen, pornography is overpoweringly addictive and severely damaging. This potent tool of Lucifer degrades the mind and the heart and the soul of any who use it. All who are caught in its seductive, tantalizing web and remain so will become addicted to its immoral, destructive influence. For many, that addiction cannot be overcome without help. The tragic pattern is so familiar. It begins with curiosity that is fueled by its stimulation and is justified by the false premise that when done privately, it does no harm to anyone else. For those lulled by this lie, the experimentation goes deeper, with more powerful stimulations, until the trap closes and a terribly immoral, addictive habit exercises its vicious control. …

"If you are ensnarled in pornography, make a total commitment to overcome it now. Find a quiet place; pray urgently for help and support. Be patient and obedient. Don't give up" ("To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 8–9).

What can you do to protect yourself and your family from the destructive influence of pornography?

Doctrine and Covenants 63:20–21. The transfiguration of the earth

The Lord has promised that the Saints who choose to do His will and endure to the end will inherit the terrestrial earth when the Millennium begins and also when the earth becomes a celestial world and part of the celestial kingdom following the Millennium and Final Judgment (see D&C 38:17–20; 45:58; 63:49; 88:17–20). The phrase "the day of transfiguration" in Doctrine and Covenants 63:20 refers to the

time following the Second Coming of the Lord, when "the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory" (Articles of Faith 1:10). This change, or transfiguration, will occur after all of the wicked and corruptible things of the earth have been "consumed," or done away with, and "all things shall become new" (D&C 101:24–25). The earth itself will return to the paradisiacal glory that it had before the Fall of Adam and Eve (see Isaiah 11:6–7; 51:3; D&C 133:22–24, 29). According to Doctrine and Covenants 63:21, this transfiguration of the earth was shown in vision to the Apostles Peter, James, and John during their sacred experience on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1–3, 9).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) identified the four stages of the earth's existence: "This earth is passing through four grand degrees or stages: 1. The *creation* and the condition antedating [existing before] the fall. 2. The *telestial condition* which has prevailed since the fall of Adam. 3. The *terrestrial condition* [or transfiguration of the earth] that will prevail when the Savior comes and ushers in the millennial era. 4. The *celestial or final state* of the earth when it has obtained its exaltation" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1954], 1:82).



Those who endure in faith and do the will of the Lord "shall receive an inheritance upon the earth … when the earth shall be transfigured" (D&C 63:20–21).
Photo courtesy of NASA Johnson Space Center

Doctrine and Covenants 63:22–56

The Lord gives the Saints guidelines for establishing Zion and promises blessings to the faithful

Read Doctrine and Covenants 63:22–56, looking for the Lord's instructions concerning the gathering of the Saints to the land of Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:22–23. "A well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life"

The Lord promised to give knowledge, or "the mysteries of [His] kingdom," to those who keep His commandments (D&C 63:23). The mysteries of God's kingdom refer to eternal truths that can be received or known only through revelation. The Lord likened receiving this spiritual outpouring of knowledge to possessing a "well of living water" within us that brings "everlasting life" (D&C 63:23). **President Boyd K. Packer** explained how our faithfulness invites continual revelation: "Be believing and your faith will be constantly replenished, your knowledge of the truth increased, and your testimony of the Redeemer, of the Resurrection, of the Restoration will be as 'a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life' [D&C 63:23]. You may then receive guidance on practical decisions in everyday life" ("Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise," *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 61).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:24–31, 41. "They should assemble themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste"

When the Prophet Joseph Smith returned to Kirtland, Ohio, and the Saints learned that the Lord had identified the area of Independence, Missouri, as the center place for the city of Zion, many were anxious to begin the process of moving there. However, the Lord made it clear that the Saints were not to gather to the land of Zion "in haste" (D&C 63:24; see also D&C 58:56). In fact, the Lord gave the Prophet the ability to "discern by the Spirit" who should relocate there (D&C 63:41).

Regarding these instructions from the Lord, **President Joseph Fielding Smith** explained why the Saints were to gather in an orderly fashion under the direction of Church leaders: "[The early members] were warned against creating antagonism among their neighbors, many of whom were extremely bitter towards the members of the Church. The Lord said the land could not be obtained by the shedding of blood. Those who had the privilege of assembling there should not go up to Zion in haste, but gradually. The reason for this advice is apparent, for haste would lead to confusion, unsatisfactory conditions and pestilence, and then, also, it creates consternation and fear in the hearts of their enemies and arouses greater opposition. Satan desired to destroy them and in his anger endeavored to stir them up to strife and contention as well as the older settlers in Missouri" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:232).

To manage the number of Saints gathering to Zion, Church leaders required those in Ohio desiring to go to Missouri to obtain a Church-issued certificate before they could migrate and participate in the law of consecration in Missouri. However, many enthusiastic members disregarded the instruction and went to Missouri in large numbers. A Church historian appointed by the Prophet Joseph Smith later wrote, "The church immediately began to gather in Jackson County, and on this subject they became quite enthusiastic. They had been commanded not to go up in haste, nor by flight, but to have all things prepared before them. Money was to be sent up to the bishop, and as fast as lands were purchased, and preparations made, the bishop was to let it be known, that the church might be gathered in. But this regulation was not attended to, for the church got crazy to go up to Zion, as it was then called. The rich were afraid to send up their money to purchase lands, and the poor crowded up in numbers, without having any places provided, contrary to the advice of the bishop and others, until the old citizens began to be highly displeased" (John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* [1839], 18–19, josephsmithpapers.org; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 146).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:25–27. "I, the Lord, render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's"

In Luke 20:19–26 we read about how the chief priests and the scribes tried to set a trap for Jesus by asking Him if it was legal for the Jews to pay tribute to the Roman emperor Caesar. They knew that if He said yes, the Jews would reject Him because they hated the Romans, who had conquered them. If Jesus said no, they could report Him to the Romans, who would arrest Him for treason against Roman rule.

Jesus showed them a coin with Caesar's image stamped on it and said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke 20:25).



The Lord taught that the Saints, like Him, were to "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" (see D&C 63:25–27).

The Lord's reference to this event in Doctrine and Covenants 63:26–27 helped teach the Saints that even though the whole earth belongs to the Lord, the Saints still had to buy the lands on which the Lord had commanded them to build the city of Zion. This purchase was necessary in order for the Saints to have legal ownership of the land and to prevent future contention.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:33–35. "The saints also shall hardly escape"

In response to the increasing wickedness upon the earth, the Lord has decreed judgments and consequences. As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63:33–35, the rebellious will be chastened and eventually destroyed, and though the Saints will also suffer, the Lord's promise is that He will be with them. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) recorded what took place during a meeting at his home in September 1839: "[I] explained concerning the coming of the Son of Man; also that it is a false idea that the Saints will escape all the judgments, whilst the wicked suffer; for all flesh is subject to suffer, and 'the righteous shall hardly escape' [see D&C 63:34]; still many of the Saints will escape, for the just shall live by faith [see Habakkuk 2:4]; yet many of the righteous shall fall a prey to disease, to pestilence, etc., by reason of the weakness of the flesh, and yet be saved in the Kingdom of God. So that it is an unhallowed principle to say that such and such have transgressed because they have been preyed upon by disease or death, for all flesh is subject to death; and the Savior has said, 'Judge not, lest ye be judged' [see Matthew 7:1]" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 253).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:38–40. Titus Billings is commanded to gather to Zion

The Lord instructed the Saints who were living on Isaac Morley's farm—including Joseph and Emma Smith—to make the necessary arrangements to move. When Isaac Morley was called in June 1831 to serve a mission to Missouri, his brother-in-law Titus Billings was given charge of the property. As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63:38–40, Titus Billings was commanded to sell the land and use the proceeds to go to Missouri and help others do the same. Because of the need to relocate, Joseph and Emma Smith received an invitation from John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson to move to their farm in Hiram, Ohio, approximately 30 miles southeast of Kirtland.



Isaac Morley gave the responsibility for his farm in Kirtland, Ohio, where a number of the Saints lived, to Titus Billings, his brother-in-law. In obedience to the Lord's command, the farm was sold (see D&C 63:38–40).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:49–52. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord"

Those who have endured in faith and righteousness, even unto death, will be resurrected at the Lord's Second Coming. They will partake of His glory and join with the righteous who are living at that day in inheriting a place in the city of Zion during the Millennium (see D&C 61:39; 63:49; 88:96–98; 101:35). Children who are living on the earth when the Millennium begins will "grow up until they become old" and will then die and be resurrected "in the twinkling of an eye" (D&C 63:51; see also Isaiah 65:20). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught: "Men on the earth will still be mortal, but a change shall come over them so that they will have power over sickness, disease and death. Death shall all but be banished from the earth, for men shall live until they are the age of a tree or one hundred years old (See [D&C] 63:50–51), and then shall die at the age of man, but this death shall come in the twinkling of an eye and mortality shall give way to immortality suddenly. There

shall be no graves, and the righteous shall be caught up to a glorious resurrection" (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 1:461).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:53–54. "These things … are now nigh at hand"

From God's perspective of time, the events of the Second Coming are "nigh at hand" (D&C 63:53). While we do not know the hour of the Second Coming, the Lord's parable of the foolish and wise virgins reminds us to prepare now for that day (see Matthew 25:1–13). It is essential that we view the Second Coming as imminent so that we will prepare ourselves. The clarification in Doctrine and Covenants 63:54 that "until that hour there will be foolish virgins among the wise" means that even among the Latter-day Saints there are those who will be found wicked and who will be separated and cast out from among the righteous, as in the parable of the wheat and tares (see Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43). Therefore, the Lord commanded the Saints to repent and prepare for His coming. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** explained the need for Church members to prepare:

"While we are powerless to alter the fact of the Second Coming and unable to know its exact time, we can accelerate our own preparation and try to influence the preparation of those around us.

"A parable that contains an important and challenging teaching on this subject is the parable of the ten virgins. Of this parable, the Lord said, 'And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins' (D&C 45:56).

"Given in the 25th chapter of Matthew, this parable contrasts the circumstances of the five foolish and the five wise virgins. All ten were invited to the wedding feast, but only half of them were prepared with oil in their lamps when the bridegroom came. The five who were prepared went into the marriage feast, and the door was shut. The five who had delayed their preparations came late. The door had been closed, and the Lord denied them entrance, saying, 'I know you not' (v. 12). 'Watch therefore,' the Savior concluded, 'for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh' (v. 13).

"The arithmetic of this parable is chilling. The ten virgins obviously represent members of Christ's Church, for all were invited to the wedding feast and all knew what was required to be admitted when the bridegroom came. But only half were ready when he came" ("Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 8).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:55–56. The Lord declares that Sidney Rigdon's "writing is not acceptable"

A month before the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63 was given, the Lord had commanded Sidney Rigdon to write a description of the land of Zion to share with others so that funds could be raised to purchase lands in Missouri (see D&C 58:50–52). After Sidney wrote it, the Lord declared that his description of the land was "not acceptable" because he had "exalted himself in his heart, and received not counsel, but grieved the Spirit" (D&C 63:55–56). Though Sidney's first attempt to describe Jackson County, Missouri, may have exaggerated its qualities (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed.

Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013] 54, note 305), it clearly did not meet the Lord's expectations. In any case, the Lord commanded him to write a second draft, which was accepted and became the means of raising money for Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:57–66

Jesus Christ instructs His servants to remember the sacredness of His name and to speak reverently of sacred things

Read Doctrine and Covenants 63:57–66, looking for what the Lord taught the Saints about His name.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:57–64. "Let all men beware how they take my name in their lips"

At the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 63 was given, some of the Saints had acted in the Lord's name without the proper authority and were, therefore, under condemnation (see D&C 63:60–63). The Lord called the Saints to repentance, commanding all to "beware how they take [His] name in their lips" (D&C 63:61). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** explained that the Lord's name is to be used with authority and in reverence:

"This scripture [D&C 63:61–62] shows that we take the name of the Lord in vain when we use his name without authority. This obviously occurs when the sacred names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used in what is called profanity: in hateful cursings, in angry denunciations, or as marks of punctuation in common discourse.

"The names of the Father and the Son are used with authority when we reverently teach and testify of them, when we pray, and when we perform the sacred ordinances of the priesthood.

"There are no more sacred or significant words in all of our language than the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. …

"When the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used with reverence and authority, they invoke a power beyond what mortal man can comprehend.

"It should be obvious to every believer that these mighty names—by which miracles are wrought, by which the world was formed, through which man was created, and by which we can be saved—are holy and must be treated with the utmost reverence. As we read in modern revelation, 'Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit.' (D&C 63:64.)" ("Reverent and Clean," *Ensign,* May 1986, 49–51).

Doctrine and Covenants 63:65–66. "A home, as they are taught through prayer by the Spirit"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon each had small homes located on the Isaac Morley farm. Having commanded that the farm be sold, the Lord told Joseph and Sidney to seek divine guidance in finding new places to live (see D&C

63:65). On September 17, 1831, Joseph and Emma Smith moved to Hiram, Ohio, to live with the family of John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson. Shortly thereafter, the Rigdons moved to a log home in Hiram as well. Certainly, the families of the Prophet and of Sidney Rigdon would have been concerned about their temporal needs when they learned that they would be losing their homes on the Morley farm. The Lord endeavored to calm their worries by reminding them that they would be guided by the Spirit as they called upon God in prayer and that through their patience they would be blessed (see D&C 63:65–66).

Think about the meaning of the Lord's declaration that "this is a day of warning, and not a day of many words" (D&C 63:58). What have you learned from your study of Doctrine and Covenants 63 about why the Lord was urging the Saints to repent? What can you do to be more prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

CHAPTER 24

Doctrine and Covenants 64–65

Introduction and Timeline

On August 27, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith and a number of elders returned to Ohio from their journey to Zion, or Independence, Missouri. During the journey to and from Missouri, some of the elders had disagreements with each other, but most reconciled their contentious feelings. On September 11 the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 64. In this revelation the Lord commanded Church members to forgive one another and taught them about the sacrifices He requires of the Saints in the latter days.

In September 1831, Joseph Smith and his family moved from Kirtland to Hiram, Ohio, about 30 miles southeast of Kirtland. On October 30, 1831, he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 65. In this revelation the Lord taught that the gospel will go to every nation in preparation for the Second Coming and that the Saints are to pray for the growth of the kingdom of God.

September 1, 1831

Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley returned to Ohio from their mission to Missouri.

September–December 1831

Ezra Booth wrote a series of letters that were critical of Joseph Smith and the Church and published them in the *Ohio Star* newspaper.

September 11, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 64 was received.

September 12, 1831

Joseph and Emma Smith moved to Hiram, Ohio.

October 30, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 65 was received.

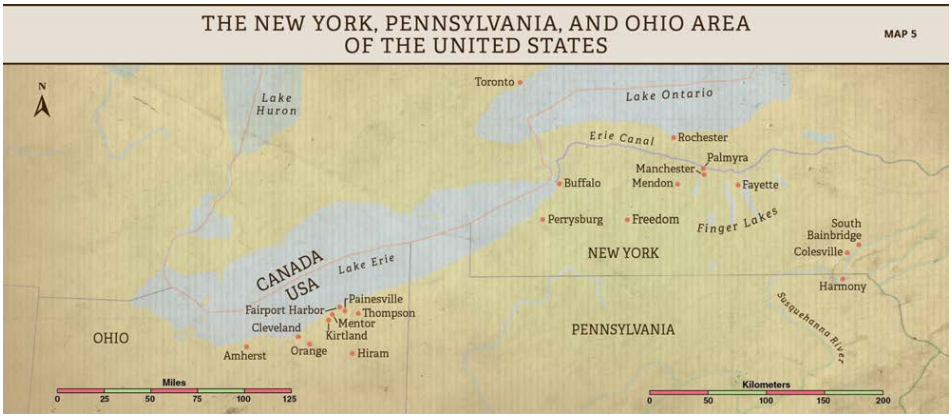
Think of a time when you may have been offended or hurt by the unkindness of others. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 64, look for principles that teach how and why we should forgive others.

Doctrine and Covenants 64: Additional Historical Background

Ezra Booth had been a Methodist preacher before he joined the Church in 1831. When the Lord commanded Church leaders and others to go to Missouri in the summer of 1831, Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley, his missionary companion, were among those elders who were called by the Lord to walk to Missouri "preaching the word by the way" (D&C 52:23). Ezra considered this to be unfair when he learned that the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were traveling to Missouri by boat and stagecoach. Upon arriving in Missouri, several of the elders, including Ezra Booth, were disappointed with the appearance of the land and with the lack of converts in the frontier town of Independence. Ezra also felt that Joseph Smith did not behave as a prophet because he had a "spirit of lightness and levity, a temper of mind easily irritated, and an habitual proneness to jesting and joking" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 60, note 332). Contrary to revelation that had been given the elders (see D&C 60:8), Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley returned

quickly to Ohio by boat and stagecoach rather than preaching the gospel along the way.

After arriving in Ohio, Ezra Booth came out in opposition to the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Church. Church leaders took action against Ezra Booth on September 6, 1831, and revoked his authority to preach the gospel. Shortly thereafter, Ezra began writing a series of letters critical of the Prophet and the Church that were published in the *Ohio Star* newspaper. Also during this time, in response to the Lord's command, several brethren in Ohio were preparing to move to Missouri. On September 11, 1831, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 64. The next day the Prophet and his family moved from Kirtland to Hiram, Ohio.



Doctrine and Covenants 64:1–19

The Lord assures us of His willingness to forgive us and commands us to forgive one another

Read Doctrine and Covenants 64:1–19, looking for the Lord's instructions about forgiving those who offend us.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:1–7. "I, the Lord, forgive sins unto those who confess their sins before me and ask forgiveness"

Some of the brethren who traveled to Missouri and back were guilty of faultfinding and arguing. The Lord extended great compassion and mercy by forgiving them of their sins. The Prophet Joseph Smith was one who had sinned and was forgiven. However, the Lord clarified that those who had been critical of the Prophet had done so "without cause" (D&C 64:6). The Lord stated that He forgives the sins of "those who confess their sins before [Him] and ask forgiveness" (D&C 64:7).

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that confession is needed in order to obtain forgiveness: "You always need to confess your sins to the Lord. If they are serious transgressions, such as immorality, they need to be confessed to a bishop or stake president. Please understand that confession is not repentance. It is an essential step, but is not of

itself adequate. Partial confession by mentioning lesser mistakes will not help you resolve a more serious, undisclosed transgression. Essential to forgiveness is a willingness to fully disclose to the Lord and, where necessary, His priesthood judge *all* that you have done. Remember, 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy' [Proverbs 28:13]" ("Finding Forgiveness," *Ensign,* May 1995, 76).

Doctrine and Covenants 64:7. What does it mean to sin unto death?

The Lord promised that He will "forgive sins unto those who confess their sins before [Him] and ask forgiveness, who have not *sinned unto death*" (D&C 64:7; italics added). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "Those who turn from the light and truth of the gospel; who give themselves up to Satan; who enlist in his cause, supporting and sustaining it; and who thereby become his children—by such a course *sin unto death.* For them there is neither repentance, forgiveness, nor any hope whatever of salvation of any kind. As children of Satan, they are sons of perdition" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 737; see also Matthew 12:31–32; Hebrews 10:26–27; 1 John 5:16–17; Alma 5:41–42).

It is important to note that sons of perdition are different from Church members who once had active testimonies of the truth but later fall away from activity and stop living the principles of the gospel. Sons of perdition commit the unpardonable sin of denying the Holy Ghost. Because they utterly turn against God and refuse to be redeemed through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for them it "is as though there was no redemption made" (Mosiah 16:5). Because the sons of perdition cannot be redeemed from spiritual death, or the second death, their sin is a sin "unto death" (D&C 64:7).



The Lord chastened His disciples in Jerusalem because they "forgave not one another in their hearts" (D&C 64:8).

Doctrine and Covenants 64:8–11. "Ye ought to forgive one another"

The Church leaders and elders who had received the Lord's forgiveness were instructed to extend personal forgiveness to others. The Lord explained that during His mortal ministry, His disciples "sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts" (D&C 64:8). An outward demonstration of forgiveness is not sufficient; the Lord requires "the hearts of the children of men" (D&C 64:22). **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency explained why extending forgiveness is critical for our spiritual growth:

"Extending forgiveness is a precondition to receiving forgiveness.

"For our own good, we need the moral courage to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. Never is the soul nobler and more courageous than when we forgive. This includes forgiving ourselves.

"Each of us is under a divinely spoken obligation to reach out with pardon and mercy and to forgive one another. There is a great need for this Christlike attribute in our families, in our marriages, in our wards and stakes, in our communities, and in our nations.

"We will receive the joy of forgiveness in our own lives when we are willing to extend that joy freely to others. Lip service is not enough. We need to purge our hearts and minds of feelings and thoughts of bitterness and let the light and the love of Christ enter in. As a result, the Spirit of the Lord will fill our souls with the joy accompanying divine peace of conscience (see Mosiah 4:2–3)" ("Point of Safe Return," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 101).



The Prophet Joseph Smith freely forgave those who wronged him.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:15–16. Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley

Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley had been assigned by the Lord to journey to Missouri and back as missionary companions. They were to travel by foot, "preaching the

word by the way" (D&C 52:23; see also D&C 42:6–8). They did this begrudgingly on their trip to Missouri, but they avoided doing so on the return trip to Ohio. From Doctrine and Covenants 64:15–16 we learn that Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley forfeited the blessings of the Spirit because "they kept not the law, neither the commandment" and "they sought evil in their hearts."

It seems that Isaac Morley repented quickly because the Lord declared that he was forgiven (see D&C 64:16). Isaac subsequently obeyed the Lord's commandment to sell his farm (see D&C 63:38–39; 64:20), and then he moved with his family to Missouri, where he served as a counselor to Bishop Edward Partridge. Ezra Booth, however, did not repent but continued to allow his doubts and critical opinions to lead him down a path to full apostasy.



Ezra Booth renounced his beliefs and pubished a series of letters in the *Ohio Star* newspaper that were critical of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:20–43

The Lord gives the requirements for the establishment of Zion

Read Doctrine and Covenants 64:20–43, looking for the sacrifices the Lord asked the Saints in Kirtland to make to strengthen the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:21–22. "Retain a strong hold in the land of Kirtland, for … five years"

Although some of the Saints were commanded to move to Missouri, others, like Frederick G. Williams, were to remain in Kirtland, Ohio. The Lord promised that Kirtland would be "a strong hold" of the Church for at least five more years (D&C 64:21). This promise was fulfilled, and during that period the Kirtland Temple was constructed and dedicated, priesthood keys were restored by heavenly messengers

to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and a great outpouring of spiritual blessings was given to the Saints. However, in 1837, problems arose among the Church members in Kirtland, and many apostatized. Joseph Smith left Kirtland in January 1838 and went to Missouri. The majority of the faithful Saints who remained in Kirtland left by July 1838.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:23–25. "Labor while it is called today"

The Lord used the word *today* to refer to the period of time from when Doctrine and Covenants 64 was received to the Second Coming (see D&C 64:23). From the Lord's perspective, *today* refers to "this life," the time that we are to "perform [our] labors" and "prepare to meet God" (Alma 34:32; see also Alma 34:31, 33–35). In Doctrine and Covenants 64:24, the word *tomorrow* refers to the time of the destruction of the wicked and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency taught about the importance of serving the Lord "this day":

"The scriptures make the danger of delay clear. It is that we may discover that we have run out of time. The God who gives us each day as a treasure will require an accounting. We will weep, and He will weep, if we have intended to repent and to serve Him in tomorrows which never came or have dreamt of yesterdays where the opportunity to act was past. This day is a precious gift of God. The thought 'Someday I will' can be a thief of the opportunities of time and the blessings of eternity. …

"It is hard to know when we have done enough for the Atonement to change our natures and so qualify us for eternal life. And we don't know how many days we will have to give the service necessary for that mighty change to come. But we know that we will have days enough if only we don't waste them. …

"For those who are discouraged by their circumstances and are therefore tempted to feel they cannot serve the Lord this day, I make you two promises. Hard as things seem today, they will be better in the next day if you choose to serve the Lord this day with your whole heart. …

"The other promise I make to you is that by choosing to serve Him this day, you will feel His love and grow to love Him more" ("This Day," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 89–91).

Doctrine and Covenants 64:23–24. "He that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming"



The wicked shall be burned as stubble at the last day if they do not obey the Lord's commandments (see D&C 64:23–24).

The instructions given to Newel K. Whitney, Sidney Gilbert, Isaac Morley, Frederick G. Williams, and others in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 64 included details regarding their personal property and their labors to help build God's kingdom. The word *tithing* in Doctrine and Covenants 64:23 refers to all of the Saints' contributions to the Church, particularly under the law of consecration, rather than a percentage of earnings. The Lord promised that those who obeyed the laws of sacrifice and consecration would escape the burning that would destroy the unrepentant at the last day. Our current understanding of the law of tithing was further clarified in 1838, when the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 119.

For more information about tithing, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 119:1–4 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:26–30. Sidney Gilbert and Newel K. Whitney

Sidney Gilbert and Newel K. Whitney were business partners who were called to serve "on the Lord's errand" as business "agents" (D&C 64:29). Their mercantile stores in Independence, Missouri, and in Kirtland, Ohio, would eventually function as the Lord's storehouses, operating under the principles of the law of consecration (see D&C 78:3). The Lord warned Sidney and Newel not to go into debt to their enemies (see D&C 64:27).

President Thomas S. Monson reminded all those who are on the Lord's errand to be worthy: "Ours is the task to be fitting examples. We are strengthened by the truth that the greatest force in the world today is the power of God as it works through man. If we are on the Lord's errand, … we are entitled to the Lord's help. Never forget that truth. That divine help, of course, is predicated upon our worthiness. Each must ask: Are my hands clean? Is my heart pure? Am I a worthy servant of the Lord?" ("Examples of Righteousness," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2008, 65).

Doctrine and Covenants 64:31–33. "Out of small things proceedeth that which is great"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders likely felt overwhelmed at the challenges they faced to meet the needs of a growing Church in Ohio and build Zion in Missouri. Some members, like Ezra Booth, were concerned because the establishment of Zion had not occurred as quickly as they had anticipated. Yet the Lord promised that everything He had previously declared would eventually come to pass (see D&C 64:31). The Lord encouraged the weary Saints by helping them see that they were "laying the foundation of a great work" (D&C 64:33). That

divine perspective likely helped the Saints move forward with renewed confidence and energy.

It is not uncommon to become discouraged with personal abilities or opportunities to help build God's kingdom. **Elder Bruce D. Porter** (1952–2016) of the Seventy observed:

"We do not have to be called to serve far from home, nor do we have to hold a prominent place in the Church or in the world to build up the Lord's kingdom. We build it in our own hearts as we cultivate the Spirit of God in our lives. We build it within our families by instilling faith in our children. And we build it through the organization of the Church as we magnify our callings and share the gospel with neighbors and friends.

"As our missionaries labor in fields ready for harvest, others labor in fields at home to strengthen the kingdom in the ward and community where they reside. From its earliest days, the Lord's Church has been built up by ordinary people who magnified their callings in humility and devotion. It does not matter to what office we are called to serve, only that we act 'in all diligence' (D&C 107:99). In the words of modern revelation: 'Be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great' (D&C 64:33)" ("Building the Kingdom," *Ensign,* May 2001, 80–81).

Doctrine and Covenants 64:34–36. "The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind"

The Lord requires His people to willingly obey His law in order to receive an inheritance in the land of Zion in this world or in the next (see D&C 38:17–20; 58:44; 63:20, 49; 64:34; 88:17–20). Those who have been gathered to the gospel and given an inheritance in the land of Zion in this life but have subsequently broken the covenant they made with God and are "rebellious" will be "sent away" from or "plucked out" of the land of their inheritance (D&C 64:35–36; see also Deuteronomy 28:63–64). The Lord reminded the Saints that those who serve God with "the heart and a willing mind" will enjoy the blessings of Zion in the last days (D&C 64:34).

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy explained the importance of serving God with "the heart and a willing mind":

"If we love the Lord with all our heart, we are willing to give Him everything we possess. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) said: 'The submission of one's will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God's altar. … The many other things we give to God … are actually things He has already given us, and He has loaned them to us. But when we begin to submit ourselves by letting our wills be swallowed up in God's will, then we are really giving something to Him' ['Sharing Insights from My Life,' in *Brigham Young University 1998–99 Speeches* (1999), 4]. …

"Having 'a willing mind' [D&C 64:34] connotes giving our best effort and finest thinking and seeking God's wisdom. It suggests that our most devoted lifetime study should be of things that are eternal in nature. It means that there must be an inextricable relationship between hearing the word of God and obeying it.

"The Apostle James said, 'Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only' (James 1:22).

"Some of us 'hear' selectively and 'do' when it is convenient. But for those who give their heart and mind to the Lord, whether the burden is light or heavy makes no difference. We demonstrate a consecrated heart and mind by consistently following God's commandments no matter how difficult the circumstances" ("The Heart and a Willing Mind," *Ensign,* June 2011, 31–32).

Doctrine and Covenants 64:35–36. "The rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim"

Ephraim was a grandson of the Old Testament prophet Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Ephraim was given the birthright blessing (see Genesis 48:20). The phrase "blood of Ephraim" (D&C 64:36) refers to those who (1) are literal descendants of Ephraim, as well as (2) those who are not of the house of Israel but who, through baptism into the restored Church, are adopted into the tribe of Ephraim. Only those who are believing and obedient members of the Church are considered to be of the blood of Ephraim. The rebellious, though they may be literal descendants of Ephraim, will not receive an inheritance in Zion (see D&C 64:35–36).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained the importance of Ephraim's birthright and the responsibility Ephraim's descendants have to bless others in the latter days: "It is essential in this dispensation that Ephraim stand in his place at the head, exercising the birthright in Israel which was given to him by direct revelation. Therefore, Ephraim must be gathered first to prepare the way, through the gospel and the priesthood, for the rest of the tribes of Israel when the time comes for them to be gathered to Zion" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:252).

Doctrine and Covenants 65: Additional Historical Background

Joseph and Emma Smith were living on Isaac Morley's property when the Lord commanded Isaac to sell his farm (see D&C 63:65; 64:20). On September 12, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith moved his family to Hiram, Ohio, where many new Church members lived, to live with John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson and their family. A church service was held at the Johnson home on Sunday, October 30, 1831. On that same day, the Prophet received the revelation that is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 65.

The Prophet Joseph Smith had completed his inspired translation of the early chapters of Matthew more than six months before this revelation was received. William E. McLellin wrote, however, that this revelation referred in theme to Matthew 6:10, where the Lord prays, "Thy kingdom come" (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 92).

Doctrine and Covenants 65

The Lord declares that the gospel will fill the whole earth

Read Doctrine and Covenants 65, looking for some of the things that the Lord would like us to pray for.

Doctrine and Covenants 65:2. "The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth"

On March 15, 1832, the Lord declared that the Prophet Joseph Smith had been "given the keys of the kingdom" (D&C 81:2). These keys are also known as the "keys of the church" (D&C 42:69) and consist of the power and authority to preside and govern over the affairs of the Lord's Church on the earth. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught about the importance of the keys of the kingdom of God:

"Now I shall say a few words to you about the priesthood and those keys which the Lord has conferred upon us in this final gospel dispensation.

"We hold the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, which is the power and authority of God delegated to man on earth to act in all things for the salvation of men.

"We also hold the keys of the kingdom of God on earth, which kingdom is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"These keys are the right of presidency; they are the power and authority to govern and direct all of the Lord's affairs on earth. Those who hold them have power to govern and control the manner in which all others may serve in the priesthood. All of us may hold the priesthood, but we can only use it as authorized and directed so to do by those who hold the keys.

"This priesthood and these keys were conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by Peter, James, and John, and by Moses and Elijah and others of the ancient prophets. They have been given to each man who has been set apart as a member of the Council of the Twelve. But since they are the right of presidency, they can only be exercised in full by the senior apostle of God on earth, who is the president of the Church.

"May I now say—very plainly and very emphatically—that we have the holy priesthood and that the keys of the kingdom of God are here. They are found only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" ("Eternal Keys and the Right to Preside," *Ensign,* July 1972, 87–88).

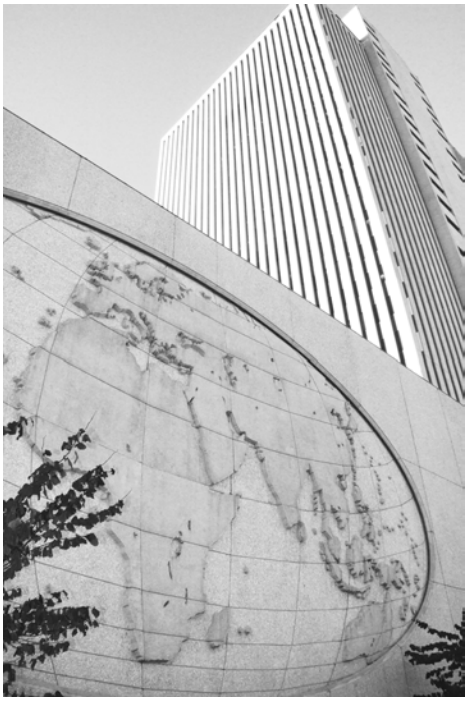
Doctrine and Covenants 65:2. "Until it has filled the whole earth"

Daniel 2, in the Old Testament, contains the account of a dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had that the prophet Daniel interpreted. The revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 65 indicates that King Nebudchadnezzar's dream was a prophecy about the growth and destiny of the kingdom of God in the latter days.

In April 1834, Wilford Woodruff participated in a priesthood meeting in Kirtland, Ohio, where the Prophet Joseph Smith prophesied about the destiny of the kingdom of God. President Woodruff later spoke about what transpired during that

meeting: "The Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland. … When we got together the Prophet called upon the Elders of Israel with him to bear testimony of this work. … When they got through the Prophet said, 'Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it.' I was rather surprised. He said, 'It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world'" (in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 137).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) described how Daniel's prophecy concerning the gospel continues to be fulfilled:



God's kingdom grows as the gospel rolls forth "until it has filled the whole earth" (D&C 65:2).

"The Church has become one large family scattered across the earth. … The Lord is fulfilling His promise that His gospel shall be as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands which would roll forth and fill the whole earth, as Daniel saw in vision (see Daniel 2:31–45; D&C 65:2). A great miracle is taking place right before our eyes. …

"… When the Church was organized in 1830 there were but six members, only a handful of believers, all residing in a largely unknown village. Today, we have become the fourth or fifth largest church in North America, with congregations in every city of any consequence. Stakes of Zion today flourish in every state of the United States, in every province of Canada, in every state of Mexico, in every nation of Central America and throughout South America.

"Congregations are found throughout the British Isles and Europe, where thousands have joined the Church through the years. This work has reached out to the Baltic nations and on down through Bulgaria and Albania and other areas of that part of the world. It reaches across the vast area of Russia. It reaches up into Mongolia and all down through the nations of Asia into the islands of the Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand, and into India and Indonesia. It is flourishing in many of the nations of Africa. …

"And this is only the beginning. This work will continue to grow and prosper and move across the earth" ("The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2007, 83–84).

Doctrine and Covenants 65:3. "Prepare ye the supper of the Lamb, make ready for the bridegroom"

The Lord's references to "the supper of the Lamb" and the "bridegroom" (D&C 65:3) are allusions to imagery used by the Lord and His Apostles in the New Testament (see Matthew 22:2–14; 25:1–13; Revelation 19:7–9). Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God and the Bridegroom, and the Church is His bride (see Revelation 19:7–9). At the time of His Second Coming, the righteous Saints will rejoice. The joyful reunion between the Lord and His people is symbolized in the celebratory marriage feast. In fulfillment of the Lord's invitation to prepare and make ready for the coming of the Bridegroom and the marriage supper of the Lamb, the Saints are to search out the righteous from the four corners of the earth and invite them to repent and be baptized. Those who heed the invitation and make and keep their covenants with the Lord shall be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (Revelation 19:8), and those people will have the joy of welcoming the Lord and rejoicing with Him at His coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 65:6. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven

The petition, or prayer, found in Doctrine and Covenants 65:6 illustrates the important connection between God's church on earth and the divine organization of heaven. **Elder James E. Talmage** (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"The Kingdom of God is the Church established by divine authority upon the earth; this institution asserts no claim to temporal rule over nations; its sceptre of power is that of the Holy Priesthood, to be used in the preaching of the gospel and in administering its ordinances for the salvation of mankind living and dead. The Kingdom of Heaven is the divinely ordained system of government and dominion in all matters, temporal and spiritual; this will be established on earth only when its rightful Head, the King of kings, Jesus the Christ, comes to reign. …

"The Kingdom of God has been established among men to prepare them for the Kingdom of Heaven which shall come; and in the blessed reign of Christ the King shall the two be made one" (*Jesus the Christ,* [1916], 788–89).

In Doctrine and Covenants 65, the Lord invites His people to pray for the kingdom of God to "go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it" (D&C 65:5). Consider praying for opportunities to share your testimony with others and help them receive the gospel of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 25

Doctrine and Covenants 66–70

Introduction and Timeline

On October 29, 1831, William E. McLellin, a recent convert to the Church, went to the Lord with five questions and prayed to receive answers through the Prophet Joseph Smith. William then asked the Prophet to inquire of the Lord on his behalf. Joseph, who knew nothing concerning William's prayer or the five questions, inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 66. This revelation details promised blessings and specific counsel regarding William's spiritual standing and his call to preach the gospel.

In November 1831, priesthood holders gathered for a series of conferences in Hiram, Ohio, to discuss publication of the revelations that the Prophet Joseph Smith had received from the Lord to that point. During the conference, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 1, which He designated as His preface to the book of revelations that would be published. The Lord also gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 67, in which He addressed those who questioned the language of the revelations received by the Prophet.

During the conference, four brethren asked Joseph Smith to inquire of the Lord concerning His will for them. In response, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 68. The revelation includes counsel to those called to preach the gospel, additional understanding about what constitutes scripture, instructions about the calling of bishops, and a commandment for parents to teach their children the principles and ordinances of the gospel.

During the time of these conferences, Oliver Cowdery was assigned to carry the manuscript of Joseph Smith's compiled revelations from Ohio to Missouri for printing. On November 11, 1831, Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 69, instructing John Whitmer to accompany Oliver to Missouri and to continue collecting historical material as Church historian and recorder. The next day at a conference in Hiram, Ohio, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 70. In that revelation the Lord appointed six men to oversee the publication of His revelations to Joseph Smith.

October 29, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 66 was received.

November 1–2, 1831

Elders at a Church conference held at Hiram, Ohio, discussed publishing the Lord's revelations to Joseph Smith (the Book of Commandments). During the conference, **the Prophet received Doctrine and Covenants 67–68.**

November 11, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 69 was received.

November 12, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 70 was received.

November 20, 1831

Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer departed Ohio for Missouri with revelations to be printed in the Book of Commandments.

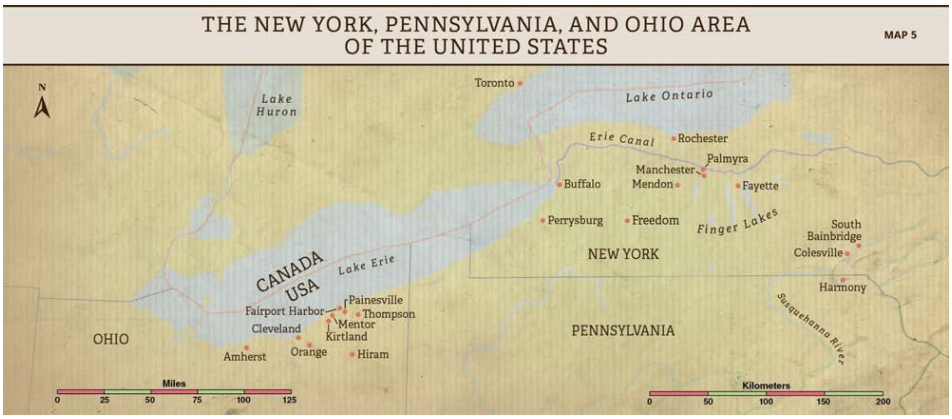
Consider choices you have made that have helped you draw closer to God or led you away from Him. When you have drawn closer to God, how has your life been blessed? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 66–70, look for truths that will help you know how to draw closer to your Heavenly Father.

Doctrine and Covenants 66: Additional Historical Background

In the summer of 1831, William E. McLellin, a former schoolteacher and recent widower, was baptized a member of the Church in Jackson County, Missouri. Soon

after his baptism he was ordained an elder and preached the gospel with Hyrum Smith before attending a Church conference in Orange, Ohio. At the conference, William met the Prophet Joseph Smith for the first time and was ordained a high priest.

On October 29, 1831, while at the home of Joseph Smith in Hiram, Ohio, William "went before the Lord in secret, and on [his] knees asked him to reveal the answer to five questions through his Prophet" (William E. McLellin, *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831-1836,* ed. Jan Shipps and John W. Welch [1994], 248). Without saying anything about his prayer or questions, William asked Joseph Smith to inquire of the Lord on his behalf. Referring to the revelation the Prophet dictated, William later wrote that "every question which I thus lodged in the ears of the Lord … were answered to my full and entire satisfaction. I desired for a testimony of Joseph's inspiration. And I to this day consider it to me an evidence which I cannot refute" (*The Journals of William E. McLellin,* 249).



Doctrine and Covenants 66

The Lord commends William E. McLellin and commands him to preach the gospel and forsake unrighteousness

Read Doctrine and Covenants 66, looking for the Lord's counsel and promises to William McLellin.

Doctrine and Covenants 66:1–2. "Blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel"

The Lord told William E. McLellin that he was blessed for turning away from his sins and receiving the "everlasting covenant, even the fulness of [the] gospel" (D&C 66:2) by being baptized. At the time of William's conversion, the term "fulness of the gospel" included faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and obedience to the commandments of God (see D&C 39:5–6). However, at the time of this revelation there were ordinances and covenants necessary for exaltation that were yet to be revealed. In due time, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord restored all of the

ordinances and covenants necessary to inherit exaltation in the kingdom of God, including those performed in holy temples.

Elder John M. Madsen of the Seventy taught that today the fulness of the gospel and the Lord's everlasting covenant refers to all gospel covenants and ordinances necessary for salvation:

"To know the Lord Jesus Christ, we and all mankind must receive Him. …

"To receive Him, we must receive the fulness of His gospel, His everlasting covenant, including all those truths or laws, covenants, and ordinances needed for mankind to enter back into the presence of God" ("Eternal Life through Jesus Christ," *Ensign,* May 2002, 79).

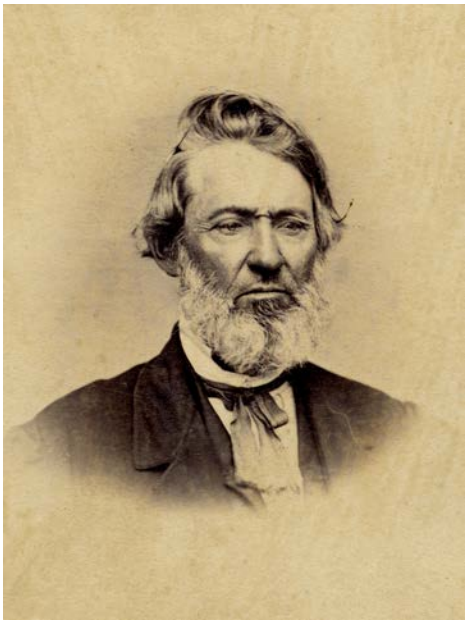
Doctrine and Covenants 66:3. "You are clean, but not all"

After commending William E. McLellin for turning away from his iniquities and embracing the restored truth through baptism, the Lord declared that he was clean, but not entirely (see D&C 66:3). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained that William had received forgiveness, "but still there lingered in some manner, evidently in his mind and thoughts, some thing from which he had not cleansed himself by full repentance" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:245). The Lord exhorted William to repent of those things that were not pleasing to Him and promised that He would reveal to William what he needed to repent of. Similarly, as we seek to know God's will, He will help us progress spiritually by showing us what we need to repent of.

Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy described how the Lord reveals through the Holy Ghost what changes and improvements we need to make in our lives:

"The journey of discipleship is not an easy one. It has been called a 'course of steady improvement' [Neal A. Maxwell, 'Testifying of the Great and Glorious Atonement,' *Ensign,* Oct. 2001, 12]. As we travel along that strait and narrow path, the Spirit continually challenges us to be better and to climb higher. The Holy Ghost makes an ideal traveling companion. If we are humble and teachable, He will take us by the hand and lead us home.

"However, we need to ask the Lord for directions along the way. We have to ask some difficult questions, like 'What do I need to change?' 'How can I improve?' 'What weakness needs strengthening?' …



William E. McClellin, then a recent convert to the Church, participated in the November 1831 conference of the Church in Hiram, Ohio. He was later called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835. He was excommunicated for apostasy in 1838.

"The Holy Ghost doesn't tell us to improve everything at once. If He did, we would become discouraged and give up. The Spirit works with us at our own speed, one step at a time, or as the Lord has taught, 'line upon line, precept upon precept, … and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, … for unto him that receiveth I will give more' [2 Nephi 28:30]. For example, if the Holy Ghost has been prompting you to say 'thank you' more often, and you respond to that prompting, then He may feel it's time for you to move on to something more challenging—like learning to say, 'I'm sorry; that was my fault.'

"A perfect time to ask, 'What lack I yet?' is when we take the sacrament. The Apostle Paul taught that this is a time for each of us to examine ourselves [see 1 Corinthians 11:28]. In this reverent atmosphere, as our thoughts are turned heavenward, the Lord can gently tell us what we need to work on next" ("What Lack I Yet?" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 33–34).

Ponder times when God has shown you, through the Holy Ghost, what changes you needed to make in your life. Consider what you can do to invite the Holy Ghost to continue showing you what to repent of and how to improve.

Doctrine and Covenants 66:4–13. "I, the Lord, will show unto you what I will concerning you"

William E. McLellin desired to know the Lord's will for him. Like many of the early Saints, he was anxious to move to Jackson County, Missouri. However, rather than sending William to Zion, the Lord commanded him to travel east and proclaim the gospel with the Prophet's younger brother Samuel H. Smith. The Lord told William that He would be with him and promised him the power to heal the sick.

William and Samuel left Hiram, Ohio, a few weeks after receiving their call and traveled throughout eastern Ohio preaching the gospel. William recorded in his journal instances of miraculous healings through the laying on of hands in fulfillment of the Lord's promise to him (see D&C 66:9; *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836,* 66). Despite some success, the two missionaries experienced much opposition while preaching the gospel. As winter set in, William became sick and decided in late December to return. In so doing, William ignored the Lord's instructions to "be patient in affliction" and to "return not" from his mission until the Lord called him back (D&C 66:9).

The Lord also counseled William to "seek not to be cumbered" and "forsake all unrighteousness" (D&C 66:10). To be *cumbered* means to be hindered or weighed down by something that prevents you from progressing. The ensuing command to forsake all unrighteousness reminds us that sin is the primary obstacle that cumbers our spiritual progression. The Lord specifically warned William to be on guard against sexual immorality, a temptation that he had apparently struggled with (see D&C 66:10). The Lord promised William that if he obeyed His counsel and continued faithful "unto the end" he would be crowned with eternal life (D&C 66:12).

William served the Lord faithfully for a time, and in 1835 he was called to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Sadly, William did not heed the

Lord's counsel to continue faithful to the end and later apostatized and turned against the Prophet Joseph Smith. When he was excommunicated from the Church in May 1838, he admitted that he had "quit praying, and keeping the commandments, and indulged himself in his lustful desires" (Joseph Smith, in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. B-1, page 796, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 67: Additional Historical Background

By the fall of 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith had received more than 60 revelations from the Lord. Preparations were made to compile and publish the revelations to make them more accessible to Church members. On November 1–2, 1831, a group of priesthood leaders convened at a conference in the home of John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson in Hiram, Ohio, to discuss the publication of the revelations in a single volume that would be titled the Book of Commandments. These priesthood leaders decided to print 10,000 copies (later the number was reduced to 3,000 copies).



A special conference of the Church was held here, in the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, in early November 1831 to compile the revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith and prepare them for publication in the Book of Commandments (see D&C 67, section heading).

The Prophet intended to include in the Book of Commandments a written testimony from the elders declaring the truthfulness of the revelations in the same manner the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses had testified of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. At one point in the conference, Joseph asked the elders "what testimony they were willing to attach to these commandants [revelations] which should shortly be sent to the world" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers,*

Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833, ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 97). Several of the brethren "arose and said that they were willing to testify to the world that they knew that [the revelations] were of the Lord" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 97). However, some of the elders had not received such a spiritual conviction, and they hesitated to testify that the revelations were given by inspiration from God. Some of the elders also voiced concerns regarding the language used in the revelations. In response to these concerns, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 67.

Doctrine and Covenants 67

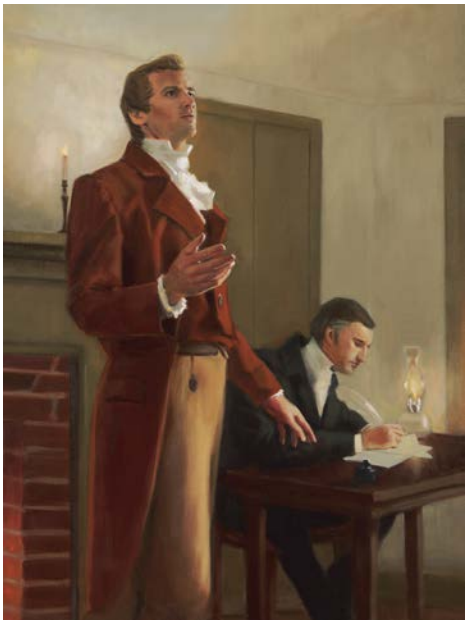
The Lord counsels those who questioned the language of the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith

Read Doctrine and Covenants 67:1–9, looking for the Lord's response to concerns about the language of the revelations.

Doctrine and Covenants 67:5–9. "That which is righteous cometh down from above, from the Father"

It seems that some of the elders had lingering doubts about the divine origin of the revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith because of the imperfections in language and composition. Joseph Smith lacked formal education, and he was not always eloquent in speaking or writing. Nevertheless, the Lord revealed truth to His Prophet and allowed him to express it "after the manner of [his] language" (D&C 1:24). The Lord challenged those who felt that they could express themselves more eloquently than the Prophet to appoint the wisest man among them to select what he considered the least revelation and write one "like unto it" (D&C 67:6). William E. McLellin, a former schoolteacher, accepted the challenge.

Joseph Smith described the outcome of William's attempt to write a revelation: "[William] E. McLellin … endeavored to write a [revelation] like unto one of the least of the Lord's, but failed; it was an awful responsibility to write in the name of the Lord. The elders, and all present, that witnessed this vain attempt of a man to imitate the language of Jesus Christ, renewed their faith in the fulness of the gospel and in the truth of the commandments and revelations which the Lord had given to the church through my instrumentality; and the elders signified a willingness to bear testimony of their truth to all the world" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 162, josephsmithpapers.org).



***Joseph Smith Jr. Receiving Revelation,* by Daniel A. Lewis. Some of the elders were critical of the wording the Prophet Joseph Smith used in his revelations (see D&C 67:4–9).**

The Lord bore testimony to the elders that the revelations came "down from above" (D&C 67:9) and told the elders that they were to bear record that the revelations were true or they would be under condemnation (see D&C 67:8). Following the failed attempt to write a revelation, the assembled brethren signed a statement bearing testimony of the revelations. This testimony with the names of the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835 is included in the introduction of the more recent editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

For additional insight regarding the language of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 1:24 in this manual.

What can you learn from this account that can help you avoid judging the character or motives of our Church leaders because of their imperfections?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 67:10–14, looking for the Lord's instructions to the elders at the conference and the promised blessing if they obeyed.

Doctrine and Covenants 67:10–14. "Continue in patience until ye are perfected"

In both ancient and modern times, the veil of the temple has symbolized separation from the presence of the Lord. The Lord promised the elders who were in attendance at the conference that if they stripped themselves of jealousies and fears and humbled themselves, the veil between Him and them would be rent and they would see and know Him (see D&C 67:10). The Lord explained that no one

had seen Him except those who had been "quickened," or spiritually enlivened, by the Spirit of God, because the "natural [mortal] man" cannot abide His presence (D&C 67:11–12; see also Moses 1:11). Although the Lord declared that the elders were not sufficiently ready to receive such a glorious blessing at that time, He encouraged them to "continue in patience until [they were] perfected" (D&C 67:13).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency explained the role of patience in becoming perfected:

"Without patience, we cannot please God; we cannot become perfect. Indeed, patience is a purifying process that refines understanding, deepens happiness, focuses action, and offers hope for peace. …

"… Patience means active waiting and enduring. It means staying with something and doing all that we can—working, hoping, and exercising faith; bearing hardship with fortitude, even when the desires of our hearts are delayed. Patience is not simply enduring; it is enduring well! …

"Patience is a godly attribute that can heal souls, unlock treasures of knowledge and understanding, and transform ordinary men and women into saints and angels. …

"Patience is a process of perfection. The Savior Himself said that in your patience you possess your souls [see Luke 21:19]. Or, to use another translation of the Greek text, in your patience you *win mastery* of your souls [see Luke 21:19 footnote *b*]. Patience means to abide in faith, knowing that sometimes it is in the waiting rather than in the receiving that we grow the most" ("Continue in Patience," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2010, 56–57, 59).

Ponder what you can do to continue serving and obeying the Lord in patience. Act on any promptings you receive.

Doctrine and Covenants 68: Additional Historical Background

During the Church conference in Hiram, Ohio, Orson Hyde, Luke S. Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and William E. McLellin petitioned the Prophet Joseph Smith to make known the Lord's will concerning them. Three of the four men had recently been ordained to the office of high priest, and Lyman E. Johnson was ordained shortly thereafter. William later recalled that when he was ordained a high priest, he "did not understand the duties of the office" (W. E. McLellan *[sic]*, M. D., letter to D. H. Bays, May 24, 1870, in *Saints' Herald,* Sept. 15, 1870, 553). This lack of understanding may have been one of the reasons the men petitioned the Prophet for a revelation, which is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 68.

Doctrine and Covenants 68

The Lord explains the meaning of scripture, counsels those called to preach the gospel, reveals truths about the calling of bishop, and gives instructions to the Saints in Zion

Read Doctrine and Covenants 68:1–5, looking for the Lord's instructions to Orson Hyde and those ordained to the office of high priest.

Doctrine and Covenants 68:1–4 "When moved upon by the Holy Ghost"

The Lord directed His instructions in these verses to Orson Hyde and all those ordained "unto this priesthood" (D&C 68:2), which likely refers to the office of high priest but was then called the high priesthood. Orson and several others had recently been ordained to this office. At the time of this revelation, the office of high priest was the highest office in the Church, aside from the offices of First and Second Elder who were also designated Apostles; other presiding offices in the priesthood were established later. Thus, the instruction in Doctrine and Covenants 68:3–4 was probably not directed to priesthood holders generally but rather to those ordained to the high priesthood, or office of high priest. These servants of the Lord had the responsibility to proclaim the gospel by the Spirit, and the Lord declared that the words they spoke "when moved upon by the Holy Ghost" would be His will, mind, word, and voice and have the power to lead people to salvation (D&C 68:4). **President J. Reuben Clark** (1871–1961) of the First Presidency taught how this responsibility is now held by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Over the years, a broader interpretation has been given to [D&C 68:4.] …

"In considering the problem involved here, it should be in mind that some of the General Authorities [meaning the Apostles] have had assigned to them a special calling; they possess a special gift; they are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, which gives them a special spiritual endowment in connection with their teaching of the people. They have the right, the power, and authority to declare the mind and will of God to his people, subject to the over-all power and authority of the President of the Church. Others of the General Authorities are not given this special spiritual endowment. …

"… Only the President of the Church, the Presiding High Priest, is sustained as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator for the Church, and he alone has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church, or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church" ("When Are Church Leaders' Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?" *Church News,* July 31, 1954, 9–10).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the following example of how the principle taught in Doctrine and Covenants 68:4 applies to general conference: "I ask you to reflect in the days ahead not only on the messages you have heard but also on the unique phenomenon that general conference itself is—what we as Latter-day Saints believe such conferences to be

and what we invite the world to hear and observe about them. We testify to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people that God not only lives but also that He speaks, that for our time and in our day the counsel you have heard is, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, 'the will of the Lord, … the word of the Lord, … the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation' [D&C 68:4]" ("An Ensign to the Nations," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 111).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified when and how the Lord makes His word known through His prophets:

"Not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. It is commonly understood in the Church that a statement made by one leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion, not meant to be official or binding for the whole Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that 'a prophet [is] a prophet only when he [is] acting as such' [in *History of the Church,* 5:265]. President [J. Reuben] Clark … observed: …

"'… The Church will know by the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the body of the members, whether the brethren in voicing their views are "moved upon by the Holy Ghost"; and in due time that knowledge will be made manifest' [J. Reuben Clark Jr., 'When Are Church Leaders' Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?' *Church News,* July 31, 1954, 10]" ("The Doctrine of Christ," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 88).



"Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you" (D&C 68:6).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 68:6–24, looking for the Lord's instructions to those called to preach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 68:14–21. The office of bishop and descendants of Aaron

At the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 68 was given, Edward Partridge served as the only bishop in the Church. However, the Lord promised that in due time He would call "other bishops" (D&C 68:14). A month later, on December 4, 1831, the Lord called Newel K. Whitney to serve as the bishop for Ohio (see D&C 72:1–8). Those called to serve as bishops were to be high priests in good standing, called and appointed by the First Presidency. However, the Lord also revealed that firstborn sons of Aaron's literal descendants have a right to this office by virtue of lineage if called, found worthy, and ordained by the Presidency of the High Priesthood (the First Presidency). Anciently, Moses' brother Aaron was the presiding high priest of the Aaronic Priesthood. In ancient Israel, only descendants of Aaron could hold the office of priest, and the high priest was selected from among the firstborn of his descendants.

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that the provision about descendants of Aaron in Doctrine and Covenants 68:15–21 refers to the office of Presiding Bishop of the Church: "This has reference only to the one who presides over the Aaronic Priesthood. It has no reference whatever to bishops of wards. Further, such a one must be designated by the First Presidency of the Church and receive his anointing and ordination under their hands. … In the absence of knowledge concerning such a descendant, any high priest, chosen by the Presidency, may hold the office of Presiding Bishop" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:92–93; see also D&C 107:13–16, 69–83).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–35, looking for the instructions that the Lord gave to parents in the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28. "Inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes"

The Lord taught that parents in the Church have the responsibility to teach their children to understand the first principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see D&C 68:25). Parents are not only to teach their children to understand the doctrine but also to observe the teachings of the gospel so as to "walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28). This includes teaching their children to pray, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and to avoid idleness (see D&C 68:28–31).

Brother Tad R. Callister of the Sunday School General Presidency gave additional insight into parents' responsibility to teach their children the gospel: "As parents, we are to be the prime gospel teachers and examples for our children—not the bishop, the Sunday School, the Young Women or Young Men, but the parents. As their prime gospel teachers, we can teach them the power and reality of the Atonement—of their identity and divine destiny—and in so doing give them a rock foundation upon which to build. When all is said and done, the home is the ideal forum for teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ" ("Parents: The Prime Gospel Teachers of Their Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 32–33).



Parents are commanded to "teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson warned parents about the spiritual danger of failing to teach their children the truths of the gospel:

"I have heard a few parents state that they don't want to impose the gospel on their children but want them to make up their own minds about what they will believe and follow. They think that in this way they are allowing children to exercise their agency. What they forget is that the intelligent use of agency requires knowledge of the truth, of things as they really are (see D&C 93:24). Without that, young people can hardly be expected to understand and evaluate the alternatives that come before them. Parents should consider how the adversary approaches their children. He and his followers are not promoting objectivity but are vigorous, multimedia advocates of sin and selfishness.

"Seeking to be neutral about the gospel is, in reality, to reject the existence of God and His authority. We must, rather, acknowledge Him and His omniscience if we want our children to see life's choices clearly and be able to think for themselves" ("Moral Discipline," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 107).

What can you do to prepare now to fulfill the responsibility that the Lord has given parents to teach their children the gospel?

Doctrine and Covenants 68:25 "The sin be upon the heads of the parents"

It is important to remember that the word *sin* (singular) is used in Doctrine and Covenants 68:25, not the word *sins.* It does not refer to the sins children may commit but to the sin of the parents in not teaching their children the doctrine of

the kingdom. Misreading this verse may cause some parents to mistakenly feel they are responsible for the sins of their children. Consequently, some parents blame themselves for their children's poor choices despite having diligently taught them correct principles.

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–1995) provided the following comforting counsel to those who may feel they have been unsuccessful as a parent because of a wayward child:

"A successful parent is one who has loved, one who has sacrificed, and one who has cared for, taught, and ministered to the needs of a child. If you have done all of these and your child is still wayward or troublesome or worldly, it could well be that you are, nevertheless, a successful parent. …

"… Don't give up hope for a boy or a girl who has strayed. Many who have appeared to be completely lost have returned. We must be prayerful and, if possible, let our children know of our love and concern. …

"We should never let Satan fool us into thinking that all is lost. Let us take pride in the good and right things we have done; reject and cast out of our lives those things that are wrong; look to the Lord for forgiveness, strength, and comfort; and then move onward" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* [2015], 228–29).

Doctrine and Covenants 69: Additional Historical Background

In late October or early November 1831, Oliver Cowdery was assigned to take the transcripts of revelations that the Prophet Joseph Smith had received to Independence, Missouri. The revelations were to be printed there by William W. Phelps in his printing office. Oliver was also appointed to take with him money contributed for the establishment of Zion. To help safeguard the manuscript and money, it was decided that a traveling companion should accompany him. On November 11, 1831, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 69, in which He appointed John Whitmer to accompany Oliver Cowdery to Missouri. At the time this revelation was received, John Whitmer was serving as the Church historian and recorder (see D&C 47:1–3).

Doctrine and Covenants 69

The Lord commands John Whitmer to accompany Oliver Cowdery to Missouri and continue his duties as Church historian

Read Doctrine and Covenants 69, looking for the Lord's instructions to John Whitmer.

Doctrine and Covenants 69:3–8 "Writing and making a history of all the important things"

In March of 1831, John Whitmer was called by the Lord to "keep a regular history" of the Church and to assist the Prophet Joseph Smith by writing for him (D&C 47:1). This call was in harmony with the Lord's earlier counsel that "there shall be a

record kept among you" (D&C 21:1). The Lord reiterated to John Whitmer his responsibility to document the history of the Church by collecting and recording "all the important things" that transpired among the Saints (D&C 69:3). The purpose for keeping such a history is "for the good of the church, and for the rising generations" (D&C 69:8).

Doctrine and Covenants 70: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 70 during or immediately after a conference held in Hiram, Ohio, on November 12, 1831. This was the last of four special conferences that were held November 1–12. During these two weeks, Joseph Smith and others spent much of their time reviewing the revelations the Prophet had received and preparing them for publication. At this final conference, those present approved a resolution declaring the revelations "to be worth to the Church the riches of the whole Earth" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 138). Also at this conference the Prophet noted the contributions made by a handful of brethren who had labored with him from the beginning to bring forth the sacred writings given by the Lord. The conference passed a proposal to provide compensation from the sale of the publications for the families of those who were devoting their time to the preparation and publication of the revelations.

The elders voted that Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, and Sidney Rigdon "be appointed to manage [the revelations] according to the Laws of the Church [and] the commandments of the Lord" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 138). A later history states that the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 70 in answer to an inquiry. In this revelation the Lord sanctioned the decision to appoint individuals to oversee the publication of the revelations.

Doctrine and Covenants 70

The Lord appoints six men to serve as stewards over His revelations

Read Doctrine and Covenants 70, looking for instructions the Lord gave those appointed to oversee the publication of the revelations.

Doctrine and Covenants 70:3–8 "Stewards over the revelations and commandments"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 70, the Lord called Martin Harris and William W. Phelps to join the four men who had been previously appointed to serve as stewards over the revelations. These stewards were not only responsible for publishing the revelations but also for managing the revenue generated from the sale of the Book of Commandments. The Lord commanded them to use the profits to provide for their families and to consecrate what was left to the Lord's storehouse for the benefit of the people in Zion. The Lord organized this joint stewardship according to the principles of the law of consecration.

In March 1832, a revelation directed the Prophet Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Newel K. Whitney to organize "the Literary and Mercantile establishments" of the Church (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 198; spelling standardized). Consequently, the stewards over the revelations joined with the Church's bishops and those responsible for the storehouses in what would be called the United Firm (see section headings for D&C 78 and 82). The six men appointed to oversee the Church's printing endeavors made up a branch of the United Firm called the Literary Firm. In addition to the Book of Commandments, other publishing projects of the Literary Firm were the Church hymnal, children's literature, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and Church newspapers.

Consider the truths you have learned from Doctrine and Covenants 66–70, and prayerfully set a goal to act on them.

CHAPTER 26

Doctrine and Covenants 71–75

Introduction and Timeline

In the fall of 1831, former Church members Ezra Booth and Symonds Ryder tried to discredit the Church and its leaders and dissuade people from becoming members of the Church. They did so by speaking against the Church in public meetings and actively publishing anti-Mormon criticisms in local newspapers, which led to widespread antagonism. On December 1, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 71. In it, the Lord instructed Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to defend the Church and dispel falsehoods by proclaiming the gospel from the scriptures as guided by the Spirit.

The rapid growth of the Church in Kirtland, Ohio, coupled with Bishop Edward Partridge's relocation to Missouri, necessitated calling a new bishop to serve in Ohio. On December 4, 1831, Joseph Smith received the three revelations now combined in Doctrine and Covenants 72 (verses 1–8, 9–23, and 24–26). In these revelations the Lord called Newel K. Whitney to serve as bishop in Ohio and outlined his responsibilities.

After a month of preaching the gospel to dispel the falsehoods spread by Ezra Booth and Symonds Ryder, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon returned to Hiram, Ohio. On January 10, 1832, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 73, wherein the Lord instructed Joseph and Sydney to resume their translation of the Bible.

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 74 was received in 1830 before Joseph Smith moved to Ohio. It contains the Lord's explanation of 1 Corinthians 7:14.

At a Church conference held on January 25, 1832, Joseph Smith received the two revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 75 (verses 1–12 and 13–36). In these revelations the Lord instructed the elders concerning their missionary duties and assigned them mission companions.

1830

Doctrine and Covenants 74 was received.

October 1831

The *Ohio Star* newspaper began publishing nine letters from apostate Ezra Booth denouncing the Church and its leaders.

November 1, 1831

A Church conference passed a resolution to publish the revelations of Joseph Smith as the Book of Commandments.

December 1, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 71 was received.

December 4, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 72 was received.

January 10, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 73 was received.

January 25, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 75 was received.

Consider criticisms you have heard about the Church. What are some ways that Church members can respond to such criticisms? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 71, look for a principle that will help you know how to respond to those who criticize the Church, its leaders, and its teachings.

Doctrine and Covenants 71: Additional Historical Background

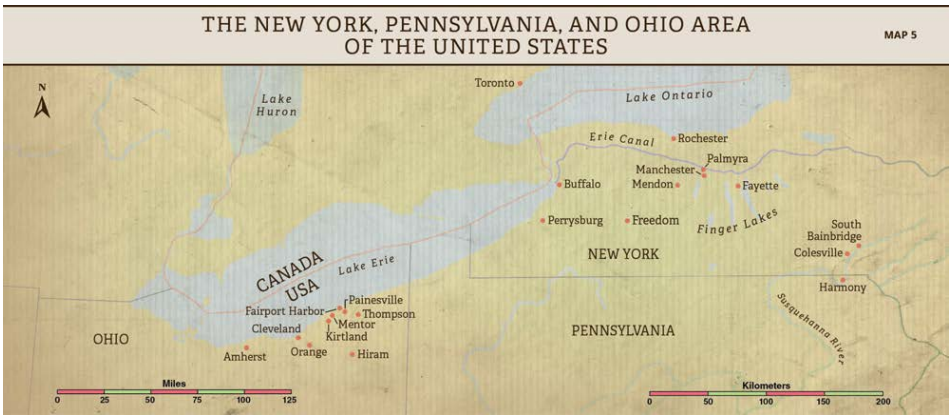
In October 1831, the *Ohio Star* newspaper began publishing letters that criticized the Church and its leaders. The letters were written by Ezra Booth, a former

Methodist preacher who became a member of the Church after reading the Book of Mormon and seeing the Prophet Joseph Smith miraculously heal Alice (Elsa) Johnson's rheumatic arm. However, pride led Ezra to be critical of the Prophet and the Church. He had traveled to Missouri as a missionary in the summer of 1831, but he became disillusioned by the rigors of the journey. He was also disappointed when the land of Zion and Joseph Smith's leadership did not meet his expectations. (See Matthew McBride, "Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 131–32, or history.lds.org; Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting for Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* [2009], 296.)

After returning from Missouri in September 1831, Ezra Booth began criticizing the Church and the Prophet Joseph Smith. At a conference of elders held on September 6, Ezra was prohibited "from preaching as an Elder in this Church" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 61). Later that month, he and another dissident, Symonds Ryder, renounced their Church membership. In his letters to the *Ohio Star,* Ezra Booth denounced the Prophet Joseph Smith as an imposter, claiming that his revelations were a ploy to defraud people of their money. Joseph Smith's history records that Booth's letters, "by their coloring, falsity, and vain calculations to overthrow the work of the Lord, exposed [Booth's] weakness, wickedness and folly, and left him a monument of his own shame for the world to wonder at" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 154, josephsmithpapers.org).

Symonds Ryder (or Simonds Rider) learned about the restored gospel from Ezra Booth. Symonds became a member of the Church after witnessing what he considered to be a miracle. Shortly after his baptism he was ordained an elder of the Church. Later accounts suggest that when he received an official commission to preach the gospel, he found that his name was misspelled on the certificate. Supposing that a revealed call would have been free from even small errors, Symonds began to question the extent of Joseph Smith's prophetic inspiration. Symonds was further influenced by the failing faith of his close friend Ezra Booth, who returned disappointed from his mission to Missouri. More than anything else, his concerns over the principle of consecration seem to have led to his disaffection. (See A. S. Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio* [1875], 220–21, 251–52.) After separating himself from the Church in the fall of 1831, Symonds Ryder gave copies of one of the Prophet Joseph Smith's unpublished revelations to the *Western Courier* newspaper in an attempt to dissuade people from joining the Church. Ryder later claimed that new converts could learn from these revelations that "a plot was laid to take their property from them and place it under the control of Joseph Smith the prophet" (in *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 144–45; see also Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples,* 221).

The Lord's revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 71 came as a result of the agitation and negative publicity caused by Ezra Booth and Symonds Ryder.



Doctrine and Covenants 71

The Lord instructs Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to respond to critics of the Church

Read Doctrine and Covenants 71, looking for what the Lord counseled the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to do to calm unfriendly feelings toward the Church that resulted from the attacks of Ezra Booth and Symonds Ryder.

Doctrine and Covenants 71:1. Proclaim the gospel "out of the scriptures, according to [the] Spirit"

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to respond to criticism of the Church by teaching the truths of the gospel "out of the scriptures, according to that portion of Spirit and power which shall be given unto you" (D&C 71:1) This counsel serves as a pattern for all Church members when responding to those who criticize the Church and its teachings. The prophet Alma in the Book of Mormon taught that preaching the word of God has a "more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else" (Alma 31:5). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "The Lord has told us that 'the sword of the Spirit … is the word of God' (Ephesians 6:17); it can facilitate communication and penetrate as nothing else. Thus holy scripture and the words of living prophets occupy a privileged position; they are the key to teaching by the Spirit so that we communicate in what the Prophet Joseph Smith called 'the language of inspiration' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 56)" ("Teaching by the Spirit—'The Language of Inspiration'" [address given at the Church Educational System Symposium, Aug. 15, 1991], 1).

Based on Elder Maxwell's statement, why would sharing truths from the scriptures, as guided by the Spirit, be effective in responding to criticisms against the Church? As you study the scriptures and words of the prophets, look for truths that invite the Spirit to testify and that teach what you could share in response to such criticisms.

Doctrine and Covenants 71:2–7. "Confound your enemies"

The Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to preach the gospel to the Saints and the people in the surrounding region (see D&C 71:2). In addition, the Lord instructed them to "confound [their] enemies" (D&C 71:7), or in other words, disprove their false claims by inviting them to meet and discuss their allegations. In obedience to the Lord's commandment, Sidney Rigdon invited Ezra Booth to meet him at a lecture on December 25, 1831, "where he would 'review' Booth's letters and show them to be 'an unfair and false representation of the subjects on which they treat'" (in *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 145). He also asked Symonds Ryder to a public meeting where they could discuss the Book of Mormon. Neither man accepted the invitation.



The Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, moved to Hiram, Ohio, to the home of John Johnson, so that the Prophet could continue his work on the translation of the Bible (see D&C 64; 71 section headings).

For the next month the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon worked to dispel the unfriendly feelings toward the Church resulting from Ezra Booth's newspaper articles. The two men preached throughout northern Ohio, teaching the gospel and repudiating the claims that were directed at the Church and its leaders. According to the Prophet, their efforts to follow the Lord's counsel and respond by preaching the truths of the gospel by the power of the Spirit "did much towards allaying the excited feelings which were growing out of the scandalous letters then being published in the 'Ohio Star,' at Ravenna, by the … apostate Ezra Booth" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 179, josephsmithpapers.org).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that when we encounter criticism against the Church and its teachings, it is essential to respond in a Christlike way according to the guidance of the Holy Ghost:

"When we respond to our accusers as the Savior did, we not only become more Christlike, we invite others to feel His love and follow Him as well.

"To respond in a Christlike way cannot be scripted or based on a formula. The Savior responded differently in every situation. …

"As we respond to others, each circumstance will be different. Fortunately, the Lord knows the hearts of our accusers and how we can most effectively respond to them. *As true disciples seek guidance from the Spirit, they receive inspiration tailored to each encounter.* And in every encounter, *true disciples respond in ways that invite the Spirit of the Lord*" ("Christian Courage: The Price of Discipleship," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 72–73).

Ponder the importance of following the Savior's example and the guidance of the Spirit when responding to those who criticize and attack the Church.

Doctrine and Covenant 71:9. "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the Lord's promise that if they remained faithful, their enemies would be humbled (see D&C 71:7). The Lord then reiterated the promise He made to ancient Israel through the prophet Isaiah that "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17; see D&C 71:7). In other words, God and His work will always triumph, regardless of attacks from critics of the Church. Despite the apostasy and attacks of Ezra Booth and Symonds Ryder, missionaries continued to find success in preaching the gospel. Ira Ames, who lived in New York, recalled that when he read Booth's letters in the newspaper, he "felt an impression that there was something to Mormonism. There was considerable talk about it in the neighborhood" (in Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples,* 302). Some time after Ira Ames read Booth's letters, missionaries came to Ira's village and he was baptized a member of the Church (see Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples,* 303). Thus, while Booth and Ryder hoped to dissuade people from embracing the restored gospel, their influence increased people's exposure to the Church, and in some instances this contributed to more conversions.

Doctrine and Covenants 72: Additional Historical Background

In obedience to the Lord's commandment (see D&C 71:1–7), on December 3, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Ridgon traveled from Hiram to Kirtland, Ohio, to proclaim the gospel to help dispel hostile feelings against the Church. According to the Prophet's history, the next day, December 4, "several of the Elders and members assembled together to learn their duty and for edification," and after discussing their "temporal and Spiritual welfare," the Prophet received three related revelations, which are now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 72 (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 176, josephsmithpapers.org). With the Church's expansion into Missouri and Bishop Edward Partridge's relocation to Independence, the Saints in Ohio were left without a bishop. In one of

the revelations, the Lord declared the need to call a new bishop in Ohio (see D&C 72:2).

Doctrine and Covenants 72

The Lord calls Newel K. Whitney as bishop in Ohio and explains the duties of a bishop

Read Doctrine and Covenants 72:1–6, looking for why the Saints in Ohio needed a bishop.

Doctrine and Covenants 72:2–3. "To render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity"

Because some of the Church members in Ohio were living the law of consecration, a bishop was needed to receive consecrated properties, distribute and oversee individual stewardships, collect surpluses, and disperse funds from the storehouse to those in need (see the commentary for D&C 42:30–39 in this manual). The Lord required the Saints to "render an account" of their stewardships to the bishop (D&C 72:3). The principle of stewardship is based on the teaching that all things belong to the Lord and we are His stewards (see D&C 104:13–16). While we are not given stewardships under the law of consecration today, the Lord does bestow upon us both spiritual and temporal responsibilities for which we are accountable to Him.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught of one such responsibility for which we will need to render an account:

"Each of you has an eternal calling from which no Church officer has authority to release you. This is a calling given you by our Heavenly Father Himself. In this eternal calling, as with all other callings, you have a stewardship. … This most important stewardship is the glorious responsibility your Father in Heaven has given you to watch over and care for your own soul.

"At some future day, you and I will each hear the voice of the Lord calling us forward to render an account of our mortal stewardship. This accounting will occur when we are called up to 'stand before [the Lord] at the great and judgment day' [2 Nephi 9:22]" ("True to the Truth," *Ensign,* May 1997, 16).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 72:7–19, looking for the responsibilities the Lord gave to newly called Bishop Newel K. Whitney.

Doctrine and Covenants 72:8. "My servant Newel K. Whitney is the man who shall be appointed"

Newell K. Whitney was a businessman who owned a store in Kirtland, Ohio, with his business partner, A. Sidney Gilbert. Before learning about the restored gospel, Newell and his wife, Ann, had been part of Sidney Rigdon's congregation of Reformed Baptists, and they "desired the things of the Spirit. One night in 1829, as

they were praying to be guided, they received a powerful spiritual manifestation. Ann explained:

"'The Spirit rested upon us and a cloud overshadowed the house. … A solemn awe pervaded us. We saw the cloud and felt the Spirit of the Lord. Then we heard a voice out of the cloud saying, "Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming." At this we marveled greatly, but from that moment we knew that the word of the Lord was coming to Kirtland' [Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia,* 4 vols. (1901–36), 1:223]" ("Newel K. Whitney: A Man of Faith and Service," Museum Treasures, history.lds.org).

Not long after that experience, the Whitneys heard the word of the Lord when Sidney Rigdon invited missionaries to preach to his congregations. The Whitneys became members of the Church in November 1830. A few months later Joseph and Emma Smith arrived in Kirtland. The Prophet wrote: "I and my wife lived [with] the family of Brother Whitney several weeks, and received every kindness and attention, which could be expected, and especially from Sister Whitney" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 93, josephsmithpapers.org). Later, in September 1832, the Whitneys invited Joseph and Emma Smith to live in the dwelling part of their store, which became the headquarters of the Church for a time.



Newel K. Whitney was called to be a bishop. His store eventually became a storehouse from which he could help meet the needs of the poor (see D&C 72:8–12).

When Newel was called in December 1831 to serve as bishop in Ohio, he expressed feelings of inadequacy to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Bishop Whitney's grandson, **Elder Orson F. Whitney** (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, recounted how his grandfather felt when called as bishop and the assurances he received:

"The thought of assuming this important responsibility (the office of bishop) was almost more than he could bear. Though in natural gifts few men were better qualified for such a position, he nevertheless distrusted his ability, and deemed himself incapable of discharging the high and holy trust. In his perplexity he appealed to the Prophet:

"'I cannot see a bishop in myself, Brother Joseph; but if you say it's the Lord's will, I'll try.'

"'You need not take my word alone;' answered the Prophet, kindly, 'Go and ask Father for yourself.'

"Newel … determined to do as [the Prophet] advised. His humble, heartfelt prayer was answered. In the silence of night and the solitude of his chamber, he heard a voice from heaven: *'Thy strength is in me.'* The words were few and simple, but they had a world of meaning. His doubts were dispelled like dew before the dawn. He straightway sought the Prophet, told him he was satisfied, and was willing to accept the office to which he had been called" (in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church,* 1:271).

Newel K. Whitney served as bishop until his death in 1850.

How can Bishop Whitney's experience help those who may feel overwhelmed by a calling or an assignment in the Church?

Doctrine and Covenants 72:9–19. The duties of a bishop

During this early period of organization, the Church was not divided into wards or branches with bishops or branch presidents presiding over each ward or branch as it is now. As of December 4, 1831, there were only two bishops—Bishop Edward Partridge in Missouri and Bishop Newel K. Whitney in Ohio. The responsibilities outlined by the Lord as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 72:9–19 related primarily to Bishop Whitney's role under the law of consecration.

While we do not live the law of consecration in the same manner as the early Saints did, many of the duties outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 72 still apply to bishops today. Bishops are responsible for overseeing the distribution of food and supplies from bishops' storehouses to members who are in need, and they receive and have responsibility for the funds of the Church in the form of tithing, fast offerings, and other donations (see D&C 72:10). Bishops serve as the Lord's representatives when members render an account of their responsibilities and callings (see D&C 72:11). They look after the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Saints. In particular, they have a duty to seek out and care for the poor and needy within their ward boundaries (see D&C 72:11–12). As judges in Israel, bishops also have the solemn responsibility to determine and certify the worthiness of members to be baptized, receive the priesthood, serve missions, enter the house of the Lord, and serve in ward callings (see D&C 72:17). In addition, as common judges they are responsible for convening and conducting disciplinary councils in their ward in cases of serious transgression (see D&C 58:17–18).

In what ways have you or your family been blessed by the faithful service of a bishop or branch president?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 72:20–26, looking for the Lord's instructions regarding those who were appointed to oversee the Church's publication efforts and the Lord's instructions regarding the Saints who were migrating to Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 73: Additional Historical Background

After spending a month preaching the gospel in eastern Ohio, trying to counter the effects of Ezra Booth's letters against the Church and its leaders, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon returned to the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio. A few days later, on January 10, 1832, the Prophet dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 73, "making known the will of the Lord" unto the elders of the Church until the convening of the next conference, which was held two weeks later (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 179, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 73

The Lord instructs Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to recommence translation of the Bible

Read Doctrine and Covenants 73, looking for the Lord's instructions to the elders of the Church, as well as to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon.

Doctrine and Covenants 73:3–4. "It is expedient to translate again"

The Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to resume working on the inspired translation of the Bible and to continue preaching locally until the next Church conference (see D&C 73:3–4). After the conference, however, they were to devote their time fully to "the work of translation until it be finished" (D&C 73:4). The Prophet and Sidney Rigdon worked diligently on the Bible translation from this time until July 2, 1833, when the translators wrote to the brethren in Missouri that they had, that day, completed the translation of the Bible. Portions of Joseph Smith's translation are now contained in the Pearl of Great Price (the book of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew) and in increasingly more languages in the Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible. The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible had "a significant influence on the Church in the way it shaped the content of the Doctrine and Covenants. More than half of the current Doctrine and Covenants consists of revelations received during the three-year period in which Joseph Smith labored over the Bible translation. Many revelations were received as direct answers to questions Joseph was inspired to ask as his understanding of the gospel expanded during the effort to restore plain and precious parts of the Bible"

(Elizabeth Maki, "Joseph Smith's Bible Translation," in *Revelations in Context,* 103, or history.lds.org).

For additional explanation of Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 35:20 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 74: Additional Historical Background

When Church historian and recorder John Whitmer copied the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 74 into the official record book, he recorded the date as 1830 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 228). Years later, those editing the Prophet Joseph Smith's history mistakenly wrote that the Prophet received this revelation in January 1832 while he was making inspired revisions to the New Testament. However, John Whitmer identified Wayne County, New York, as the place where Joseph Smith dictated the revelation and 1830 as the date when it was received. The Prophet's later history described this revelation as "an Explanation of the epistle to the first Corinthians, 7th Chapter, 14th verse" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 178, josephsmithpapers.org). The passage in 1 Corinthians 7:14 had often been cited in Joseph Smith's day to justify infant baptism.

Doctrine and Covenants 74

The Lord explains the meaning of 1 Corinthians 7:14

Read Doctrine and Covenants 74, looking for the Lord's explanation of 1 Corinthians 7:14.

Doctrine and Covenants 74:1–5. The false traditions of our fathers

Doctrine and Covenants 74 provides important historical context to the Apostle Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 7:14. His counsel to the Saints in Corinth addressed a problem that developed when wives converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and their husbands still practiced the law of Moses. We read in Doctrine and Covenants 74:3 that conflicts arose when fathers desired to have their male children circumcised and become subject to the law of Moses, which had been fulfilled by the Savior and His atoning sacrifice. Many children in these situations, raised under the law of Moses, came of age and "gave heed to the traditions of their fathers and believed not the gospel of Christ" (D&C 74:4). Paul counseled the Saints who were already married to unbelievers not to divorce their spouses but to remain married and live faithfully. By so doing, spouses could have a sanctifying influence on their families (see 1 Corinthians 7:13–14; D&C 74:1).

The Apostle Paul was not teaching that children are born unclean or sinful. Rather, he taught that a believing spouse could have a righteous influence that could lead children, when they reached the age of accountability, to obey the gospel and become "holy" (1 Corinthians 7:14; D&C 74:1) through the Savior, Jesus Christ.

According to Doctrine and Covenants 74:5, Paul counseled those who were not yet married against marrying unbelievers unless the spouses agreed that the law of Moses "be done away among them." The Lord explained that these recommendations were not commandments from Him, but rather counsel from Paul himself.

Doctrine and Covenants 74:6–7. "The tradition … that little children are unholy"

Some of the Jews who followed the law of Moses in the Apostle Paul's day believed in the false tradition that male infants were born unholy, or unclean, unless they entered a covenant with God through circumcision. Such a teaching, however, was in conflict with the prophets' counsel that little children are innocent because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 3:16), "have eternal life" (Mosiah 15:25), and "are alive in Christ" (Moroni 8:12, 22). In addition, to teach that children are unholy contradicts the Lord's purpose for instituting the practice of circumcision with Abraham. With added insight from the Joseph Smith Translation, we learn that circumcision represented a covenant between the Lord and Abraham's posterity and that "children are not accountable before [the Lord] until they are eight years old" (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 17:11 [in the Bible appendix], scriptures.lds.org).



The Prophet Joseph Smith clarified 1 Corinthians 7:14, explaining that little children are holy and do not need ordinances of salvation until they become accountable (see D&C 68:27; 74:5–7).

For additional teachings regarding the salvation of little children, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 29:46–50 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 75: Additional Historical Background



The Prophet Joseph Smith was ordained on January 25, 1832, in Amherst, Ohio, as the President of the High Priesthood, meaning the President of the Church (see D&C 75, section heading).

On January 25, 1832, the Church convened a conference at Amherst, Ohio, about 50 miles east of Kirtland. The Prophet Joseph Smith's history states that during the conference "the Elders seemed anxious for me to enquire of the Lord, that they might know his will, or learn what would be most pleasing to him, for them to do, in order to bring men to a sense of their condition" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 180, josephsmithpapers.org). Orson Pratt, who was appointed president of the elders at the conference, later recounted, "At this Conference the Prophet Joseph was acknowledged President of the High Priesthood, and hands laid on him by Elder Sidney Rigdon who sealed upon his head the blessings which he had formerly received." Elder Pratt also noted that "by the request of the Priesthood, the Prophet inquired of the Lord, and a revelation was given and written in the presence of the whole assembly, appointing many of the Elders to missions" ("History of Orson Pratt," *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star,* vol. 27 [Jan. 28, 1865], 56). The Prophet dictated two revelations at the conference, which were later combined and are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 75. The first revelation (D&C 75:1–22) was given to a group of elders who had submitted their names for missionary service. The second revelation (D&C 75:23–36) was given to a group of elders desiring to know the Lord's will concerning them.

Doctrine and Covenants 75

The Lord calls and instructs missionary companionships

Read Doctrine and Covenants 75, looking for the Lord's counsel to missionaries and the blessings He promises to those who faithfully proclaim His gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 75:2–5. The rewards of faithfully proclaiming the gospel

The Lord promised great blessings to those who faithfully proclaim the gospel, including honor, glory, and eternal life (see D&C 75:5). **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) taught of additional blessings that come to us as we faithfully share the gospel with others:

"Sharing the gospel brings peace and joy into our own lives, enlarges our own hearts and souls in behalf of others, increases our own faith, strengthens our own relationship with the Lord, and increases our own understanding of gospel truths.

"The Lord has promised great blessings to us in proportion to how well we share the gospel. We will receive help from the other side of the veil as the spiritual miracles occur. The Lord has told us that our sins will be forgiven more readily as we bring souls unto Christ and remain steadfast in bearing testimony to the world" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 259).



Faithful Saints who preach the gospel will gain eternal life (see D&C 75:1–5).

Doctrine and Covenants 75:27. "Made known from on high … whither they shall go"

In both of the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 75, the Lord emphasized the importance of prayer in missionary work. The Lord promised that if those who are called as missionaries would inquire of Him through prayer, "the Comforter [would] teach them all things that are expedient for them" (D&C 75:10) and direct them "wither they shall go" to proclaim the gospel (D&C 75:27). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified that as we pray for help and follow the promptings of the Spirit, the Lord will guide us in sharing the gospel with others:

"We must pray for the Lord's help and directions so we can be instruments in His hands for one who is now ready—one He would have us help today. Then, we must be alert to hear and heed the promptings of His Spirit in how we proceed.

"Those promptings will come. We know from countless personal testimonies that in His own way and His own time the Lord is preparing persons to accept His gospel. Such persons are searching, and when we are seeking to identify them the Lord will answer their prayers through answering ours. He will prompt and guide those who desire and who sincerely seek guidance in how, where, when, and with whom to share His gospel" ("Sharing the Gospel," *Ensign,* Nov. 2001, 8).

Ponder whom you could have a gospel conversation with or share a gospel message with. Prayerfully ask the Lord to help you know with whom you could share the gospel and how you might go about it.

Doctrine and Covenants 75:29. "Be diligent in all things"

The Lord's commandment to "be diligent in all things" (D&C 75:29) included His commandment to those called on missions to arrange for the support of their families while they served. If such arrangements could not be made, those men were obligated to remain at home, care for their families, and labor in the Church locally (see D&C 75:24–28). To be diligent in all things is to give persistent, careful, and energetic effort, especially in serving the Lord and obeying His commandments. The scriptures contain many examples and admonitions regarding diligence. **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency taught, "Diligently doing the things that matter most will lead us to the Savior of the world" ("Of Things That Matter Most," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 21).

Ponder the principles you have learned from your study of Doctrine and Covenants 71–75, and set a goal regarding how you can be more diligent in your service to the Lord and His Church.

CHAPTER 27

Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–49

Introduction and Timeline

On February 16, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were working on inspired revisions to the Bible (known as the Joseph Smith Translation). As Joseph Smith was translating John 5:29, he and Sidney pondered the meaning of the verse and were shown a vision, which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76. In this vision the Savior affirmed His reality and divinity, taught about the fall of Satan and the sons of perdition, and revealed the nature of the three kingdoms of glory and those who will inherit them.

The commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 76 will be divided over two lessons. This first lesson covers Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–49, which includes the Lord's promised blessings to the faithful, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon's witness of the Father and the Son, and an account of the fall of Lucifer and the sons of perdition.

January 25, 1832

Joseph Smith was ordained as President of the High Priesthood during a Church conference in Amherst, Ohio.

Late January 1832

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon returned to Hiram, Ohio, to work on the inspired translation of the New Testament.

February 16, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 76 was received.

March 24–25, 1832

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were taken by a mob at night and violently beaten and tarred and feathered in Hiram, Ohio.

Reflect upon your testimony of Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ. As you read Doctrine and Covenants 76, consider how the vision that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw of the Father and the Son can help you know how to receive greater personal revelation and deepen your testimony of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 76: Additional Historical Background

In early 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were working on the translation of the New Testament in Hiram, Ohio, at the home of John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson. During this intensive study of the scriptures, the Prophet reflected on the many truths that the Lord had revealed to the Saints and observed: "It was apparent that many important points, touching the Salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 183, josephsmithpapers.org).

One of the questions Joseph and Sidney were pondering during this time was what happens after death. The truths regarding life after death given through revelation (see, for example, 1 Nephi 15:32; D&C 19:3) led the Prophet to observe that "if God rewarded everyone according to the deeds done in the body, the term 'heaven,' as intended for the Saints' eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one" (in Manuscript History, vol. A-1, page 183; spelling and punctuation standardized). On February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were translating John 5:29, which states that the dead "shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the

resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

After the Prophet dictated the translation of this verse (see D&C 76:15–17), he and Sidney saw a vision "concerning the economy of God and his vast creation throughout all eternity" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 183; spelling standardized). Jesus Christ appeared to them and conversed with them (see D&C 76:14), and they were commanded to record the vision while they "were yet in the Spirit" (D&C 76:28, 80, 113). The vision revealed truths about the nature of the Father and the Son, the kingdoms of glory, and Satan's rebellion and the suffering of the sons of perdition.



The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received a series of visions in this room in the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, as they worked on the inspired translation of the Bible.

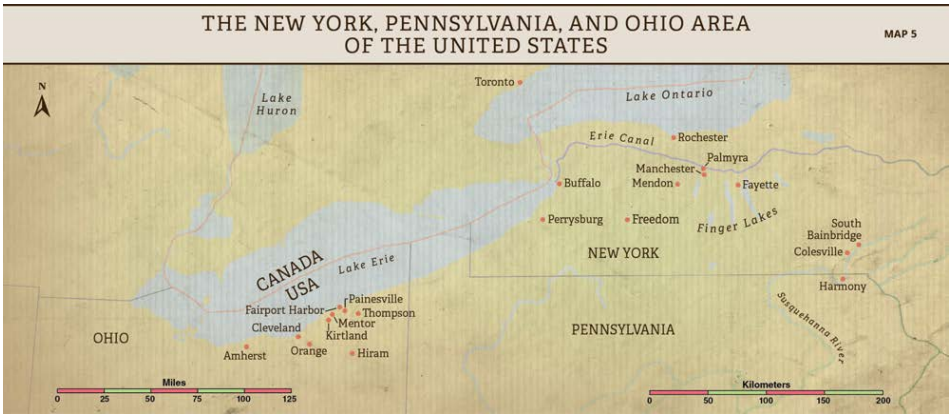
There were approximately 12 other persons who were present during the vision. One eyewitness, Philo Dibble, later recalled:

"The vision which is recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of 'Father Johnson,' in [Hiram], Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the spirit and saw the heavens open, there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time— … I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision. …

"Joseph would, at intervals, say: 'What do I see?' as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, 'I see the same.' Presently Sidney would say 'what do I see?' and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, 'I see the same.'

"This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision. …

"Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, 'Sidney is not used to it as I am' " (in "Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith," *Juvenile Instructor,* May 1892, 303–4).



Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–10

The Lord promises blessings to those who serve Him

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–10, looking for what God promised to reveal to those who serve Him in righteousness.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:5–10. "To them will I reveal all mysteries. … By my Spirit will I enlighten them"

The revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith are evidence that God guides His children and teaches them truth. The Lord promised His Saints that "inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time" (D&C 1:28). In addition to receiving direction through the Prophet's teachings, early Church members learned that "if thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61). The Lord introduced the sacred vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 with the promise that He would honor those who serve Him by revealing the mysteries of His kingdom through the power of the Spirit (see D&C 76:5–10).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained how personal revelation can bless us:

"It is the privilege of the children of God to come to God and get revelation. … God is not a respecter of persons; we all have the same privilege.

"We believe that we have a right to revelations, visions, and dreams from God, our heavenly Father; and light and intelligence, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the name of Jesus Christ, on all subjects pertaining to our spiritual welfare; if it so be that we keep his commandments, so as to render ourselves worthy in his sight.

"A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 132).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:7–10. What are the "hidden mysteries"?

The Lord promised to "reveal all … the hidden mysteries of [His] kingdom" and "the secrets of [His] will" (D&C 76:7, 10) to those who "serve [Him] in righteousness and in truth" (D&C 76:5). These mysteries include principles and truths of the gospel that can only be understood by the power of the Holy Ghost. Some mysteries or truths are revealed in sacred temples.

The Prophet Joseph Smith testified that "light … burst upon the world" through the vision that he and Sidney Rigdon received on February 16, 1832 (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 192, josephsmithpapers.org). Although Joseph and Sidney recorded much of the doctrine that was revealed to them in the vision, the Lord commanded that some of the truths He revealed were not to be written (see D&C 76:114–17). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** later said, "I could explain a hundredfold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive it. The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of His ways, as they can hear it" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1556, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation standardized).

What will you do to serve the Lord in righteousness and truth so you can receive promised revelation?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:11–24

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon see Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:11–24, looking for truths about revelation through the Holy Spirit and doctrine concerning Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:11–14. "By the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon recorded that while they were translating John 5:29 they were "in the Spirit" (D&C 76:11) and that "by the power of the Spirit [their] eyes were opened" (D&C 76:12). When one of God's children is influenced by the Holy Ghost, that person can begin to see things from God's perspective. **Elder Kim B. Clark** of the Seventy testified: "If we will look to Christ and open our eyes and our ears, the Holy Ghost will bless us to see the Lord Jesus

Christ working in our lives, strengthening our faith in Him with assurance and evidence. We increasingly will see all of our brothers and sisters the way God sees them, with love and compassion. We will hear the Savior's voice in the scriptures, in the whisperings of the Spirit, and in the words of the living prophets. We will see the power of God resting upon His prophet and all the leaders of His true and living Church, and we will know with a surety that this is God's holy work. We will see and understand ourselves and the world around us the way the Savior does. We will come to have what the Apostle Paul called 'the mind of Christ' [1 Corinthians 2:16]. We will have eyes to see and ears to hear, and we will build the kingdom of God" ("Eyes to See and Ears to Hear," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 125).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:15–19. "While we meditated upon these things"

The vision that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw came while they were pondering the inspired translation of John 5:29. The inspired translation of the verse "was given" to them (D&C 76:15) and "caused [them] to marvel" (D&C 76:18). Other visions and revelations have been received by prophets as they have pondered and meditated over the scriptures (see D&C 138:1–11; Joseph Smith—History 1:8–20).



Jesus's words about the rewards available through the Resurrection were recorded in John 5:29. The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were translating and pondering this passage when the visions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 were received (see D&C 76:15–16).

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency taught about the difference between studying and pondering and the relationship between pondering and receiving revelation: "Reading, studying, and pondering are not the same. We read words and we may get ideas. We study and we may discover patterns and connections in scripture. But when we ponder, we invite revelation by the Spirit.

Pondering, to me, is the thinking and the praying I do after reading and studying in the scriptures carefully" ("Serve with the Spirit," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 60).

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) affirmed, "Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* [2003], 32).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:19–24. "He lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw the glory of Jesus Christ as He stood "on the right hand of the Father" (D&C 76:20). They saw "the holy angels, and them who are sanctified … , worshiping God" (D&C 76:21) and "heard the voice bearing record that [Jesus Christ] is the Only Begotten of the Father" (D&C 76:23). This remarkable experience led the two witnesses to declare, "After all of the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!" (D&C 76:22). The phrase "last of all" does not mean that this was the last testimony of the Savior to ever be given. Rather, their testimony was the most recent witness of the reality of the Son of God in a long line of testimonies proclaimed by ancient prophets and Saints. Prophets, Apostles, and Saints throughout the world continue to proclaim their testimony of the living reality of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

On January 1, 2000, the **First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles** issued a statement affirming their witness of the reality of the living Christ: "We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son" ("The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Apr. 2000, 3).



"This is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him" (see D&C 76:22–23).

What do you know to be true concerning Jesus Christ and His role as your Savior and Redeemer? What can you do to share your testimony of Him through word and example?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:24. Jesus Christ as creator

God revealed to His prophets anciently that man cannot number the worlds that have been created (see Moses 1:28–33; 7:30; Abraham 3:11–12). This vision reaffirmed that Jesus Christ was the creator of those worlds. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Long before He was born at Bethlehem and became known as Jesus of Nazareth, our Savior was Jehovah. Way back then, under the direction of the Father, Christ was the Lord of the universe, who created worlds without number—of which ours is only one (see Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2).

"How many planets are there in the universe with people on them? We don't know, but we are not alone in the universe! God is not the God of only one planet!" (in "Special Witnesses of Christ," *Ensign,* Apr. 2001, 6).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:24. "The inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God"

Those who come unto Jesus Christ and keep His commandments become His sons and daughters. Jesus Christ is the father of all those who repent and experience spiritual rebirth (see Mosiah 5:7; 15:11–12; 27:25–26; Alma 5:14; 7:14; Ether 3:14; D&C 11:28–30). The voice that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon heard in the vision declared that the inhabitants of every world created by Jesus Christ "are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:24). This means that Jesus is both the Creator and the Savior of "worlds without number" (Moses 1:33).

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the far-reaching effects of the Atonement of Jesus Christ: "His Atonement is infinite—without an end [see 2 Nephi 9:7; 25:16; Alma 34:10, 12, 14]. It was also infinite in that all humankind would be saved from never-ending death. It was infinite in terms of His immense suffering. It was infinite in time, putting an end to the preceding prototype of animal sacrifice. It was infinite in scope—it was to be done once for all [see Hebrews 10:10]. And the mercy of the [Savior's] Atonement extends not only to an infinite number of people, but also to an infinite number of worlds created by Him [see D&C 76:24; Moses 1:33]. It was infinite beyond any human scale of measurement or mortal comprehension" ("The Atonement," *Ensign,* Nov. 1996, 35).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–29

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon see Lucifer's rebellion in the premortal existence

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–29, and ponder why it might have been important for the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to see the fall of Lucifer.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–29. Satan "maketh war with the saints of God"

After witnessing "the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father" (D&C 76:20), the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon beheld a contrasting vision of Satan, or Lucifer. They saw Lucifer, who had held a position of authority in the

premortal existence, fall from the presence of God after rebelling against Him and leading many of God's spirit children to do the same (see Isaiah 14:12; Revelation 12:7–10; D&C 29:36–37; Abraham 3:27–28). Lucifer became known as *Perdition* (see D&C 76:26), meaning *loss* or *destruction.*

Joseph and Sidney were reminded that Satan is a real being who opposes God and all those who seek righteousness. Satan attempted to "take the kingdom of our God and his Christ" (D&C 76:28), and he continues to do so as "he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about" (D&C 76:29). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** later explained: "In relation to the kingdom of God, the devil always sets up his kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 15).

Just as the devil opposes God's kingdom, he also opposes individuals who seek to progress spiritually because "he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:27).



Through their faithfulness, Church members will be protected when Satan "maketh war with the saints of God" (see D&C 76:28–29).

What can you do to stand fast in your faith in Jesus Christ and gain power to overcome Satan's influence in your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:30–49

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon see the suffering of the sons of perdition

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:30–49, looking for how sons of perdition rebel against Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:30–35. Who are the sons of perdition?

After the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon witnessed Lucifer's rebellion, the Lord showed them the suffering of the sons of perdition. They did not write the details of the vision but rather recorded what the voice of the Lord said about what they had seen. The Lord explained that sons of perdition are individuals who receive a knowledge of God's power and are "made partakers thereof" but then allow themselves "to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy [God's] power" (D&C 76:31). Further, they deny "the Holy Spirit after having received it" and deny "the Only Begotten Son of the Father" (D&C 76:35).

Years after this vision was received, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained: "All sins shall be forgiven except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. E-1, page 1976, josephsmithpapers.org; capitalization and punctuation standardized).

The unpardonable sin is not committed carelessly or by accident. Rather, those who become sons of perdition do so willingly and deliberately. Sons of perdition have "denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves" (D&C 76:35; see also Hebrews 6:4–6). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: "To commit this unpardonable crime a man must receive the gospel, gain from the Holy Ghost by revelation the absolute knowledge of the divinity of Christ, and then deny 'the new and everlasting covenant by which he was sanctified, calling it an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace.' [Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 3:232.] He thereby commits murder by assenting unto the Lord's death, that is, having a perfect knowledge of the truth he comes out in open rebellion and places himself in a position wherein he would have crucified Christ knowing perfectly the while that he was the Son of God. Christ is thus crucified afresh and put to open shame. (D. & C. 132:27.)" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 816–17).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:37. "The second death"

All of God's children born on this earth, including those who become sons of perdition, will be raised from the grave and overcome physical death through the power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 11:42–45; D&C 88:27–32). In addition to physical death, all of God's children have experienced the effects of spiritual death, or separation from the physical presence of the Father and the Son, being "cut off from the presence of the Lord" because of the Fall (Helaman 14:16). Spiritual death, or separation from God, is also overcome through the Resurrection, which will bring all back into the presence of the Lord (at least temporarily) to be judged (see Helaman 14:15–17).

After returning to the presence of the Lord, the sons of perdition will experience a second death. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained that the second death "brings a spiritual banishment … by which those who partake of it

are denied the presence of God and are consigned to dwell with the devil and his angels throughout eternity" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1954], 1:49). The sons of perdition are the only ones who will suffer such a death (see Helaman 14:18; D&C 76:37; 88:35).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave the following descriptions of the second death, which comes only upon the sons of perdition:

"Spiritual death is to be cast out of the presence of the Lord, to be dead to the things of righteousness, to be dead to the promptings and whisperings of the Spirit" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 761).

"Eventually, all are redeemed from spiritual death except those who have 'sinned unto death' (D. & C. 64:7), that is, those who are destined to be sons of perdition. John teaches this by saying that after death and hell have delivered up the dead which are in them, then death and hell shall be 'cast into the lake of fire. This is the *second death.*' (Rev. 20:12–15.) And thus the Lord said in our day that the sons of perdition are 'the only ones on whom the *second death* shall have any power' (D. & C. 76:37), meaning any power *after* the resurrection" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 758).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:39–44. "He saves all"

After learning about the sons of perdition and their awful fate, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon learned that "through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb … all might be saved" (D&C 76:39, 42) and that Jesus Christ "saves all except [the sons of perdition]" (D&C 76:44). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that there are various meanings of the word *saved:*

"As Latter-day Saints use the words *saved* and *salvation,* there are at least six different meanings. According to some of these, our salvation is assured—we are already saved. In others, salvation must be spoken of as a future event (e.g., 1 Cor. 5:5) or as conditioned upon a future event (e.g., Mark 13:13). But in all of these meanings, or kinds of salvation, salvation is in and through Jesus Christ. …

"For Latter-day Saints, being 'saved' can … mean being saved or delivered from the second death (meaning the final spiritual death) by assurance of a kingdom of glory in the world to come (see 1 Cor. 15:40–42). Just as the Resurrection is universal, we affirm that every person who ever lived upon the face of the earth—except for a very few—is assured of salvation in this sense. …

"The prophet Brigham Young taught that doctrine when he declared that 'every person who does not sin away the day of grace, and become an angel to the Devil, will be brought forth to inherit a kingdom of glory' (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 288). This meaning of *saved* ennobles the whole human race through the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. …

"… In another usage familiar and unique to Latter-day Saints, the words *saved* and *salvation* are also used to denote exaltation or eternal life (see Abr. 2:11). This is sometimes referred to as the 'fulness of salvation' (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah,* 4 vols. [1979–81], 1:242). This salvation requires more than repentance and baptism by appropriate priesthood authority. It also requires the making of sacred covenants, including eternal marriage, in the temples of God, and

faithfulness to those covenants by enduring to the end" ("Have You Been Saved?" *Ensign,* May 1998, 55–57).



Jesus Christ came into the world to be crucified, to "bear the sins of the world, … that through him all might be saved" (D&C 76:41–42).

Why do you think the truths taught in Doctrine and Covenants 76:40–42 are referred to as "glad tidings" (verse 40)? What can you do to help others come to know and understand these glad tidings?

CHAPTER 28

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–119

Introduction and Timeline

On February 16, 1832, while the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were working on the inspired translation of the Bible and pondering the meaning of John 5:29, they were shown a vision, which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76. In the portion of the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–119, Joseph and Sidney were shown the inhabitants of the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms and the importance of receiving and being valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ.

January 25, 1832

Joseph Smith was ordained as President of the High Priesthood during a Church conference in Amherst, Ohio.

Late January, 1832

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon returned to Hiram, Ohio, to work on the inspired translation of the New Testament.

February 16, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 76 was received.

March 24–25, 1832

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were taken by a mob at night and violently beaten and tarred and feathered in Hiram, Ohio.

As you study Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–119, look for truths that can help you better understand Heavenly Father's plan of happiness for all of His children, including you and your family.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–119: Additional Historical Background

Many early Church members had actively participated in other Christian denominations and naturally held on to some of their former beliefs. The doctrinal truths revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith sometimes challenged these members' previous religious instruction but provided them with a more correct understanding of God's plan. Answering questions that arose during the inspired translation of the Bible, which the Prophet began in June 1830 and continued for approximately three years, was one important way the Lord unfolded the truths of the restored gospel to the Saints. The vision given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon on February 16, 1832, was precipitated by the inspired translation of John 5:29 in the New Testament, and it greatly expanded the Saints' understanding of life after death.

In Joseph Smith's day, Christians generally believed that in the postmortal life God would assign some people to heaven and condemn all others to suffer eternally in hell. This view was common among the early members of the Church. The Prophet's father, Joseph Smith Sr., and the Prophet's grandfather Asael Smith believed in Universalism, a type of universal salvation in which God would eventually save the wicked after they had suffered sufficiently. The truths that were revealed in the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 described distinct

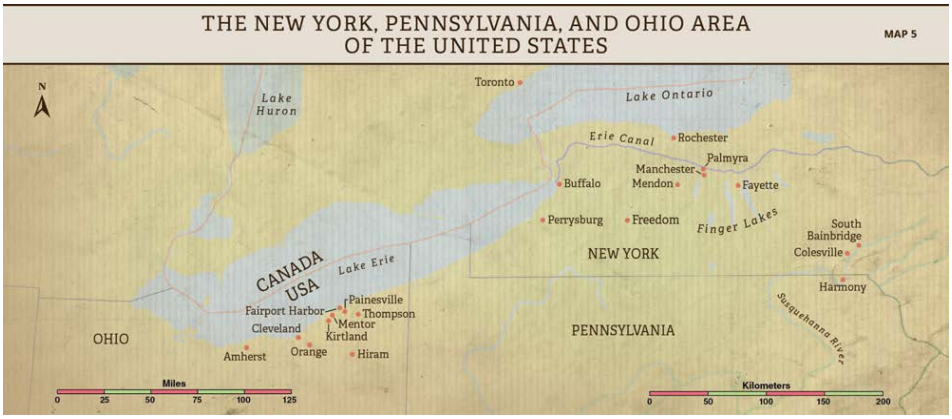
levels of heaven, or kingdoms of glory, and how the judgment of the wicked and the righteous differed greatly from traditional religious views of life after death. (See Matthew McBride, "The Vision," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 149–50, or history.lds.org.)

When the Saints learned of the vision given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, some members struggled to accept the doctrine that the Lord had revealed. **President Brigham Young** (1801–1877) related: "When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not. It was a new doctrine to this generation, and many stumbled at it" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 292).

Brigham Young himself had difficulty understanding this doctrine at first. He recalled: "My traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was directly contrary and opposed to my former education. I said, Wait a little. I did not reject it; but I could not understand it." He said that he needed to "think and pray, to read and think, until [he] knew and fully understood it for [himself]" (quoted in McBride, "The Vision," 150–51).

The revelation became known among Church members simply as "the Vision." When it was recorded, it became the first printed account of the Prophet's witness of the Father and the Son that was accessible to Church members.

For more information about the historical context of Doctrine and Covenants 76, see the additional historical background for Doctrine and Covenants 76:1–49 in the preceding lesson in this manual.



Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon see those who will receive celestial glory

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70, looking for the blessings that will come to those who are exalted in the celestial kingdom of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70. "Concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just"

After the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76, the Saints' understanding of life after death expanded. Church members learned that God has prepared different levels of heaven and that all of His children will be saved in a kingdom of glory, except for the few who deny Him and defy His power (see D&C 76:31, 42–44, 89–98). This vision is also the first of several revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants emphasizing that faithful followers of the Father and the Son can receive exaltation and eternal life, which include the highest blessings God can bestow upon His children. For example, the righteous are promised to receive a glorious resurrection, to live in God's presence, to receive all that He has, and to become like Him and receive a fulness of His glory (see D&C 76:54–59; 81:6; 84:33–38; 88:28–29, 107; 93:19–22, 27–28).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:51–53. "They who received the testimony of Jesus"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were shown in vision those who would come forth in the Resurrection of the just, and they heard a description of the faithfulness and blessings of those people. The Lord revealed that those who inherit the celestial kingdom are those "who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name" (D&C 76:51). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "I have what is known as 'the testimony of Jesus,' which means that I know by personal revelation from the Holy Spirit to my soul that Jesus is the Lord; that he brought life and immortality to light through the gospel; and that he has restored in this day the fullness of his everlasting truth, so that we with the ancients can become inheritors of his presence in eternity" ("The Testimony of Jesus," *Ensign,* July 1972, 109).

Receiving a testimony of Jesus also means that a person has accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ, has been baptized and received the Holy Ghost, has overcome the world by faith, and has been "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" (see D&C 76:51–53). The degree to which a person receives the testimony of Jesus and is valiant in living according to that testimony influences the eternal reward bestowed upon him or her (see D&C 76:51, 73–75, 79, 82).



Those who receive a testimony of Jesus Christ, are baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost can overcome the world and receive rich blessings in eternity (see D&C 76:50–70).

Reflect upon your personal testimony of the Savior, Jesus Christ. What could you do to deepen your testimony of Him and more fully invite the Spirit to bear witness of the Lord's divine reality?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:53. "Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise"

Those who will inherit the celestial kingdom are those who have overcome the world through faith and obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. The "Holy Spirit of promise" mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 76:53 is the Holy Ghost acting to seal, approve, or ratify the ordinances and righteousness of a faithful person so that those ordinances are in effect after the Resurrection (see D&C 132:7). Through this manifestation of the Holy Ghost, a person may eventually receive the spiritual assurance of eternal life (see Ephesians 1:13–14; D&C 88:3–5). This assurance is sometimes referred to as the "more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19; D&C 131:5).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "The Holy Spirit of Promise is the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost. When sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, an ordinance, vow, or covenant is binding on earth and in heaven. (See D&C 132:7.) Receiving this 'stamp of approval' from the Holy Ghost is the result of faithfulness, integrity, and steadfastness in honoring gospel covenants 'in [the] process of time' (Moses 7:21). However, this sealing can be forfeited through unrighteousness and transgression" ("Ye Must Be Born Again," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 22).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:54–62. "Wherefore, … they are gods, even the sons of God"

Faithful Saints who have been "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" (D&C 76:53) are granted the blessing of becoming "joint-heirs with Christ," who is the Firstborn of the Father (see Romans 8:14–17; see also D&C 76:94–95; 93:21–22). The Lord referred to these exalted Saints as "the church of the Firstborn" and as heirs "into whose hands the Father has given all things" (D&C 76:54–55; see also D&C 76:94–95; 84:37–38). Those who achieve their eternal potential and receive an inheritance in the celestial kingdom will become priests and kings, priestesses and queens, and their exaltation includes the promise that "they are gods" (see D&C 76:56, 58; see also Psalm 82:1, 6; John 10:34; D&C 29:13; 109:75–76; 131:1–4; 132:19–20; see also "Becoming Like God," Gospel Topics Essay, topics.lds.org).

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified that because we are children of God, our eternal destiny lies in our potential to become like Him:

"Since *every living thing* follows the pattern of its parentage, are we to suppose that God had some other strange pattern in mind for *His* offspring? Surely we, His children, are not, in the language of science, a different species than He is?

"… We may now be young in our progression—juvenile, even infantile, compared with Him. Nevertheless, in the eternities to come, if we are worthy, we may be like unto Him, enter His presence, 'see as [we] are seen, and know as [we] are known,' and receive a 'fulness.' (D&C 76:94.)" ("The Pattern of Our Parentage," *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 67–68).

For more information about "the church of the Firstborn," see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 93:21–22 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:63–65. "The first resurrection"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 as they pondered the doctrine of the Resurrection. The inspired changes that were revealed concerning John 5:29 helped them understand that there would be an order to the Resurrection: "They who have done good [will come forth] in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil [will come forth] in the resurrection of the unjust" (D&C 76:17). The Resurrection of the just is also known as the "first resurrection" (D&C 76:64) and includes all those who will inherit the celestial and terrestrial kingdoms (see D&C 88:96–99). The First Resurrection began when the graves of the righteous were opened after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 27:52–53; Mosiah 15:21–24; 3 Nephi 23:9–10). The Doctrine and Covenants refers to the First Resurrection as the time when the just will come forth from their graves at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see D&C 29:13; 45:54; 88:96–99). The Resurrection of the unjust, or the "last resurrection" (D&C 76:85), will include those who will inherit the telestial kingdom and those who are sons of perdition, and it will occur at the end of the Millennium (see D&C 76:85; 88:32, 100–102).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:69. "Just men made perfect through Jesus"

Individuals who conform their lives in obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel are known as being *just* (see examples in Matthew 1:19; Enos 1:1; Mosiah 2:4; Moses 8:27). Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, just men are sanctified and made perfect. The process of sanctification, or being made holy, comes through the grace of Jesus Christ and is for "all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength" (D&C 20:31; see also Moroni 10:32–33). **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about the process by which we become perfected:

"Brothers and sisters, let us do the best we can and try to improve each day. When our imperfections appear, we can keep trying to correct them. We can be more forgiving of flaws in ourselves and among those we love. We can be comforted and forbearing. The Lord taught, 'Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now … ; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected' [D&C 67:13].

"We need not be dismayed if our earnest efforts toward perfection now seem so arduous and endless. Perfection is pending. It can come in full only after the Resurrection and only through the Lord. It awaits all who love him and keep his commandments. It includes thrones, kingdoms, principalities, powers, and dominions [see D&C 132:19]. It is the end for which we are to endure. It is the eternal perfection that God has in store for each of us" ("Perfection Pending," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 88).



Jesus Christ is "the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood" (D&C 76:69).

How does knowing that you can be made perfect only through Jesus Christ and the power of His Atonement help you overcome discouragement as you strive for exaltation?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:70. The glory of resurrected bodies

The scriptures are clear that all of God's children will be resurrected (see 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 11:42; 40:4). The eternal kingdom inherited by a resurrected person, as well as the nature of a person's resurrected body, however, will be determined by his or her faithfulness and obedience to God's laws (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42; D&C 76:96–98; 88:22–24, 28–31). Those who will inherit the celestial kingdom will have bodies that are celestial, "whose glory is that of the sun" (D&C 76:70). Those in the terrestrial kingdom will have bodies that differ from those in the celestial kingdom, "even as [the glory] of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament" (D&C 76:71; see also D&C 76:78). Telestial bodies will have a lesser glory, "as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament" (D&C 76:81).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained:

"In the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 88, we are informed that there will be differences in the bodies of inhabitants of the several kingdoms to meet every need and restriction.

"'And they who are not sanctified through the law which I have given you, even the law of Christ, must inherit another kingdom, even that of a terrestrial kingdom, or that of a telestial kingdom.

"'For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.

"'And he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom cannot abide a terrestrial glory.

"'And he who cannot abide the law of a telestial kingdom cannot abide a telestial glory; therefore he is not meet for a kingdom of glory. Therefore he must abide a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory' [D&C 88:21–24]. …

"Since bodies will be raised in the resurrection to suit the condition of each individual, the Lord will assign each man and woman to the place which each has earned" (*Answers to Gospel Questions,* comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. [1963], 4:64–65).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–80

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon see those who will receive terrestrial glory

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–80, looking for the description of those who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–80. More heavenly kingdoms than one

The vision of the kingdoms of glory revealed that God's plan for our life after mortality includes far more than the traditional view of one heaven and a never-ending hell. Because people are not all equally good or equally evil, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained: "In the 14th chapter of John—'In my Father's house are many mansions' [John 14:2] … should be—'In my Father's kingdom are many kingdoms. … There are mansions for those who obey a celestial law, and there are other mansions for those who come short of the law; every man in his own order" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 219).



The three degrees of glory are compared to the sun, the moon, and the stars (see D&C 76:71–72, 81).

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw that the terrestrial world was prepared for those "whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn" (D&C 76:71). This means that terrestrial glory falls below celestial glory but is above that of telestial glory (see D&C 76:81, 91). The Prophet later learned that the celestial kingdom consists of "three heavens or degrees" (D&C 131:1). The telestial kingdom is also comprised of various glories (see D&C 76:98).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the path that all of God's children can follow to receive an inheritance in the celestial kingdom. That glorious eternal reward is within the grasp of everyone who chooses to receive the gospel and make and keep sacred covenants with the Lord (see D&C 10:50; 14:7; 20:14; 50:24).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:72–74. "These are they who died without law"

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 provides only a general description of the inhabitants of the terrestrial world. For example, according to Doctrine and Covenants 76:72–73, some of those in the terrestrial kingdom will be people "who died without law" and who are taught the gospel in the spirit world. It is important to understand that some people who are taught the gospel in the spirit world will inherit the celestial kingdom, while others who are taught will not receive the gospel in the same manner and will therefore inherit a lower kingdom (see D&C 137:7–9; 138:30–37, 58–59). Additionally, there are others who die without a knowledge of the gospel but who will inherit the telestial kingdom. The kingdom of glory that each person will ultimately inherit will be according to the law he or she chooses to accept and live (see also D&C 88:21–24).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:74–75, 79. "Valiant in the testimony of Jesus"

Some who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom are those "who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus" (D&C 76:79). In other words, these people obtained a

testimony of Jesus Christ but were not sufficiently valiant to accept or live the fulness of the gospel in order to obtain a celestial reward. **Elder Quentin L. Cook** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught of the importance of being valiant in our testimony of Jesus: "My prayer is that … we will make our conduct consistent with the noble purposes required of those who are in the service of the Master. In all things we should remember that being 'valiant in the testimony of Jesus' is the great dividing test between the celestial and terrestrial kingdoms [D&C 76:79]. We want to be found on the celestial side of that divide" ("Choose Wisely," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 49).



The followers of Jesus Christ are to be valiant in their testimony of Jesus or they will not obtain exaltation (see D&C 76:79).

There is a difference between having a testimony of Jesus Christ and living so that our lives reflect that testimony. **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) described how we can be valiant in our testimony of Jesus: "'Those who are just and true' [D&C 76:53]! What an apt expression for one valiant in the testimony of Jesus. They are courageous in defending truth and righteousness. These are members of the Church who magnify their callings in the Church (see D&C 84:33), pay their tithes and offerings, live morally clean lives, sustain their Church leaders by word and action, keep the Sabbath as a holy day, and obey all the commandments of God" ("Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus," *Ensign,* May 1982, 63).

Think of someone you know who is valiant in his or her testimony of Jesus Christ. What can you do to be valiant and follow this person's example?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:81–112

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon see those who will receive telestial glory

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:81–90, looking for the description of those who will inherit the telestial kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:84–85. "These are they who are thrust down to hell"

Those who will receive an inheritance in the telestial kingdom are those who choose not to receive the gospel or a testimony of Jesus Christ (see D&C 76:82, 101). They have not denied the Holy Ghost as the sons of perdition do, but they have chosen a path of wickedness and are "thrust down to hell" (D&C 76:84). In this case, *hell* refers to that portion of the spirit world where those who were disobedient in mortality suffer for their own sins because they did not repent (see D&C 19:15–18). These individuals will remain in this state of hell until they come forth in "the last resurrection," which follows the Millennium (D&C 76:85; see also D&C 43:18; 63:17–18; 76:106; 88:100–101).

Elder Quentin L. Cook explained: "At death, righteous spirits live in a temporary state called paradise. Alma the Younger teaches us 'paradise [is] a state of rest, a state of peace, where [the righteous] shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow' [Alma 40:12]. The unrighteous spirits dwell in spirit prison, sometimes referred to as hell [see 2 Nephi 9:10–14; D&C 76:84–86]. It is described as an awful place, a dark place where those fearful of the 'indignation of the wrath of God' shall remain until the resurrection [Alma 40:14]. However, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all spirits blessed by birth will ultimately be resurrected, spirit and body reunited, and inherit kingdoms of glory that are superior to our existence here on earth [see D&C 76:89]. The exceptions are confined to those who, like Satan and his angels, willfully rebel against God [see Isaiah 14:12–15; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7–9; D&C 76:32–37]. At the resurrection, the spirit prison or hell will deliver up its captive spirits" ("Our Father's Plan—Big Enough for All His Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 37).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:88–89. The glory of the telestial kingdom "surpasses all understanding"

The wicked who will suffer in hell will eventually be redeemed (see D&C 76:85), become "heirs of salvation" (D&C 76:88) and "servants of the Most High" (D&C 76:112), and will inherit a level of telestial glory (see D&C 76:98). This doctrinal understanding highlights the abundant mercy and grace of Jesus Christ and confirms that "he saves all" except the sons of perdition (D&C 76:44). **Elder John A. Widtsoe** (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:

"The [Doctrine and Covenants] explains clearly that the lowest glory to which man is assigned is so glorious as to be beyond the understanding of man. It is a doctrine fundamental in Mormonism that the meanest sinner, in the final judgment, will receive a glory which is beyond human understanding, which is so great that we

are unable to describe it adequately. Those who do well will receive an even more glorious place. …

"The Gospel is a gospel of tremendous love. Love is at the bottom of it. The meanest child [of God] is loved so dearly that his reward will be beyond the understanding of mortal man" (*The Message of the Doctrine and Covenants,* ed. G. Homer Durham [1969], 167).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:91–112, looking for the contrast between the telestial kingdom and the other kingdoms of glory.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:98–101. "They who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas"

Some who will inherit the telestial kingdom are those who profess to follow Jesus Christ or particular prophets yet who willfully reject the Savior and refuse to accept His gospel or follow His prophets. To condemn disunity among the Saints in his day, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, … that there are contentions among you.

"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:11–13).



Through the grace of Jesus Christ, His followers can become like Him "in power, and in might, and in dominion" (see D&C 76:94–95).

The similar wording in Doctrine and Covenants 76:99–101 refers to those who are not in harmony with Jesus Christ or His prophets.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:111. "Every man shall receive according to his own works"

During His mortal ministry, Jesus Christ explained, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). The need for obedience to the commandments and ordinances of the gospel has always been a central message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. **President Brigham Young** (1801–1877) taught: "The children of men will be judged according to their works, whether they be good or bad. If a man's days be filled up with good works, he will be rewarded accordingly.

On the other hand, if his days be filled up with evil actions, he will receive according to those acts. … When will the people realize that this is the period of time in which they should commence to lay the foundation of their exaltation for time and eternity, that this is the time to conceive, and bring forth from the heart fruit to the honor and glory of God, as Jesus did" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 286).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:113–19

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon explain how others can receive the knowledge they received by revelation

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:113–19, looking for what we must do in order to understand the works of the Lord and prepare to enter into His presence.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:113–16. Joseph Smith saw more in this vision than what is written

Referring to the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** said: "I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have, of the glories of the Kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive it" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1556, josephsmithpapers.org).

The richness of doctrine and the spiritual insights given in the vision of the kingdoms of glory provide us with an understanding of postmortal life that far surpasses anything found in ancient scripture. **President Wilford Woodruff** (1807–1898) said: "I will refer to the 'Vision' [in D&C 76] alone, as a revelation which gives more light, more truth and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going to. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be. For all men know what laws they keep, and the laws that men keep here will determine their position hereafter" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 120–21).

President Woodruff, who became a member of the Church in 1833, recalled his personal reaction to the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76:

"I was taught from my childhood that there was one Heaven and one Hell, and was told that the wicked all had one punishment and the righteous one glory. …

"… When I read the vision … , it enlightened my mind and gave me great joy, it appeared to me that the God who revealed that principle unto man was wise, just and true, possessed both the best of attributes and good sense and knowledge, I felt He was consistent with both love, mercy, justice and judgment, and I felt to love the Lord more than ever before in my life" ("Remarks on the Necessity of Adhering to the Priesthood in Preference to Science and Art," in *Deseret News,* May 27, 1857, 91).

Ponder how the plan of salvation that our Heavenly Father has prepared is also a plan of happiness for each of His children. What are you doing to ensure that you are receiving or preparing to receive the greatest blessings and happiness Heavenly Father has prepared for you?

CHAPTER 29

Doctrine and Covenants 77–80

Introduction and Timeline

In March 1832 the Prophet Joseph Smith continued his inspired translation of the New Testament. As he studied the book of Revelation, the Lord revealed the meaning of some of the symbols and events described by the Apostle John. This revelation is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 77.

On March 1, 1832, in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 78, the Lord directed the Prophet to organize a firm (later known as the United Firm) to manage the Church's storehouses and publishing efforts. The Lord also described the blessings the Saints would receive. Later in March, the Prophet received the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 79–80, in which the Lord called Jared Carter, Stephen Burnett, and Eden Smith to proclaim the gospel.

February–March 1832

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon continued the inspired translation of the New Testament.

March 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 77 was received.

March 1, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 78 was received.

March 7, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 80 was received.

March 8, 1832

Joseph Smith appointed Jesse Gause and Sidney Rigdon as his counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

March 12, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 79 was received.

March 24–25, 1832

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were taken in the night and violently beaten by a mob in Hiram, Ohio.

March 29, 1832

Joseph Murdock Smith, adopted son of Joseph and Emma Smith, died.

How often do you find it challenging to understand what you read in the scriptures? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 77, consider how asking questions and seeking answers can help you obtain a clearer understanding of the word of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 77: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith began his inspired translation of the New Testament on March 8, 1831, and completed his initial work on it in July 1832. He then reviewed and continued to revise the translation until February 2, 1833. During his initial work on the translation, the Prophet received an "explanation of the Revelations of Saint John" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 192, josephsmithpapers.org), or inspired answers to a series of questions about the book of Revelation. These answers were likely received sometime between March 4 and 20, 1832, and are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 77.

The Apostle John, who is also known as John the Beloved and John the Revelator, was exiled to the island of Patmos for testifying of Jesus Christ and His gospel, and while there he received the revelation recorded in the book of Revelation in the New Testament (see Revelation 1:9–10). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844)

explained, "John had the curtains of heaven withdrawn, and by vision looked through the dark vista of future ages, and contemplated events that should transpire throughout every subsequent period of time until the final winding up scene—[and] while he gazed upon the glories of the eternal world, saw an innumerable company of angels and heard the voice of God" (in Manuscript History, vol. C-1, Addenda, page 69, josephsmithpapers.org).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught, "The book of Revelations is one of the plainest books God ever caused to be written" (in Manuscript History, vol. D-1, page 1523, josephsmithpapers.org). But the book's rich imagery and symbolism can be difficult for modern readers to understand. The Prophet cautioned missionaries not to teach about the specific symbols and details in the book and to instead preach the basic principles of the gospel (see Manuscript History, vol. D-1, page 1523, josephsmithpapers.org). The questions and answers recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 77 provide an inspired interpretation of some of the symbols and events described by the Apostle John in the first 11 chapters of the book of Revelation.

Doctrine and Covenants 77

The Lord reveals answers to questions about the book of Revelation

Read Doctrine and Covenants 77, looking for how images and symbols can communicate gospel truths and principles.

Doctrine and Covenants 77. What truths can we learn from Joseph Smith's study of the book of Revelation?

During his inspired translation of the book of Revelation in the New Testament, the Prophet Joseph Smith read and studied the scripture passages, sought for greater understanding from the Lord, and then received answers in a revelation that helped him better understand the scriptures. These answers are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 77. Joseph Smith's experience illustrates that individuals can receive personal revelation to better understand the scriptures. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that careful study of the scriptures and teachings of modern prophets can bring us greater knowledge through revelation:

"What makes us different from most other Christians in the way we read and use the Bible and other scriptures is our belief in continuing revelation. For us, the scriptures are not the ultimate source of knowledge, but what precedes the ultimate source. The ultimate knowledge comes by revelation. …

"The word of the Lord in the scriptures is like a lamp to guide our feet (see Ps. 119:105), and revelation is like a mighty force that increases the lamp's illumination manyfold. We encourage everyone to make careful study of the scriptures and of the prophetic teachings concerning them and to prayerfully seek personal revelation to know their meaning for themselves" ("Scripture Reading and Revelation," *Ensign,* Jan. 1995, 7).

Why do you think asking God questions is essential to better understanding the scriptures?

Doctrine and Covenants 77:1. "The earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state"

The "sea of glass" described by John in Revelation 4:6 represents "the earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state" as a celestial kingdom (D&C 77:1; see also D&C 88:25–26). Those who have lived worthy of celestial glory will receive an eternal inheritance on the celestial earth (see D&C 88:17–20). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught, "This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and this earth will be Christ's" (D&C 130:9; see also commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 130:9 in this manual).

Doctrine and Covenants 77:2–4. "The four beasts"

The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that the four beasts, or living creatures, that the Apostle John saw represented different classes of beings who would enjoy eternal happiness in God's presence (see Revelation 4:6–8; D&C 77:2–3). In describing these classes of heavenly beings, the Lord stated that their temporal bodies were created after the image of their spiritual bodies (see D&C 77:2). Regarding the spirit bodies of men and women, the **First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles** stated: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 129).

Some of the differences between God's children and the other forms of animal life were explained many years earlier, in November 1909, by the **First Presidency**: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, proclaims man to be the direct and lineal offspring of Deity. God Himself is an exalted man, perfected, enthroned, and supreme. By His almighty power He organized the earth and all that it contains, from spirit and element, which exist coeternally with Himself. He formed every plant that grows and every animal that breathes, each after its own kind, spiritually and temporally—'that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal, and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual.' He made the tadpole and the ape, the lion and the elephant, but He did not make them in His own image, nor endow them with godlike reason and intelligence. Nevertheless, the whole animal creation will be perfected and perpetuated in the Hereafter, each class in its 'distinct order or sphere,' and will enjoy 'eternal felicity.' That fact has been made plain in this dispensation (see D&C 77:3)" ("The Origin of Man," *Ensign,* Feb. 2002, 30; see also *Improvement Era,* Nov. 1909, 81).

The four beasts "represent the glory of the classes of beings in their destined order or sphere of creation" (D&C 77:3). They are also actual living beings, as taught by the **Prophet Joseph Smith**: "John saw curious looking beasts in heaven—he saw

every creature that was in heaven,—all the beasts, fowls, and fish in heaven,—actually there giving glory to God. … I suppose John saw beings there of a thousand forms that had been saved from ten thousand times ten thousand earths like this;—strange beasts of which we have no conception—all might be seen in heaven. The grand secret was to show John what there was in heaven: John learned that God glorified himself by saving all that his hands had made, whether beasts, fowl, fishes, or men, and he will gratify himself with them. … The four beasts were four of the most noble animals that had filled the measure of their creation, and had been saved from other worlds, because they were perfect; they were like angels in their sphere; we are not told where they came from" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1523, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 77:5. "The four and twenty elders"

Along with the four beasts, the Apostle John saw 24 elders in the presence of God, worshipping and praising Him. The Lord explained that these elders had belonged to the seven churches—meaning the seven branches of the Church of Jesus Christ in Asia Minor to whom John wrote (see D&C 77:5). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "Thus John is seeing what is to be in the future; he is seeing certain elders in celestial splendor who at that time were in their disembodied state in paradise awaiting the day of their resurrection and the receipt of eternal life. In principle it is the same as when Joseph Smith, on January 21, 1836, saw his father and mother—who were then still living in mortality—in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* [1973], 3:465; see also D&C 137:1–5). The exaltation of these 24 elders is representative of the reward that all faithful followers of Jesus Christ will receive.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:6–7. A book sealed with seven seals

Anciently, important documents written on scrolls were sealed with clay or wax seals. These seals identified the owner and protected the document from those not authorized to read it. The book, or scroll, with seven seals that the Apostle John saw in vision contained "the revealed will, mysteries, and the works of God" (D&C 77:6). Each seal represents 1,000 years of the earth's temporal existence (see D&C 77:6–7). In John's vision, only the Lamb of God—Jesus Christ—was worthy to open the seals on the book (see Revelation 5:1–7; 6:1–12). The Lord opened each seal, and John saw the Lord's revealed works during each of the seven 1,000-year periods of the earth's temporal existence. Everything that John saw in the sealed book will eventually be made known. In a later revelation, the Lord taught that during the Millennium "the secret acts of men" and "the mighty works of God" in every age of the world will be revealed (see D&C 88:108–10).



The Apostle John saw a book that was sealed with seven seals, containing "the works of God" throughout seven periods of a thousand years each (see D&C 77:6–7).

Doctrine and Covenants 77:8. "Four angels sent forth from God"

The Apostle John saw "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth" (Revelation 7:1). The angels standing on the four corners, or quarters, of the earth suggests that they have power over the whole globe (see D&C 38:12), and the four winds represent forces of destruction (see D&C 38:12). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) taught:

"These angels fit the description of the angels spoken of in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24–43 and D. & C. 86:1[–]7), who plead with the Lord that they might go forth to reap down the field. They were told to let the wheat and the tares grow together to the time of the end of the harvest, which is the end of the world (Matt. 13:38–39). …

"These angels have been given power over the four parts of the earth and they have the power of committing the everlasting Gospel to the peoples of the earth. The fulness of the Gospel was not restored by any one messenger sent from the presence of the Lord. All the ancient prophets who held keys and came and restored them, had a hand in this great work of restoration. There are, we learn from this revelation, four angels unto whom the power has been given, to shut up the heavens, to open them and with power unto life and also unto death and destruction. These are now at work in the earth on their sacred mission" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:300–301).

For more information about the mission of these angels, see commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 86:5–7 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:9. Elias

The Prophet Joseph Smith learned that "the angel ascending from the east" was Elias, who would "come to gather together the tribes of Israel and restore all things" (D&C 77:9). The name or title *Elias* is used in various ways in the scriptures. In the New Testament, Elias is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Elijah and is used in referring to the ancient Israelite prophet (see Matthew 17:1–4; Luke 4:25–26; James 5:17). The word *Elias* also is used as a title for those who have specific missions to act as forerunners or restorers. For example, Doctrine and

Covenants 77:14 indicates that the title *Elias* applies to John the Revelator, whose mission includes the responsibilities of helping "to gather the tribes of Israel" and to "restore all things." John the Baptist served as an Elias in preparing the way for Jesus Christ (see Matthew 17:11–13). Jesus Christ acted as an Elias in restoring the gospel and the Melchizedek Priesthood (see Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:20–28 [in the Bible appendix]). A man called Elias restored the gospel of Abraham to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 110:12). This title has applied to many who have been given missions as forerunners, gatherers, or restorers (see D&C 27:6–7; 77:14). (See Bible Dictionary or Guide to the Scriptures, "Elias," scriptures.lds.org.)

The Elias referred to by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation may represent those who restored gospel knowledge and priesthood keys to the earth in this final dispensation. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: "Since it is apparent that no one messenger has carried the whole burden of the restoration, but rather that each has come with a specific endowment from on high, it becomes clear that *Elias is a composite personage. The expression must be understood to be a name and a title for those whose mission it was to commit keys and powers to men in this final dispensation*" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 221).

John described Elias as "having the seal of the living God" (Revelation 7:2; see also D&C 77:9), and he learned that Elias's mission was to seal "the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Revelation 7:3; see also D&C 77:9). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that this "signifies sealing the blessing upon their heads, meaning the everlasting covenant, thereby making their calling and election sure" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. E-1, page 1690, josephsmithpapers.org; punctuation standardized). Those who receive the ordinances of salvation by proper priesthood authority and who are faithful to the covenants they have made will have the blessing of exaltation sealed upon them. This sealing protects the faithful from divine judgments that will come forth upon the wicked (see Revelation 9:4; 16).

Doctrine and Covenants 77:11. "Sealing the one hundred and forty-four thousand"

Some have supposed that the sealing of the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 7:3–8 refers to the total number of people who will be exalted in the celestial kingdom. However, the Lord clarified that this is the number of high priests who are "ordained out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" to "administer the everlasting gospel" and help bring people "to the church of the Firstborn" (D&C 77:11). The Prophet Joseph Smith learned that the Church of the Firstborn refers to the Savior's heavenly Church, which comprises all those who are exalted in the celestial kingdom of God (see D&C 76:54; 88:4–5). Thus, the 144,000 are those who minister in the latter days to bring people to Jesus Christ and help them obtain exaltation.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:14. John's mission to help gather the tribes of Israel

The "little book" (Revelation 10:2) given to the Apostle John by the angel was not the book sealed with seven seals spoken of in Revelation 5. The little book

represents John's mission to help gather Israel as part of the Restoration. He was to "eat it up" (Revelation 10:9), meaning that he was to partake of God's word and accept the commission that had been given to him. According to John Whitmer's account of a conference of the Church in June 1831, "the Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph [Smith] in an unusual manner. And [he] prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel who had been led away by Shalmaneser, king of [Assyria], to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion, to again possess the land of their fathers" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 39; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized). The Lord referred to the Apostle John as Elias, who would "come and restore all things" (D&C 77:14). In his role as Elias, John appeared with Peter and James to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to restore the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:15. Who are the two witnesses in Jerusalem?

In his vision, the Apostle John saw two witnesses who possessed great power testifying of the truth and eventually being slain in Jerusalem (see Revelation 11:3–8). The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that these two witnesses would be prophets "raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days" (D&C 77:15). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: "Who will these witnesses be? We do not know, except that they will be followers of Joseph Smith; they will hold the holy Melchizedek Priesthood; they will be members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is reasonable to suppose, knowing how the Lord has always dealt with his people in all ages, that they will be two members of the Council of the Twelve or of the First Presidency of the Church" (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 390).

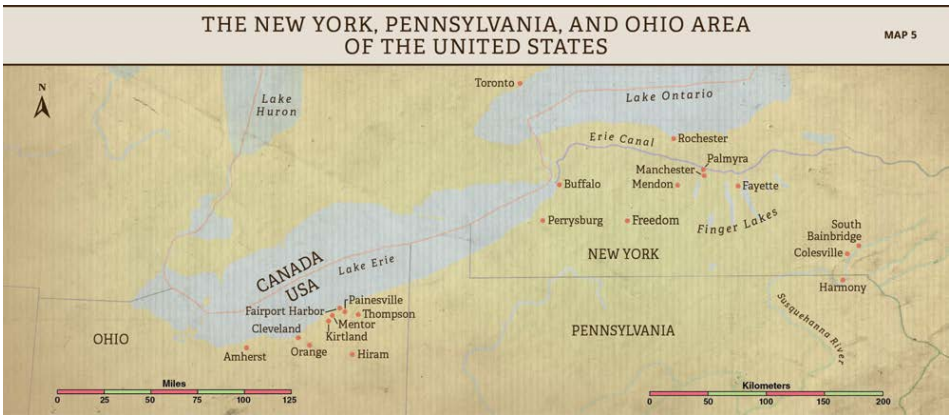
Doctrine and Covenants 78: Additional Historical Background

In a revelation given in February 1831, the Lord commanded the Saints to establish a storehouse to gather surplus goods and money for the benefit of the poor (see D&C 42:34–35; see also D&C 51:13). Newel K. Whitney's mercantile store in Kirtland, Ohio, operated as one storehouse, and Sidney Gilbert established another in Independence, Missouri (see D&C 57:8–10; 72:8–10). These storehouses not only supplied the Saints with needed goods but also generated revenue to purchase land and finance the publication of the Lord's revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Additionally, in November 1831 the Lord appointed Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon, Martin Harris, and William W. Phelps as "stewards over the revelations and commandments" (D&C 70:3). This group had the responsibility to oversee the publication of the revelations. For their labors, they were to receive compensation from the profits generated from the sale of the published revelations. The Lord instructed them to place any profits over and above their needs in His storehouse for the benefit of the Saints in Zion (see D&C 70:7–8).

On March 1, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith met with a group of high priests in Kirtland, Ohio, possibly to discuss the Church's mercantile and publication efforts.

During the meeting, the Prophet dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 78. Subsequently, the United Firm was created to better manage the Church's property and financial endeavors, such as the storehouses. The part of the United Firm that managed the Church's publishing efforts was called the Literary Firm.

In an effort to protect this Church-operated entity from enemies of the Church, some of the language of this and other revelations was changed when they were first published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 82; 92; 96; 104). In this early edition, pseudonyms, or substitute names, were used to refer to individuals, places, and activities. This may have been done to prevent Church enemies from obtaining information that could potentially undermine the Church's objective to build Zion. In later editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, those substitute names were replaced with the actual names.



Doctrine and Covenants 78

The Lord instructs Joseph Smith to establish the United Firm and promises blessings to those who keep His commandments

Read Doctrine and Covenants 78:1–12, looking for reasons why Church members are to help the poor and the needy.

Doctrine and Covenants 78:3–4, 8–9. The United Firm, or United Order

In the 2013 edition of the scriptures, the section heading to Doctrine and Covenants 78 says that "sometime after [the United Firm's] dissolution, under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the phrase 'the affairs of the storehouse for the poor' replaced 'mercantile and publishing establishments' in the revelation, and the word 'order' replaced the word 'firm' [see D&C 78:3–4, 8]."

The terms *firm* and *United Firm* were later changed to *order* and *United Order* in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 78:4, 8; 82:20; 92:1; 104:1, 5, 10, 47–48, 53). The term *United Order* as used in the Doctrine and Covenants refers to the United Firm and should not be confused with the various systems of communal or cooperative sharing established years later when the Saints settled in the western United

States. The United Firm was a business partnership based on the law of consecration between the Prophet Joseph Smith and a limited number of other Church leaders in Kirtland, Ohio, and Independence, Missouri (see D&C 82:11–12; 92:1–2; 96:8). From April 1832 until April 1834, when the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to dissolve the partnership, the United Firm played a vital role in Church administration. It serves as one example of how the law of consecration was implemented in the Church's business affairs.

For additional explanation of the United Firm, its organization, purpose, and reasons for being dissolved, see commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 82:8–12, 15–24 and Doctrine and Covenants 104 in this manual.



The United Firm was organized according to revelation to manage the Church's mercantile and publishing endeavors (see D&C 78:3).

Doctrine and Covenants 78:4. "A permanent and everlasting establishment"

Although the United Firm was disbanded after two years, the principles of the law of consecration and caring for the poor and needy are permanent features of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When the Saints strive to be "of one heart and one mind," they can dwell in righteousness and have "no poor among them" (Moses 7:18).

Doctrine and Covenants 78:5–7. Preparing ourselves for a place in the celestial kingdom

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 78, the Lord instructed the Saints to be "equal in earthly things" (D&C 78:6) by living the principles of the law of consecration. To be made "equal in earthly things" does not mean that everyone will have the same material possessions but that they will have equal claim on resources according to their varied circumstances and needs (see D&C 51:3; 82:17). The Lord promised the Saints who lived by this principle that He would share all

that He has with them and that they would "be equal in the bonds of heavenly things" (D&C 78:5).

When we care for the poor and needy and consecrate all that we have to the Lord, we prepare ourselves to receive a place in the celestial world. If Latter-day Saints "do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and the afflicted," they will not be "united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom" (D&C 105:3–4). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "God has in reserve a time, or period appointed in His own bosom, when He will bring all His subjects, who have obeyed His voice and kept His commandments, into His celestial rest. This rest is of such perfection and glory, that man has need of a preparation before he can, according to the laws of that kingdom, enter it and enjoy its blessings. This being the fact, God has given certain laws to the human family, which, if observed, are sufficient to prepare them to inherit this rest. This, then, we conclude, was the purpose of God in giving His laws to us" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 163–64). The Lord has promised that those exalted in the celestial kingdom of God, having received of His fulness and grace, will be made equal with Him in power, might, and dominion (see D&C 76:95; 88:107).

In what ways will living the law of consecration and caring for the poor prepare you for a place in the celestial kingdom?

Doctrine and Covenants 78:10. Satan seeks to turn our hearts away from the truth and blind us

The restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ has made it possible for every individual to learn and acquire spiritual truth, which makes it possible to forsake evil and sin and avoid error and deception (see D&C 6:11; 50:25; 66:1; 93:36–37, 42). The Lord warned the Saints that Satan sought "to turn their hearts away from the truth" (D&C 78:10). When God's children obey the commandments, they gain truth (see D&C 93:28), but when they are disobedient, they forfeit truth (see D&C 93:39; 138:29). Those who are disobedient "become blinded and understand not the things which are prepared for them" (D&C 78:10).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "One of Satan's clever tactics is to tempt us to concentrate on the present and ignore the future. The Lord warned Joseph Smith that 'Satan seeketh to turn their hearts away from the truth, that they become blinded and understand not the things which are prepared for them.' (D&C 78:10.) The 'things which are prepared for them' are the promised rewards of eternal life, which come as a result of obedience. The devil attempts to blind us to these rewards. President Heber J. Grant said that 'if we are faithful in keeping the commandments of God His promises will be fulfilled to the very letter. … The trouble is, the adversary of men's souls blinds their minds. He throws dust, so to speak, in their eyes, and they are blinded with the things of this world.' (*Gospel Standards,* Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1942, pp. 44–45.) He tempts us with the transitory pleasures of the world so that we will not focus our minds and efforts on the things that bring eternal joy. The devil is a dirty fighter,

and we must be aware of his tactics" ("Purity Precedes Power," *Ensign,* Nov. 1990, 36).

What are other ways the devil seeks to turn the hearts of God's people from the truth? What can help you detect and overcome the adversary's efforts to turn your heart from the truth?

Doctrine and Covenants 78:11–12. "Organize yourselves by a bond or everlasting covenant"

The Prophet Joseph Smith, Newel K. Whitney, Sidney Rigdon, and others traveled to Missouri in April 1832 to meet with other Church leaders and formally organize the United Firm, with storehouses in Independence, Missouri, and Kirtland, Ohio. William W. Phelps and Sidney Gilbert were assigned to prepare "a bond [written agreement] or everlasting covenant" for the firm (D&C 78:11). By entering into this covenant, these Church leaders agreed to consecrate their property to the United Firm and that together they would be responsible for the firm's debts. The Lord warned that if any of these men broke this covenant they would lose their calling in the Church and would be left vulnerable to Satan's influence (see D&C 78:12).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 78:13–22, looking for what the Lord promises those who consecrate all that they have to Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 78:13–14. "That the church may stand independent"

The members of the United Firm were promised that living the Lord's law of consecration would create a foundation of temporal resources that would make it possible for the Church to be financially independent and accomplish its divine objectives. The Lord's directive that His Church have the means to be independent does not mean that Latter-day Saints should be isolated from others in working to bring about good in the world. Today, the Church often works with other churches and organizations in humanitarian relief efforts to assist people in need around the world. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"The Lord gave instruction to leaders of His restored church to establish and maintain institutional integrity—'that the church may stand independent' [D&C 78:14].

"Meanwhile, its members are encouraged to join with like-minded citizens in doing good. We are grateful for the many examples of heroic service rendered in times of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, or other disasters. Such cooperative efforts to help neighbors in distress transcend any barriers posed by religion, race, or culture. Those good deeds are latter-day love in action!

"Humanitarian relief rendered by members of this church is extensive, multinational, and generally unpublicized" ("Teach Us Tolerance and Love," *Ensign,* May 1994, 70).

Doctrine and Covenants 78:15–16. Adam-ondi-Ahman

The Prophet Joseph Smith identified northern Missouri as the location of Adam-ondi-Ahman, the place where Adam and Eve dwelt after they were cast out of the Garden of Eden (see D&C 116; see also commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 116 in this manual). According to the Prophet, the word *Ahman* is the name of God in the pure language of Adam, and "Son Ahman" is the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 213–15; see also D&C 95:17). Adam-ondi-Ahman was the scene of a sacred council held by Adam with his righteous posterity (see D&C 107:53–57; see also commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 107 in this manual). This site will also be the location of the great future meeting between the Lord, Adam, and Adam's righteous posterity before the Savior's Second Coming (see Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14; D&C 27:5–14; 116).

The original revelation given in March 1832 did not include the information regarding Adam-ondi-Ahman and Michael. These inspired additions were made in the summer of 1835 as the Doctrine and Covenants was being prepared for publication. The changes to the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 78 included the addition of the phrase "who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman" in verse 15, all of verse 16, and the title "Son Ahman" in verse 20. (See Alexander L.Baugh, "The History and Doctrine of the Adam-ondi-Ahman Revelation (D&C 116)," in *Foundations of the Restoration: Fulfillment of the Covenant Purposes,* ed. Craig J. Ostler, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Barbara E. Morgan [2016], 165–66).

These additions clarify that Michael (Adam) will hold "the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One [Jesus Christ]" (D&C 78:16). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "The Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed. … He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 104). The Prophet further explained that whenever the gospel of Jesus Christ is restored, priesthood keys "have to be brought from heaven," and "when they are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam's authority" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 104).

Doctrine and Covenants 78:17–22. "He who receiveth all things with thankfulness"

The Lord compared the Saints to little children in their understanding of the great blessings Heavenly Father has in store for them. He referred to these blessings as "the riches of eternity" (D&C 78:18). Such riches include a glorified, resurrected body; a celestial inheritance in the kingdom of God; eternal families; and exaltation. It is difficult for the mortal mind to comprehend such glorious blessings. For this reason, the Apostle Paul taught the Corinthian Saints that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The Lord offers "all things" to those who are faithful and live the principles of the law of consecration (D&C 78:22), and He promises glory to those who receive "all things with thankfulness" (D&C 78:19). One way we can receive all things with

thankfulness is by developing a thankful disposition. **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency taught:

"Could I suggest that we see gratitude as a disposition, a way of life that stands independent of our current situation? In other words, I'm suggesting that instead of being thankful *for* things, we focus on being thankful *in* our circumstances—whatever they may be. …

"This type of gratitude transcends whatever is happening around us. It surpasses disappointment, discouragement, and despair. It blooms just as beautifully in the icy landscape of winter as it does in the pleasant warmth of summer" ("Grateful in Any Circumstances," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2014, 75).

Doctrine and Covenants 79–80: Additional Historical Background

In the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 79 and 80, three individuals were called to preach the gospel: Jared Carter, Stephen Burnett, and Eden Smith. Jared Carter was baptized in Colesville, New York, and moved to Ohio with the Colesville Saints. In the fall of 1831, he left on a mission to the East, preaching the gospel in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont. After five months of proclaiming the gospel, he returned to his home in Ohio. A few weeks later he visited the Prophet Joseph Smith to inquire about his next mission. On March 12, 1832, Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 79.

Stephen Burnett became a member of the Church in November 1830 at the age of 16 in Warrensville, Ohio. The following year he was ordained a high priest by Oliver Cowdery. In a January 1832 revelation, he was called to serve a mission with Ruggles Eames (see D&C 75:35). It is not known if he fulfilled this call. Two months later, on March 7, 1832, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 80, calling Stephen Burnett to preach the gospel with Eden Smith. However, when Eden Smith became ill, Stephen Burnett fulfilled his mission with John Smith, Eden's father. (This is not the same John Smith who was the uncle of the Prophet Joseph Smith.)

Doctrine and Covenants 79–80

The Lord calls Jared Carter, Stephen Burnett, and Eden Smith to serve missions

Read Doctrine and Covenants 79 and 80, looking for the blessings promised to those who participate in missionary work.

Doctrine and Covenants 79:1–3. "The power of the ordination wherewith he has been ordained"

The Lord admonished Jared Carter to serve in his missionary calling "in the power of the ordination wherewith he [was] ordained" (D&C 79:1). Those called to preach the gospel are set apart and given authority to teach the gospel and help others to come unto Jesus Christ. **Sister Julie B. Beck**, former Relief Society General President, taught, "Every elder and sister who receives a mission call is set apart to

do the Lord's work, and each is given authority to preach the gospel of Christ" ("An Outpouring of Blessings," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2006, 12).



Priesthood ordination brings the power of God to bless others through worthy service (see D&C 79:1).

With this authority Jared Carter departed for a mission on April 25, 1832. His mission lasted six months and two days, and he recorded the following about it: "The Lord has permitted me to administer the gospel to 79 souls and many others by my instrumentality have been convinced of this most glorious work" (Journal of Jared Carter, typescript, 20, Church History Library, Salt Lake City). Among those he helped convert to the restored gospel were John and Elizabeth Tanner. John Tanner was a wealthy businessman whose leg had been afflicted with sores. Jared Carter gave the following account of the healing of John Tanner: "The Lord had mercy upon a lame man by the name of Tanner, who was so lame that he could not bear his weight … on one of his feet. He had been lame for months but we found he was a believer in the Book of Mormon. I asked him to endeavor to walk in the name of Christ [and] he agreed to undertake. I then took him by the hand and commanded him in the name of Christ to walk and by the power of Christ he was enabled to walk" (Journal of Jared Carter, 19). After his conversion, John Tanner moved to Ohio and donated thousands of dollars to pay the debt on the Kirtland Temple site and to finance its construction. This was an answer to the prayers of the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders.

Why is it important to remember that each person who is called to serve in the Church is given authority and spiritual help to accomplish their assignment? Consider what help you might need from the Lord to better magnify your calling in the Church. Pray for the spiritual guidance and strength to do what you have been asked.

CHAPTER 30

Doctrine and Covenants 81–83

Introduction and Timeline

On March 8, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith called Jesse Gause and Sidney Rigdon to serve as his counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood. On March 15, 1832, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 81, in which the Lord clarified Brother Gause's duties as a counselor to Joseph Smith. However, Jesse Gause did not remain faithful, and the Lord later called Frederick G. Williams, whose name now appears in Doctrine and Covenants 81, to take Brother Gause's place in the Presidency.

In April 1832, Joseph Smith and others traveled to Independence, Missouri, obeying the Lord's command to establish an organization to build up Zion and care for the poor (see D&C 78). While there, the Prophet received two revelations. On April 26, during a council of high priests and elders of the Church in Independence, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 82, in which the Lord forgave these brethren their trespasses and warned them against further sin. He also instructed members of the United Firm to bind themselves by covenant to manage the temporal affairs of Zion. Four days later, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 83, in which the Lord gave instructions about the care of widows, orphans, and the poor.

January 25, 1832

Joseph Smith was ordained as President of the High Priesthood in Amherst, Ohio.

March 8, 1832

Joseph Smith appointed Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause as his counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

March 15, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 81 was received.

March 24–25, 1832

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were taken in the night and violently beaten by a mob in Hiram, Ohio.

March 29, 1832

Joseph Murdock Smith, adopted son of Joseph and Emma Smith, died.

April 1–24, 1832

Joseph Smith and other leaders traveled to Independence, Missouri.

April 26, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 82 was received.

April 30, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 83 was received.

May–June 1832

Joseph Smith stayed with Newel K. Whitney for several weeks in Greenville, Indiana. Newel had broken his foot and leg while jumping from a runaway stagecoach on his return trip to Ohio.

Consider all of the positions in a typical ward or branch organization that Church members hold. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 81, look for principles that can help members serve successfully in their callings.

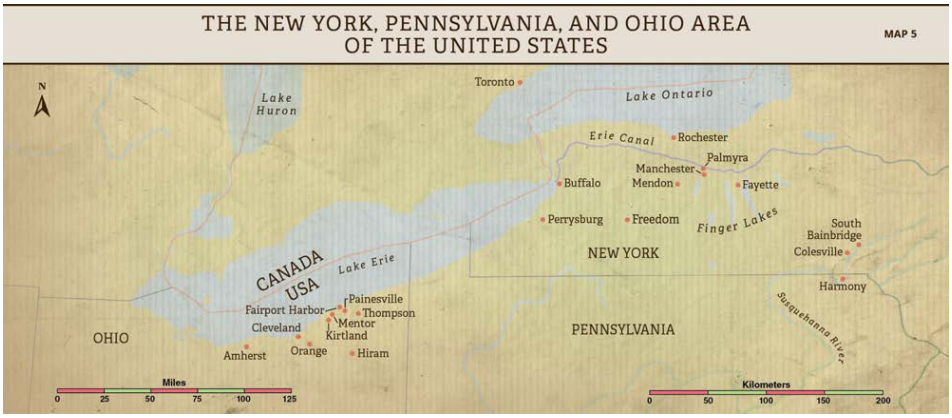
Doctrine and Covenants 81: Additional Historical Background

At a Church conference held on January 25, 1832, in Amherst, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith was ordained as the President of the High Priesthood by Sidney Rigdon. On March 8, 1832, he selected Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause as counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood; the revelation given on

March 15, 1832, confirmed Jesse Gause's call and instructed him regarding the duties of a counselor. Gradually, the Presidency of the High Priesthood began to be known as the First Presidency. This revelation "should be regarded as a step toward the formal organization of the First Presidency" (D&C 81, section heading).

Jesse Gause was likely baptized in late 1831 or early 1832. In March 1832, after being appointed as a counselor in the Presidency of the High Priesthood, Jesse may have assisted for a time as a scribe while the Prophet Joseph Smith continued his inspired translation of the New Testament. He also traveled with Joseph Smith and other Church leaders to Independence, Missouri, in April 1832. Little is known about Jesse Gause after August 1832 except that he did not remain faithful and was excommunicated on December 3, 1832.

In January 1833, a few weeks after Jesse Gause was excommunicated, the Lord called Frederick G. Williams to replace him as a counselor. Frederick G. Williams had become a member of the Church after hearing the message of the missionaries who had traveled from New York to the Kirtland, Ohio, area in October 1830. He had volunteered to accompany Oliver Cowdery and the other missionaries as they continued to Missouri to preach the gospel "on the borders by the Lamanites" (D&C 28:9). He returned to Kirtland many months later and was ordained a high priest on October 25, 1831. He later became a clerk and a scribe for Joseph Smith. Sometime after he replaced Jesse Gause as a counselor in the Presidency of the High Priesthood, Frederick G. Williams's name was written into the transcription of this revelation, replacing references to Jesse Gause. When this revelation was published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, it referred only to Frederick G. Williams, illustrating that the instructions relating to the duties of a counselor were to be applied to others, not just to Jesse Gause.



Doctrine and Covenants 81

The Lord outlines the role of counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood

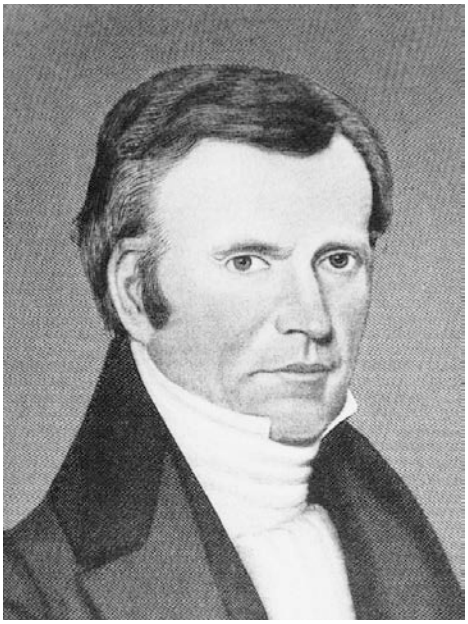
Read Doctrine and Covenants 81, looking for some of the responsibilities of a counselor in the First Presidency.

Doctrine and Covenants 81:1–2. The Presidency of the High Priesthood

Soon after the Saints began gathering to Ohio, a special conference was held June 3–6, 1831, for those who had previously been ordained as elders. At that conference the first high priests were ordained. For a time, early members of the Church referred to the office of high priest as the *high priesthood.* Over time, the use of the term *high priesthood* was understood to mean the Melchizedek Priesthood. In 1902 the **First Presidency** quoted the scripture passage stating that the "President of the High Priesthood of the Church" is "the Presiding High Priest over the High Priesthood of the Church" (D&C 107:65–66) and then declared, "It is well to remember that the term 'High Priesthood,' as frequently used, has reference to the Melchizedek Priesthood, in contradistinction to the 'Lesser,' or Aaronic Priesthood" ("The Priesthood and Its Offices," *Improvement Era,* May 1902, 551).

The Lord had previously referred to Joseph Smith as an "apostle" and the "first elder" of the Church and as a "seer," "translator," and "prophet" (see D&C 20:2; 21:1). The ordination of Joseph Smith as President of the High Priesthood on January 25, 1832, further defined his presiding role in the Melchizedek Priesthood of the Church. In the revelation given originally to Jesse Gause and later assigned to Frederick G. Williams, the Lord explained that "the keys of the kingdom … belong always unto the Presidency of the High Priesthood" (D&C 81:2), further clarifying the sacred and distinguished role of the President of the Church and his counselors (see also D&C 107:91–92). Beginning in February 1834, the Lord referred to these officers as "the First Presidency" (D&C 102:26–27, 33; see also D&C 112:20, 30; 117:13; 120:1; 124:125–26). The use of "First Presidency" in Doctrine and Covenants 68:15, 22–23 was added to the original revelation later (see commentary in this manual in the additional historical background for Doctrine and Covanents 42 about the prophet's authority to make inspired additions or changes to a revelation).

Doctrine and Covenants 81:1. "A counselor unto my servant Joseph"



Frederick G. Williams was called as a counselor in the First Presidency after Jesse Gause failed to fulfill his calling (see D&C 81:1).

The Prophet Joseph Smith appointed two counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood. This pattern continues to be followed today, although there have been times when the President of the Church has appointed one or more additional counselors. The President of the Church and his two counselors form a presidency, allowing them to preside over the membership of the Church (see D&C 107:22). **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) explained the role of counselors:

"The counselors are not the president. In certain circumstances they may act in his behalf, but this is a delegated authority. …

"[A counselor] is *an assistant to his president.* Regardless of the organization, the assignment of president is a heavy and burdensome one. …

"As an assistant, the counselor is not the president. He does not assume responsibility and move out ahead of his president.

"In presidency meetings, each counselor is free to speak his mind on all issues that come before the presidency. However, it is the prerogative of the president to make the decision, and it is the duty of the counselors to back him in that decision. His decision then becomes their decision, regardless of their previous ideas. …

"… Even the President of the Church, who is Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and whose right and responsibility it is to make judgment and direct the course of the Church, invariably consults with his counselors to determine their feelings. If there is a lack of unity, there follows an absence of action. Two counselors, working with a president, preserve a wonderful system of checks and balances. They become a safeguard that is seldom, if ever, in error and affords great strength of leadership" ("In … Counsellors There Is Safety," *Ensign,* Nov. 1990, 49–50).

Doctrine and Covenants 81:2. "The keys of the kingdom"

"The keys of the kingdom" mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 81:2 refer to the authority to direct the Church and govern the use of the priesthood. See commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 65:2 in this manual for additional understanding about the keys of the kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 81:3–7. "Succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees"



The members of the First Presidency hold the keys of God's kingdom (see D&C 81:2).

The Lord's promise to Jesse Gause, and later Frederick G. Williams, was that if he was "faithful in counsel, in the office which I have appointed" he would receive "a crown of immortality, and eternal life" (D&C 81:3, 6). To qualify for such a blessing also required ministering to the needs of others. The Lord said to "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5), meaning to help and administer relief to those who lack physical and spiritual strength. **Elder Marvin J. Ashton** (1915–1994) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the following:

"There is a phrase used four times in the standard works which has always intrigued me. It is the expression 'feeble knees.'

"By definition, *feeble* means weak, not strong, without force, easily broken, frail.

"When Frederick G. Williams was called to be a counselor to Joseph Smith, he was given this charge: 'Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.' (D&C 81:5.)

"Coupled with the word *strengthen,* which is to make or become stronger, the phrase led me to contemplate the meaning of these words.

"Early on, I assumed 'feeble knees' meant weak or exhausted. However, the context of its use in Isaiah (see Isa. 35:3–4) suggests that it may have a somewhat richer meaning, something more like fearful. …

"In Doctrine and Covenants 81:5, the verse might be interpreted as the Lord's urging Frederick G. Williams to provide strength to the weak ('succor the weak'), provide encouragement to those who are exhausted or discouraged ('lift up the hands which hang down'), and to give courage and strength to those with feeble knees and fearful hearts" ("Strengthen the Feeble Knees," *Ensign,* Nov. 1991, 70).

Doctrine and Covenants 82: Additional Historical Background

In 1832 the Church had two centers of growing membership: one in Kirtland, Ohio, and one in Jackson County, Missouri. To assist needy Saints and to generate revenue that could be used to purchase land in Zion (Jackson County) and publish the revelations, a storehouse was established in each location (see D&C 57:8–10; 72:8–10). In November 1831, the Lord appointed a group of Church leaders to be

"stewards over the revelations and commandments" (D&C 70:3) and see to their publication. Later, the Lord commanded that a "firm" be organized to manage the literary and mercantile endeavors of the Church (see the section headings to D&C 78 and D&C 82).

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 78, Joseph Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and Sidney Rigdon were commanded to travel to Independence, Missouri, and counsel with Church leaders there. Before their departure, however, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were violently taken from their homes in Hiram, Ohio, and brutally beaten in the middle of the night of March 24–25, 1832. The mob of local residents, including some former Church members, covered Joseph's body in tar and feathers in an effort to humiliate him. A few days later, perhaps partially because of exposure to the cold air on that night when the mobbers burst into their home, Joseph and Emma Smith's 10-month-old adopted son, Joseph Murdock Smith, died.

To fulfill the Lord's commandment to counsel with Church leaders in Missouri, the Prophet and others left Hiram, Ohio, on April 1, 1832, and made the nearly 900-mile journey to Independence, Missouri, arriving on April 24, 1832. As the Church leaders from Ohio assembled with those in Missouri in a council meeting held on April 26, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 82. This revelation was not published in the Book of Commandments but was included, using pseudonyms, or substitute names, in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. For more information about the use of substitute names, please see commentary in the additional historical background for Doctrine and Covenants 78 in this manual.



Doctrine and Covenants 82:1–7

The Lord warns those who have received much from Him

Read Doctrine and Covenants 82:1–7, looking for why it is important to recognize that we are all sinners in need of repentance.

Doctrine and Covenants 82:1–7. "Inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses"

For several months, unkind feelings had existed between Sidney Rigdon in Ohio and Bishop Edward Partridge in Missouri. Soon after the arrival of Church leaders in Independence, Missouri, a council of high priests of the Church was held on April 26, 1832, and Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge resolved their differences. In the revelation received that day, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 82, the Lord said that He forgave them (see D&C 82:1), but He also warned them that "unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return" (D&C 82:7). **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency gave the following counsel:

"We need to recognize and acknowledge angry feelings. It will take humility to do this, but if we will get on our knees and ask Heavenly Father for a feeling of forgiveness, He will help us. The Lord requires us 'to forgive all men' [D&C 64:10] for our own good because 'hatred retards spiritual growth' [Orson F. Whitney, *Gospel Themes* (1914), 144]. Only as we rid ourselves of hatred and bitterness can the Lord put comfort into our hearts. …

"Let us remember that we need to forgive to be forgiven. … With all my heart and soul, I believe in the healing power that can come to us as we follow the counsel of the Savior 'to forgive all men' [D&C 64:10]" ("The Healing Power of Forgiveness," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 69).

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how we can forgive others:

"You may be carrying a heavy burden of feeling injured by another who has seriously offended you. Your response to that offense may have distorted your understanding so that you feel justified in waiting for that individual to ask forgiveness so that the pain can leave. The Savior dispelled any such thought when He commanded:

" 'Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

" 'I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men' [D&C 64:9–10; see also Mark 11:25–26; Luke 6:37; Mosiah 26:29–32; 3 Ne. 13:14–15].

"Don't carry the burden of offense any longer. Genuinely ask forgiveness of one that has offended you, even when you consider you have done no wrong. That effort will assuredly bring you peace and will likely begin the healing of serious misunderstandings" ("To Be Free of Heavy Burdens," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 88).

Doctrine and Covenants 82:3. "Much is required"

The Lord emphasized to Church leaders at the conference in Independence, Missouri, that because they were blessed with a greater understanding of God's plan, they were also held accountable for that knowledge (see D&C 82:3; see also James 4:17; Alma 9:23). **Elder Neil L. Andersen** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints, having a witness of His reality not only from the Bible but also from the Book of Mormon; knowing His priesthood has been restored to the earth; having made sacred covenants to follow Him and received the gift of the Holy Ghost; having been endowed with power in His holy temple; and being part of preparing for His glorious return to the earth, we cannot compare what we are to be with those who have not yet received these truths. 'Unto whom much is given much is required' [D&C 82:3]" ("Never Leave Him," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 41).

Doctrine and Covenants 82:8–24

The Lord commands nine men to form a firm to manage the temporal affairs of the Church

Read Doctrine and Covenants 82:8–24, looking for principles that can help Church members strengthen the cause of Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 82:8–12, 15–24. The United Firm is organized and instructions are given

The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders had traveled to Independence, Missouri, in obedience to the Lord's commandment to "sit in council with the saints which are in Zion" (D&C 78:9). They met to establish a "firm" or "order" that would oversee and regulate the mercantile and publishing endeavors of the Church. Church members who were invited to participate in the firm included Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Newel K. Whitney, and Martin Harris, all of whom resided in Kirtland, Ohio, and Edward Partridge, Sidney Gilbert, John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and William W. Phelps, all of whom resided in Jackson County, Missouri (see D&C 78:9; 82:11). In 1833, two additional members—Frederick G. Williams and John Johnson—were added to the firm by revelation (see D&C 92:1–2; 96:6–9). The objective of the firm was to manage storehouses that would provide goods and money to help the poor as well as to generate revenue to purchase land for Zion and finance the publication of the Lord's revelations to the Prophet. One branch of the firm would operate in Independence and was to be called "Gilbert, Whitney & Co.," and one would operate in Kirtland and would be named "Newel K. Whitney & Co." (see "Minutes, 26–27 April 1832," page 25, josephsmithpapers.org).

The members of the firm, or order, were to be united with one another in a covenant. Each received a stewardship over part of the business interests of the Church, and each could draw upon the resources of the firm to manage his stewardship. The successful operation of the business endeavors would generate a surplus that was to be kept in the Church's storehouses.

Today, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to follow principles that allow it to generate funds through Church-owned businesses. Revenue obtained from these businesses is used to further Church interests and also enables the Church to help those in need throughout the world. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** spoke about the importance of Church-owned businesses:

"We have a few business interests. Not many. Most of these were begun in very early days when the Church was the only organization that could provide the capital that was needed to start certain business interests designed to serve the people in this remote area [such as banks, hospitals, and manufacturing]. We have divested ourselves long since of some of these where it was felt there was no longer a need. …

"Some of these business interests directly serve the needs of the Church. For instance, our business is communication. We must speak with people across the world. We must speak at home to let our stand be known, and abroad to acquaint others with our work. And so we own a newspaper, the *Deseret News,* the oldest business institution in Utah.

"We likewise own television and radio stations. These provide a voice in the communities which they serve. …

"We have a real estate arm designed primarily to ensure the viability and the attractiveness of properties surrounding Temple Square. The core of many cities has deteriorated terribly. This cannot be said of Salt Lake City. … With the beautiful grounds of Temple Square and the adjoining block to the east, we maintain gardens the equal of any in the world. …

"Are these businesses operated for profit? Of course they are. They operate in a competitive world. They pay taxes. They are important citizens of this community. And they produce a profit, and from that profit comes the money which is used by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Foundation to help with charitable and worthwhile causes in this community and abroad and, more particularly, to assist in the great humanitarian efforts of the Church.

"These businesses contribute one-tenth of their profit to the Foundation. The Foundation cannot give to itself or to other Church entities, but it can use its resources to assist other causes, which it does so generously. Millions of dollars have been so distributed. Thousands upon thousands have been fed. They have been supplied with medicine. They have been supplied with clothing and shelter in times of great emergency and terrible distress. How grateful I feel for the beneficence of this great Foundation which derives its resources from the business interests of the Church" ("Why We Do Some of the Things We Do," *Ensign,* Nov. 1999, 53).

Doctrine and Covenants 82:10. "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say"

The Lord prepared the members of the United Firm to understand why they were to live obediently to the bond or covenant that they would make. He assured them of the promise of eternal blessings if they obeyed His commandments. His promise recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 82:10 is for us as well. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) taught:

"When we turn from the commandments the Lord has given unto us for our guidance then we do not have a claim upon His blessings. …

"Keep the commandments. Walk in the light. Endure to the end. Be true to every covenant and obligation, and the Lord will bless you beyond your fondest dreams" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 232, 237).

Doctrine and Covenants 82:13–14. "Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; … her stakes must be strengthened"

The Saints knew that the Lord had designated the Jackson County area of Missouri as "the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion" and that the city of Independence was to be "the center place" of Zion (D&C 57:2–3). The Old Testament prophet Isaiah saw the latter-day Zion, and he compared it to a tabernacle, or tent, "that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed" (Isaiah 33:20). Using the metaphor of a tent that expands, he prophesied about the growth of Zion in the last days: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" (Isaiah 54:2).

The Lord consecrated the land of Kirtland, Ohio, as the first stake of Zion (see D&C 82:13). Later, the high council was established in Kirtland on February 18, 1834, and was presided over by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams.

The Lord said that "Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened" (D&C 82:14). **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) explained: "The rule by which the people of God must live in order to be worthy of acceptance in the sight of God is indicated by [D&C 82:14]. This people must increase in beauty before the world; have an inward loveliness which may be observed by mankind as a reflection in holiness and in those inherent qualities of sanctity. The borders of Zion, where the righteous and pure in heart may dwell, must now begin to be enlarged. The stakes of Zion must be strengthened. All this so that Zion may arise and shine by becoming increasingly diligent in carrying out the plan of salvation throughout the world" ("Strengthen the Stakes of Zion," *Ensign,* July 1973, 3).

Doctrine and Covenants 82:22. "The mammon of unrighteousness"

The word *mammon* comes from an Aramaic word meaning "worldly riches" or "wealth." **President Joseph Fielding Smith** explained: "The commandment of the Lord that the saints should make themselves 'friends with the mammon of unrighteousness' [D&C 82:22; see also Luke 16:9], seems to be a hard saying when not properly understood. It is not intended that in making friends of the 'mammon of unrighteousness' that the brethren were to partake with them in their sins. … They were to so live that peace with their enemies might be assured. They were to treat them kindly, be friendly with them as far as correct and virtuous principles would permit. … If they could allay prejudice and show a willingness to trade with and show a kindly spirit, it might help to turn them away from their bitterness. Judgment was to be left with the Lord" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:323).

Doctrine and Covenants 83: Additional Historical Background

Some of the Saints who immigrated to Jackson County, Missouri, had settled in or near the town of Independence, while the majority of Church members lived in small settlements about 12 miles to the west in Kaw Township. After meeting with Church leaders in Independence on April 26–27, the Prophet Joseph Smith visited the Saints residing in Kaw Township, including those who had moved from Colesville, New York. The Prophet later recorded the following about his visit: "On the 28th and 29th [of April 1832] I visited the brethren … in Kaw Township, twelve miles west of Independence, and received a welcome only known by brethren and sisters united as one in the same faith, and by the same baptism, and supported by the same Lord. The Colesville Branch, in particular, rejoiced as the ancient Saints did with Paul. It is good to rejoice with the people of God. On the 30th I returned to Independence, and again sat in council with the brethren" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 213, josephsmithpapers.org; capitalization standardized).

At that April 30 meeting in Independence, Missouri, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 83. At the time, some of the Church members in Missouri were living according to the principles of consecration. During Joseph's visit, it is possible that questions arose regarding the property rights of women following the death of their husbands, who had consecrated their property to the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 83

The Lord reveals how to care for widows and orphans

Read Doctrine and Covenants 83, looking for the Lord's pattern of caring for the temporal needs of widows and children.

Doctrine and Covenants 83. Widows and orphans

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 83 came after the Prophet Joseph Smith had visited the Saints who had settled in Kaw Township, Missouri, some of whom had covenanted to live according to the principles of consecration. The revelation seems to answer questions regarding the care of the widows and orphans (see D&C 83:1, 5–6). Church leaders today have expressed continued concern regarding the temporal welfare of women and children. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** explained:

"Included among the women of the Church are those who have lost their husbands through abandonment, divorce, and death. Great is our obligation to you. …

"… I hope that every woman who finds herself in [these kinds] of circumstances … is … blessed with an understanding and helpful bishop, with a Relief Society president who knows how to assist her, with home teachers who know where their duty lies and how to fulfill it, and with a host of ward members who are helpful without being intrusive" ("Women of the Church," *Ensign,* Nov. 1996, 68–69).

In the revelation the Lord also emphasized the responsibility of parents to provide for their children (see D&C 83:4). Speaking specifically to husbands and fathers, **President Howard W. Hunter** (1907–1995) said: "You who hold the priesthood have the responsibility, unless disabled, to provide temporal support for your wife and children. No man can shift the burden of responsibility to another, not even to his wife. The Lord has commanded that women and children have claim on their husbands and fathers for their maintenance (see D&C 83; 1 Tim. 5:8)" ("Being a Righteous Husband and Father," *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 51).



Husbands and fathers have a duty to provide for their families. When that is not possible, the poor have claim on the Lord's storehouse (see D&C 83).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) gave the following instructions concerning self-reliance:

"The Church and its members are commanded by the Lord to be self-reliant and independent. (See D&C 78:13–14.)

"The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof.

"No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life. (See 1 Timothy 5:8.)" ("Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action," *Ensign,* Nov. 1977, 77–78).

The primary responsibility of a husband or father is to provide for his family's needs. In circumstances in which this is not possible, the Church can provide assistance. What are some ways that you can live the gospel principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 83 regarding caring for the needy and being self-reliant?

CHAPTER 31

Doctrine and Covenants 84

Introduction and Timeline

In September 1832, missionaries returned to Kirtland, Ohio, from preaching the gospel in the eastern United States and reported their successes to the Prophet Joseph Smith. During their reunion, the Prophet inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 84. In this revelation the Lord explained how the priesthood prepares the Saints to enter God's presence and receive all that He has. The Lord taught of the importance of hearkening to His words and reproved the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, for treating the Book of Mormon and His commandments lightly. The Lord also commanded the Saints to preach the gospel to the world and provided instructions for doing so.

Late June 1832

Joseph Smith returned to Kirtland, Ohio, from Independence, Missouri.

September 12, 1832

Joseph and Emma Smith moved from Hiram to Kirtland, Ohio, to live above the Newel K. Whitney store.

September 22–23, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 84 was received.

Early October 1832

Joseph Smith and Newel K. Whitney traveled to Boston, Massachusetts; Albany, New York; and New York City to preach the gospel and purchase merchandise for the Kirtland store.

In what ways has the priesthood brought blessings into your life? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 84, look for truths that help you better understand the importance of the priesthood.

Doctrine and Covenants 84: Additional Historical Background

During a conference of priesthood holders held in Amherst, Ohio, on January 25, 1832, a number of elders were called to preach the gospel in various locations in the United States (see D&C 75). In September 1832, some of these elders returned from their missions in the eastern states. Joseph and Emma Smith had just moved from the John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, to the living quarters in the Newel K. Whitney store in Kirtland, Ohio. When the missionaries returned to Kirtland, they reported their experiences, and the Prophet Joseph Smith rejoiced in their success. While the Prophet was with these elders on September 22, he inquired of the Lord and received revelation about the priesthood. The Prophet continued to receive instruction from the Lord the following day, September 23. This revelation, received over two days, is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 84. Several individuals witnessed the Prophet Joseph Smith dictate the revelation. Doctrine and Covenants 84:1 suggests that six elders were present as the dictation began, but a note in an original handwritten copy of the revelation indicates that 10 high priests were present during the latter part of the revelation. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 289–90.)



Doctrine and Covenants 84:1–32

The Lord declares that a temple will be built in the city of New Jerusalem and explains the purpose of the priesthood

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:1–5, looking for what the Lord taught about the city of New Jerusalem.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:2–5. A temple in the city of New Jerusalem "shall be reared in this generation"

During the Prophet Joseph Smith's first visit to Jackson County, Missouri, in July 1831, the Lord identified the area as "the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints" (D&C 57:1). He continued: "Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. … The place which is now called Independence is the center place" (D&C 57:2–3). Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon soon dedicated the land of Zion and a site for a temple to be built. They were familiar with earlier revelations in which the Lord had indicated that the center place of Zion would be known as the city of the New Jerusalem, where God's people would gather and build a temple and where Jesus Christ would someday come to visit His people (see Ether 13:6, 8; D&C 42:9, 35–36; 45:66–67).



***Independence, Missouri, 1831*, by Al Rounds. On August 3, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated a site for a temple in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri (see D&C 84:3–4).**

In the months after Joseph and Sidney dedicated the land, hundreds of Church members arrived and settled in Jackson County. In September 1832, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 84, the Lord reaffirmed His will for the Saints to build "the city of New Jerusalem" (D&C 84:2), beginning with the temple, which the Lord commanded should "be reared in this generation" (D&C 84:4).

However, by the end of 1833, the Latter-day Saints had been driven out of Jackson County by their enemies and eventually settled elsewhere. The Saints learned that their own transgressions had contributed to their expulsion from Zion (see D&C 101:1–6; 105:1–6). Neither the city of New Jerusalem nor the temple was built at that time, as commanded in Doctrine and Covenants 84:4–5. Several years later, after the Saints had established themselves in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Lord declared that they were excused from the commandment to build the city of New Jerusalem and the temple (see D&C 124:49–51). Nevertheless, the Lord's promises remain that Zion will one day be redeemed and the New Jerusalem will be built (see D&C 100:13; 105:9; 136:18).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:6–18, looking for truths about the priesthood.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:5–31. "The sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood"

Doctrine and Covenants 84 refers to events and themes found in the Old and New Testaments, highlighting important connections between God's work in ancient times and in our day. For example, the Lord prophesied that a cloud would rest upon the latter-day temple in the New Jerusalem, as occurred when the ancient

tabernacle was erected by Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness (see Exodus 40:34–35; D&C 84:5). The revelation briefly speaks of "the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood" (D&C 84:6), referring to those who, like Moses, receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, also referred to in this revelation as the "greater priesthood" (D&C 84:19). Following this phrase, the Lord interjects instruction about the priesthood. This instruction includes an explanation that the priesthood came through an unbroken line from Adam to Moses as well as important truths regarding the priesthood and priesthood ordinances (see D&C 84:6–30). Without this interjection the revelation would read, "And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood … shall offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord" (D&C 84:6, 31; see also D&C 128:24).

Doctrine and Covenants 84:16–18. The priesthood is "without beginning of days or end of years"

After stating Moses's line of Melchizedek Priesthood authority back to Adam (see D&C 84:6–16), the Lord explained that the "priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations" (D&C 84:17). This means that through the priesthood, gospel truths have been taught and saving ordinances have been administered in all dispensations. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught that the priesthood "is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 108–9).

The Lord further revealed that the priesthood "is without beginning of days or end of years" (D&C 84:17), meaning it is eternal in nature. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained:

"The Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed. … He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel; he stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood. … These men held keys first on earth, and then in heaven.

"The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 104).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22, looking for what the Lord taught about the Melchizedek Priesthood and its ordinances.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:19. The Melchizedek Priesthood "holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God"

The Lord emphasized the central role of the Melchizedek Priesthood in administering the gospel to God's children. Only through the power and authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which "holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God" (D&C 84:19), can men and

women come to know God, receive the fulness of His gospel, and enter His presence.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that the Melchizedek Priesthood "is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 108; see also D&C 107:18–19). The Lord has revealed these truths in the latter days through His chosen and authorized prophets, beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith and continuing to the President of the Church today. These truths are also made known to God's children through the ordinances administered by the authority of the holy priesthood.

Every Church member who receives the gift of the Holy Ghost by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood can know by personal revelation the truthfulness of the gospel and obtain a knowledge of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see John 17:3; 1 Nephi 10:17–19; D&C 132:24). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) taught that as members of the restored Church we should "rejoice to think that we have that great authority by which we may know God. Not only the men holding the priesthood know that great truth, but because of that priesthood and the ordinances thereof, every member of the Church, men and women alike, may know God" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:142–43).



The Prophet Joseph Smith dictated several revelations, including the one recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 84, in this upper story room in the Newel K. Whitney store, in Kirtland, Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–22. The power of godliness is manifested through the ordinances of the priesthood

The power of godliness includes the power to become like God (see 2 Peter 1:3–4; D&C 76:53–59; 93:19–22). Through the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood

we learn how to return to God's presence and receive power to do so as we live according to our covenants. **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained one way that the power of godliness is manifested in our lives through the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood:

"Our covenant commitment to Him permits our Heavenly Father to let His divine influence, 'the power of godliness' (D&C 84:20), flow into our lives. He can do that because by our participation in priesthood ordinances we exercise our agency and elect to receive it. …

"In all the ordinances, especially those of the temple, we are endowed with power from on high. This 'power of godliness' comes in the person and by the influence of the Holy Ghost. …

"… It is also the Holy Ghost, in His character as the Holy Spirit of Promise, that confirms the validity and efficacy of your covenants and seals God's promises upon you" ("The Power of Covenants," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 22).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught how the power of godliness is related to the blessings that come from the Savior through His atoning sacrifice: "Covenants received and honored with integrity and ordinances performed by proper priesthood authority are necessary to receive all of the blessings made available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. For in the ordinances of the priesthood, the power of godliness is manifest unto men and women in the flesh, including the blessings of the Atonement (see D&C 84:20–21)" ("Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2014, 88).

In what ways can the ordinances of the priesthood help you become more like your Heavenly Father?

Doctrine and Covenants 84:22. "Without this no man can see the face of God … and live"

Without the power of godliness, no man or woman can endure the presence of God. Moses saw God and spoke with Him face to face, and he said he would have "withered and died" had he not been "transfigured before [God]" (Moses 1:11). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 67, the Lord taught that only those "quickened by the Spirit of God" can see God's face and abide His presence (see D&C 67:11–12). These accounts refer to transfiguration, a temporary change that has allowed righteous people in various dispensations to see God and live. However, Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–22 teaches of being sanctified—a lasting change to our fallen nature that comes through the ordinances and covenants of the Melchizedek Priesthood (see also D&C 67:10; 88:68; 93:1). The Lord taught Adam that "no unclean thing can dwell … in his presence" (Moses 6:57). Only by receiving the ordinances through the power of the priesthood and keeping the associated covenants can we be cleansed from sin and become holy and pure like God. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or possess the principles which God possesses" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 72).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:23–30, looking for lessons we can learn from the children of Israel.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:23–25. Moses "sought diligently to sanctify his people"

In Doctrine and Covenants 84:23, the Lord summarized Moses's efforts to sanctify the children of Israel so that they could receive promised priesthood ordinances and power to enter into God's presence (see also Exodus 19:10–11). Initially, the children of Israel covenanted to do all that the Lord commanded them to do (see Exodus 19:7–8), and some of them, including Aaron and two of his sons, "saw the God of Israel" (Exodus 24:9–10). However, the children of Israel hardened their hearts and "corrupted themselves" with idolatry (see Exodus 32:7–8). Consequently, they lost the privilege of receiving the ordinances and covenants of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which would have enabled them to enter into God's rest, "which rest is the fulness of his glory" (D&C 84:24; see also Jacob 1:7; Alma 12:33–37; 13:12–16; 3 Nephi 27:19).



At Mount Sinai, Moses sought to prepare the children of Israel to receive priesthood ordinances so that they might "behold the face of God" (see D&C 84:19–23).

Doctrine and Covenants 84:26–30. The Aaronic Priesthood holds the key of the preparatory gospel

Although the Lord took the Melchizedek Priesthood away from the children of Israel, He provided them with "the lesser priesthood," or the Aaronic Priesthood, and its ordinances (see D&C 107:13–14). **Bishop Keith B. McMullin,** who served in the Presiding Bishopric, explained how the Aaronic Priesthood prepares God's children for the fulness of the Savior's gospel:

"The lesser portion of the gospel encompasses vital, saving truths and rests on the cornerstones of obedience and sacrifice. These truths school men and women, boys and girls in the fundamentals of righteousness. They consist of repentance, baptism, and observance of the law of carnal commandments unto the remission of sins. Carnal commandments are those that enable us to overcome the lusts, passions, and desires of our natural, or mortal, bodies and minds. … This lesser portion of the gospel will nourish those who are new in the Church, lead back those who have strayed, help young people recognize and overcome the temptations and deceptions of the world. Without this preparation, the fulness of gospel blessings cannot be realized or enjoyed.

"The responsibility for administering this preparatory portion of the gospel is entrusted to the Aaronic Priesthood" ("Behold the Man," *Ensign,* Nov. 1997, 41).

President Boyd K. Packer (1924– 2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the following account from President Wilford Woodruff to illustrate the power that is inherent in the Aaronic Priesthood and how through it God's children can be led to embrace the gospel:

"After President Wilford Woodruff joined the Church he desired to serve a mission.

" 'I was but a Teacher,' he wrote, 'and it is not a Teacher's office to go abroad and preach. I dared not tell any of the authorities of the Church that I wanted to preach, lest they might think I was seeking for an office.' (*Leaves from My Journal,* Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882, p. 8.)

"He prayed to the Lord, and without disclosing his desire to any others, he was ordained a priest and sent on a mission. They went to the Arkansas Territory.

"He and his companion struggled through a hundred miles of alligator-infested swamps, wet, muddy, and tired. Brother Woodruff developed a sharp pain in his knee and could go no further. His companion left him sitting on a log and went home. Brother Woodruff knelt down in the mud and prayed for help. He was healed and continued his mission alone.

"Three days later he arrived in Memphis, Tennessee, weary, hungry, and very muddy. He went to the largest inn and asked for something to eat and for a place to sleep, although he had no money to pay for either.

"When the innkeeper found he was a preacher, he laughed and decided to have some fun with him. He offered Brother Woodruff a meal if he would preach to his friends.

"A large audience of the rich and fashionable people of Memphis gathered and were quite amused by this mud-stained missionary.

"None would sing or pray, so Brother Woodruff did both. He knelt before them and begged the Lord to give him His Spirit and to show him the hearts of the people. And the Spirit came! Brother Woodruff preached with great power. He was able to reveal the secret deeds of those who came to ridicule him.

"When he was finished, no one laughed at this humble holder of the Aaronic Priesthood. Thereafter he was treated with kindness. (See *Leaves from My Journal,* pp. 16–18.)

"He was under the guiding, protecting power of his Aaronic Priesthood. The same power can be with you [who hold the Aaronic Priesthood] as well. …

"The fact that it is called the lesser priesthood does not diminish at all the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood" ("The Aaronic Priesthood," *Ensign,* Nov. 1981, 30)

Doctrine and Covenants 84:31–32. Who are the sons of Moses and the sons of Aaron?

In Doctrine and Covenants 84:31, the Lord continued the discussion that began in Doctrine and Covenants 84:5–6 regarding the role of "the sons of Moses and also the sons of Aaron … in the house of the Lord," including the latter-day temple that will be built in the city of New Jerusalem. The sons of Moses are those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. The sons of Aaron are those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood. These priesthood bearers will "offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord" (D&C 84:31). (For further details about these latter-day offerings, see Isaiah 66:20–21; Omni 1:26; D&C 13:1; 128:24.)

Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–44

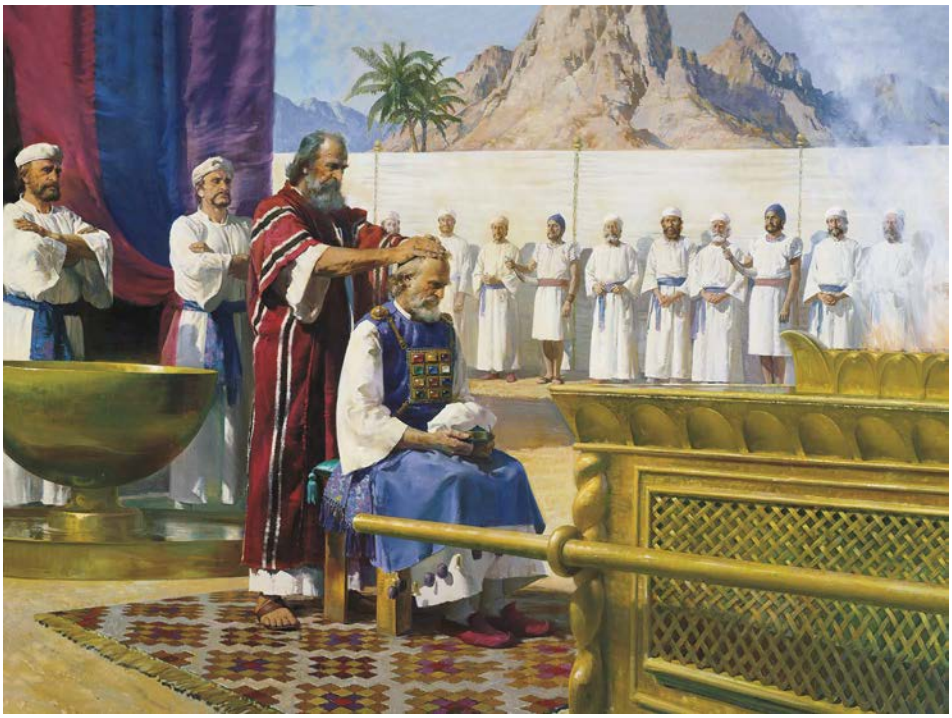
The Lord reveals the oath and covenant of the priesthood

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–44, looking for the responsibilities of those who receive the priesthood as well as the blessings promised to them by the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–44. What is the oath and covenant of the priesthood?

The Savior declared that "all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father" (D&C 84:40). The Guide to the Scriptures explains: "An oath is a sworn affirmation to be true and faithful to one's promises. A covenant is a solemn promise between two parties" ("Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood," scriptures.lds.org). **Elder Carlos E. Asay** (1926–1999) of the Presidency of the Seventy explained the sacred nature of the oath and covenant associated with the priesthood: "Of all the holy agreements pertaining to the gospel of Jesus Christ, few, if any, would transcend in importance the oath and covenant of the priesthood. It is certainly one of the most sacred agreements, for it involves the sharing of heavenly powers and man's upward reaching toward eternal goals. None of us can afford to be ignorant of the terms of this contract. To do so might cause us to miss the mark in our performance of duty and result in the forfeiture of promised blessings" ("The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood," *Ensign,* Nov. 1985, 43).

The Lord has promised that those who obtain the priesthood and faithfully magnify their callings will be sanctified by the Spirit, receive the authority of the sons of Moses and Aaron, and become the seed of Abraham and the elect of God (see D&C 84:33–34). To be the seed or children of Abraham is to become heirs of the blessings promised to Abraham (see Abraham 2:9–11; D&C 132:28–31).



Moses Calls Aaron to the Ministry, **by Harry Anderson. Those who receive the priesthood and faithfully magnify their calling "become the sons of Moses and of Aaron" (see D&C 84:33–34).**

To be faithful in obtaining "these two priesthoods" (D&C 84:33) involves obtaining the power and blessings that come from receiving the ordinances of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and faithfully keeping the associated covenants. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that a person obtains the fulness of the priesthood "by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 419). Therefore, the blessings of the oath and covenant of the priesthood are not just for priesthood holders. God's greatest blessings come to men and women who are sealed to each other in the temple. **Elder Paul B. Pieper** of the Seventy taught:

"The full blessings of the priesthood are received together as husband and wife or not at all.

"It is interesting that in the oath and covenant of the priesthood, the Lord uses the verbs *obtain* and *receive.* He does not use the verb *ordain.* It is in the temple that men and women—together—obtain and receive the blessings and power of both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods" ("Revealed Realities of Mortality," *Ensign,* Jan. 2016, 21).

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also emphasized that blessings are available to all Church members through the priesthood:

"One day Sister Nelson and I will dwell together in the presence of our family and the Lord forevermore. We will have been faithful to covenants made in the temple and to the oath and covenant of the priesthood, which have assured us, in the

words of the Lord, that 'all that my Father hath shall be given unto [you]' (D&C 84:38).

"Faithful sisters share the blessings of the priesthood. Think of those words 'all that my Father hath.' … It means that no earthly reward—no other success—could compensate for the bounties the Lord will bestow upon those who love Him, keep His commandments (see Moro. 4:3), and endure to the end (see D&C 14:7)" ("Identity, Priority, and Blessings," *Ensign,* Aug. 2001, 10).

Doctrine and Covenants 84:36. "He that receiveth my servants receiveth me"

The Lord taught that those who receive His servants receive Him (see D&C 84:36). Receiving the Lord's servants means following those who hold the keys of the priesthood, beginning with the prophets and apostles and including other priesthood leaders such as stake presidents, bishops, and quorum presidents. If we receive the Lord and His servants, we also receive Heavenly Father, and He will bestow all that He has upon us (see D&C 93:26–28). Because receiving the Lord's servants and the priesthood keys that they hold is a necessary step to receiving all that Heavenly Father has, Satan will try to undermine our faith in those priesthood keys and those who hold them. **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency cautioned: "Satan will always work on the Saints of God to undermine their faith in priesthood keys. One way he does it is to point out the humanity of those who hold them. He can in that way weaken our testimony and so cut us loose from the line of keys by which the Lord ties us to Him and can take us and our families home to Him and to our Heavenly Father" ("Faith and Keys," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2004, 28).

Ponder what it means to receive all that Heavenly Father has. What can you do to be more faithful and true to the promises you have made to God through the ordinances of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood you have received?

Doctrine and Covenants 84:40. "All those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant"

President Henry B. Eyring spoke of the confidence that priesthood holders should have when entering into the oath and covenant of the priesthood:

"Rising to the possibilities of the oath and covenant brings the greatest of all the gifts of God: eternal life. That is a purpose of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Through keeping the covenants as we receive the priesthood and renewing them in the temple ceremonies, we are promised by an oath made by our Heavenly Father, Elohim, that we will gain the fulness of His glory and live as He lives. We will have the blessing of being sealed in a family forever with the promise of eternal increase. …

"… The very fact that you have been offered the oath and covenant is evidence that God has chosen you, knowing your power and capacity. He has known you since you were with Him in the spirit world. With His foreknowledge of your strength, He has allowed you to find the true Church of Jesus Christ and to be offered the

priesthood. You can feel confidence because you have evidence of His confidence in you" ("Faith and the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2008, 61–62).

Doctrine and Covenants 84:41–42. "Whoso breaketh this covenant … shall not have forgiveness"

The Lord warned that those who break the oath and covenant of the priesthood and "altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come" (D&C 84:41). Those individuals who turn away completely from their covenants and do not repent will forfeit the blessings of exaltation promised to those who are faithful, although they may not necessarily become sons of perdition (see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* 3:141–42).

Doctrine and Covenants 84:45–59

The Lord explains why the world is in darkness, and He admonishes the Saints to repent

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:43–53, looking for the blessings promised to those who give diligent heed to God's words.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:45–48. "The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world"

Every person who comes to earth is enlightened and influenced by "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (see D&C 84:45–46), also referred to as the Light of Christ. Those who heed this Light will be led to God the Father, who is the source of all truth and light (see D&C 84:47).

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained several functions of the Light of Christ, which helps all people come unto God: "The Light of Christ is that divine power or influence that emanates from God through Jesus Christ [see Topical Guide, 'Light of Christ']. It gives light and life to all things. It prompts all rational individuals throughout the earth to distinguish truth from error, right from wrong. It activates your conscience [see Moroni 7:16]. Its influence can be weakened through transgression and addiction and restored through proper repentance. The Light of Christ is not a person. It is a power and influence that comes from God and when followed can lead a person to qualify for the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost [see John 1:9; D&C 84:46–47]" ("Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2004, 15).

For more information about the Spirit of Jesus Christ, or the Light of Christ, see the commentary in this manual for Doctrine and Covenants 88:5–13.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:54–59, looking for why the Saints' minds had become darkened.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:49–59. "Remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon"

The Lord contrasted the light that comes from the Spirit of Christ with the darkness of sin, and He declared that those who choose not to come unto Him are left in darkness and under the bondage of sin (see D&C 84:45–46, 49–50). The Lord warned the Saints in Zion that their minds had been "darkened because of unbelief" and because they treated the things He had given them lightly (D&C 84:54). To treat something lightly is to ignore it or treat it disrespectfully or carelessly. The Saints in Zion were under condemnation for treating the Book of Mormon and "the former commandments" that the Lord had given them lightly (D&C 84:57). The former commandments could be previous revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith or teachings from the Bible. Speaking about this warning and admonition concerning the Book of Mormon, **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) gave Church members the following counsel:

"Brethren and sisters, I implore you with all my heart that you consider with great solemnity the importance of the Book of Mormon to you personally and to the Church collectively.

"Over ten years ago I made the following statement regarding the Book of Mormon:

"'Do eternal consequences rest upon our response to this book? Yes, either to our blessing or our condemnation.

"'Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit. Otherwise he is placing his soul in jeopardy and neglecting that which could give spiritual and intellectual unity to his whole life' ["The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God," *Ensign,* May 1975, 65]. …

"I reaffirm those words to you this day. Let us not remain under condemnation, with its scourge and judgment, by treating lightly this great and marvelous gift the Lord has given to us. Rather, let us win the promises associated with treasuring it up in our hearts" ("The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign,* Nov. 1986, 7).



In 1986, President Ezra Taft Benson counseled Church members regarding the importance of the Book of Mormon and referred to Doctrine and Covenants 84:54–58 (see "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign,* Nov. 1986, 7).
Busath.com

President Thomas S. Monson taught of the blessings members of the Church will receive as they regularly study the Book of Mormon: "My dear associates in the work of the Lord, I implore each of us to prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day. As we do so, we will be in a position to hear the voice of the

Spirit, to resist temptation, to overcome doubt and fear, and to receive heaven's help in our lives. I so testify with all my heart" ("The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2017, 87).

Why do you think treating the word of God lightly can darken a person's mind? How can faithful study of the word of God bring spiritual light into a person's life? What can you do to make the Book of Mormon a more meaningful part of your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 84:60–120

The Lord commands the Saints to take the gospel to all the world and instructs those called to preach

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:60–76, looking for the Lord's instructions to the Saints regarding preaching the gospel and His promises to those who believe His servants and are baptized.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:60–62. The responsibility to preach the gospel to all the world

Like the charge given His ancient Apostles (see Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–18), the Lord instructed the Saints of this dispensation to preach the gospel to all the world. He commanded that if there were any place that the Saints could not personally go, they were to send their testimony in some other way so that the restored gospel could be proclaimed "unto every creature" (D&C 84:62). **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invited Church members to use inspired innovations in communication and technology to send the gospel message to people throughout the world:

"The Lord is hastening His work, and it is no coincidence that these powerful communication innovations and inventions are occurring in the dispensation of the fulness of times. Social media channels are global tools that can personally and positively impact large numbers of individuals and families. And I believe the time has come for us as disciples of Christ to use these inspired tools appropriately and more effectively to testify of God the Eternal Father, His plan of happiness for His children, and His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior of the world; to proclaim the reality of the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days; and to accomplish the Lord's work. …

"What has been accomplished thus far in this dispensation communicating gospel messages through social media channels is a good beginning—but only a small trickle. I now extend to you the invitation to help transform the trickle into a flood. … I exhort you to sweep the earth with messages filled with righteousness and truth—messages that are authentic, edifying, and praiseworthy—and literally to sweep the earth as with a flood (see Moses 7:59–62)" ("Flood the Earth through Social Media," *New Era,* Aug. 2015, 32, 35).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:77–97, looking for the instructions the Lord gave those called to proclaim the gospel and the blessings He promised them.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:77–95. "Take ye no thought for the morrow"

Much of the counsel contained in Doctrine and Covenants 84:77–95 is similar to the instructions that the Lord gave His ancient Apostles before sending them forth to preach the gospel (see Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:25–27 [in the Bible appendix]; Matthew 10:5–20). It is important to remember that these instructions were given to those called to serve full-time missions rather than to Church members generally. At the time Doctrine and Covenants 84 was received, the Lord commanded His missionaries to go forth and proclaim the gospel without purse or scrip, meaning without money or other provisions (see D&C 84:78, 86). In the Savior's day, a purse carried money and a scrip or small bag carried food and other supplies. Furthermore, the Lord instructed His missionaries to "take … no thought for the morrow" (D&C 84:81) as to their temporal needs. In other words, they were not to be overly anxious or worried about food, clothing, or lodgings. Instead, they were to trust in and rely on the Lord to provide for their sustenance and needs through other people. Similarly, missionaries were not to be overanxious about what they should teach. Rather, they were to "treasure up in [their] minds continually" the word of God so that they would be inspired as to what to say in the moment they needed it (D&C 84:85). Missionaries today rely on the inspiration of the Spirit to help them know how and what to teach, but the Lord no longer sends them forth without purse or scrip.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:88. "I will go before your face"

Those called to serve the Lord have the encouraging promise that He will go before them to prepare the way and His Spirit and ministering angels will assist them in accomplishing His work. **President Henry B. Eyring** explained one way that Church members may experience the fulfillment of this promise:

"The first thing you must commit to do is to go and serve, knowing that you do not go alone. When you go to comfort and serve anyone for the Savior, He prepares the way before you. Now, as the returned missionaries here tonight will tell you, that doesn't mean that every person behind every door is prepared to welcome you or that every person you try to serve will thank you. But the Lord will go before your face to prepare the way. …

"One of the ways He goes before your face is to prepare the heart of a person He has asked you to serve. He will prepare your heart as well.

"You will also find that the Lord puts helpers by your side—on your right, on your left, and all around you. You do not go alone to serve others for Him" ("Trust in That Spirit Which Leadeth to Do Good," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2016, 17).

When have you felt that the Lord went before you to prepare the way for you to accomplish His work?

Doctrine and Covenants 84:92. "Cleanse your feet"

To learn more about the Lord's instructions for His servants to cleanse their feet when people reject their message, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 24:15 in this manual.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:98–102, looking for what will happen when Zion and her people are redeemed.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:98–102. The new song of Zion's redemption

After the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the start of the Millennium, all people will know the Lord and "lift up their voice, and with the voice together sing this new song" of Zion's redemption (D&C 84:98). The Saints will rejoice and praise the Lord for establishing Zion and redeeming them by His grace, which is received through faithfully keeping His covenants. They will also rejoice that Satan is bound and that the city of Enoch, "Zion from above," will return and meet the "Zion from beneath" (D&C 84:100; see also Moses 7:62–64).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:103–10, looking for what the Lord instructed the Saints to do to strengthen one another.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:106–10. Edifying and strengthening one another

Every member of the Church is needed to help in the Lord's work. The Lord counseled the elders of the Church to invite those who were "weak" to assist in the work with those who were "strong in the Spirit" so that they "may become strong also" (D&C 84:106). The Lord also explained that every Church member is to contribute to the kingdom by laboring in the calling that he or she is given (see D&C 84:109). The Lord then compared the Church and its members to the physical body and its various parts (see D&C 84:109–10; see also 1 Corinthians 12:13–27).

Each part of the body is needed for the entire body to function properly. Likewise, each Church member, no matter his or her calling or position, is valued and needed—each can strengthen the Church and help edify its members. **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency taught: "You may feel that there are others who are more capable or more experienced who could fulfill your callings and assignments better than you can, but the Lord gave you your responsibilities for a reason. There may be people and hearts only you can reach and touch. Perhaps no one else could do it in quite the same way" ("Lift Where You Stand," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 56).

Ponder how you or your family members have been edified and strengthened by those who have faithfully served in their Church callings and responsibilities. What can you do to bless the lives of others and strengthen your ward or branch through your callings and service?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 84:111–20, looking for the Lord's instructions to Bishop Newel K. Whitney and other priesthood leaders.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:117. What is "the desolation of abomination"?

The Lord instructed Bishop Newel K. Whitney and other elders of the Church to preach the gospel in the "notable cities and villages" and warn the people of "the desolation of abomination in the last days" (D&C 84:117). The Old Testament prophet Daniel prophesied of "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Daniel 11:31). The Savior taught His disciples that Daniel's prophecy would have two fulfillments. The first fulfillment of this prophecy was when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:12). The second will be in the last days, after the restored gospel is preached in all the world (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:31–32). "The desolation of abomination in the last days" (D&C 84:117) refers more generally to the judgments that will be poured out upon the wicked, both the living and the dead in the spirit world (see D&C 88:84–85). For this reason, the Lord sends His servants to warn the wicked and proclaim the everlasting gospel so that they will repent and escape the coming destruction and desolation. (See Bible Dictionary, "Abomination of desolation.")

Consider the truths you have learned in Doctrine and Covenants 84. How can these truths help you to become more like your Heavenly Father so that you can return to dwell in His presence?

CHAPTER 32

Doctrine and Covenants 85–87

Introduction and Timeline

In late November 1832, some of the Saints who had moved to Zion, in Missouri, had not consecrated their properties as the Lord had commanded. Because of this they had not received an inheritance of land according to the laws of the Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith addressed this issue in an inspired letter to William W. Phelps, dated November 27, 1832, a portion of which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 85.

On December 6, 1832, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 86, the same day he was working on the inspired translation of the Bible. This revelation provided further explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares and the role of the priesthood in helping the Lord gather the righteous in the last days.

Throughout 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church members likely learned through newspaper reports of troubles sweeping the earth. For example, they were aware of disputes over slavery in the United States, and they also knew about the nullification of federal tariffs in the state of South Carolina. On December 25, 1832, Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 87, which includes prophecies about the wars and judgments that would be "poured out upon all nations" (D&C 87:3) in the last days.

November 6, 1832

Emma Smith gave birth to Joseph Smith III.

November 6, 1832

Joseph Smith returned from preaching in the eastern United States.

November 8, 1832

Joseph Smith met Brigham Young for the first time.

November 27, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 85 was written (extract from a letter written by Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps).

December 6, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 86 was received.

December 25, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 87 was received.

Think about the covenants you have made with the Lord. What challenges do you face that might make it difficult for you to keep your covenants? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 85, look for truths that can help you remain faithful to the covenants you have made.

Doctrine and Covenants 85: Additional Historical Background

By November 1832, more than 800 Latter-day Saints had gathered to the land of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 315). It was expected that Church members who settled in Zion would live according to the system of consecration commanded by the Lord (see D&C 42:30–36; 57:4–7; 58:19, 34–36; 72:15). This meant that a member would consecrate or dedicate property and resources to the Lord through a legal deed that was signed by both the member and the bishop. In return, the member was given, through another legal deed, property and resources called an "inheritance" or "stewardship" according to the needs and wants of the member's family. Saints who settled in Jackson County,

Missouri, and were obedient to the law of consecration received an inheritance of land that had been purchased by Church agents.



The Prophet Joseph Smith and his family lived in the upstairs of the Newel K. Whitney store from September 1832 to February 1834.

In October and November of 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith received correspondence from Church leaders in Zion, including from William W. Phelps, who oversaw the Church's printing operation in Independence, Missouri, as a member of the United Firm. On November 27, 1832, Joseph Smith wrote a letter responding to William W. Phelps's questions. The Prophet was aware that some of the Saints in Zion did not participate in the system of consecration required by the Lord, and he addressed the issue of whether land inheritances should be given to those Saints who had not consecrated their property. Doctrine and Covenants 85 contains an extract of the letter that the Prophet sent to William W. Phelps.



Doctrine and Covenants 85

The Lord commands that a record be kept of those who have consecrated and received inheritances

Read Doctrine and Covenants 85, looking for the spiritual danger described by the phrase "steady the ark of God" in verse 8.

Doctrine and Covenants 85:1–5. "The book of the law of God"

In March 1831 the Lord appointed John Whitmer "to keep the church record and history continually" (D&C 47:3). This earlier command was repeated when the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote that "it is the duty of the Lord's clerk [John Whitmer], whom he has appointed, to keep a history, and a general church record of all things that transpire in Zion" (D&C 85:1). As part of his duty, the clerk was to record the names of those who consecrated their property and received inheritances or stewardships from the bishop, along with "their manner of life, their faith, and works" (D&C 85:2). Further, the inspired direction given to Church leaders in Missouri was that those who were not willing to consecrate their properties in order to receive an inheritance in Zion were not to have their names, nor the names of their family members, recorded "in the book of the law of God" (D&C 85:5; see also Joshua 24:15, 25–26).

Three record books are mentioned in this revelation: "the book of the law of God" (D&C 85:5, 7), "the book of remembrance" (D&C 85:9), and "the book of the law" (D&C 85:11). It is likely that these descriptions all refer to the same book. Later, after the Saints had settled in Nauvoo, Illinois, Joseph Smith directed that a record be kept containing his journal entries and a list of tithing donations made for the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. This book was also referred to as "the Book of the Law of the Lord" (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 319, note 160).

The commandment of tithing mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 85 and in other early revelations referred to all offerings given to the Church, including consecrated property (see D&C 64:23–24; 85:3; 97:11–12; D&C 119, section heading).

Doctrine and Covenants 85:7–8. Who is the "one mighty and strong"?

During the initial visit of Church leaders to Missouri in the summer of 1831, a disagreement occurred between Bishop Edward Partridge and the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Prophet had directed that land be purchased in Independence, Missouri, but a conflict arose as Bishop Partridge expressed concern over the quality of the land. He was chastened by the Lord, but the problem of disunity was not immediately resolved. Sometime before April 1832 the Prophet and Bishop Partridge reconciled (see D&C 58:14–17; 82:1–7; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 12–13).

The inspired wording found in the Prophet's letter to William W. Phelps in November 1832 referred to "one mighty and strong" who would arise to set in order the house of God because of one who "putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God" (D&C 85:7–8). This warning would have applied to Bishop Edward Partridge had he not repented. Oliver Cowdery recorded in 1834 that Joseph Smith had later clarified that the warning in his letter did not apply to any specific person, "but it was given for a caution to those in high standing to beware, lest they should fall by the shaft of death as the Lord had said" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 320, note 161).

The reference to the "one mighty and strong" (D&C 85:7) who is to set in order the house of God and the reference to one who "putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God" (D&C 85:8) have been used by many apostates to justify their falling away from the Church. They claim that various Presidents of the Church have lost favor with God and are rejected, and that they, the apostates, are the "one mighty and strong" called by God to set things right. Such claims contradict the meaning of the scriptures.

In an official statement issued in 1905, the **First Presidency** (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) discussed the circumstances that brought forth the prophecy recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 85:7–8 and those to whom the phrases "one mighty and strong" (D&C 85:7) and "putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God" (D&C 85:8) referred:

"Bishop [Edward] Partridge was one of the brethren, who—though a most worthy man, one whom the Lord loved, and whom the Prophet described as 'a pattern of piety,' and 'one of the Lord's great men'—at time arrayed himself in opposition to the Prophet in those early days, and sought to correct him in his administrations of the affairs of the Church; in other words, 'put forth his hand to steady the ark.' …

"… Through his repentance and sacrifices and suffering, Bishop Edward Partridge undoubtedly obtained a mitigation of the threatened judgment against him of falling 'by the shaft of death, like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning,' so the occasion for sending another to fill his station—'one mighty and strong to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints'—may also be considered as having passed away and the whole incident

of the prophecy closed" (in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* comp. James R. Clark [1970], 4:113, 117).

Doctrine and Covenants 85:8. What does it mean to "steady the ark of God"?

The phrase "steady the ark of God" refers to an incident recorded in the Old Testament that occurred during the reign of King David in ancient Israel. The Philistines had captured the ark of the covenant in battle but returned it when they were struck by plagues (see 1 Samuel 4–6). David and the people later brought the ark to Jerusalem in an ox cart, driven by Uzzah and Ahio. "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (2 Samuel 6:6–7). The ark was the symbol of God's presence, His glory and majesty. When first given to Israel, the ark was placed in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, and not even the priest was permitted to approach it. Only the high priest, a type of Christ, could approach it, and then only after going through an elaborate ritual of personal cleansing, which represented the cleansing of his sins.

The Lord referred to this incident in latter-day revelation to teach the principle that we should not take upon ourselves the responsibility to give direction ("steady the ark") to those God has called and appointed to reveal His will and direct His kingdom upon the earth (see D&C 85:8). There may be those who fear the ark is in danger of falling and presume to steady it. Some members of the Church may see problems and be frustrated with the way they feel the Lord's servants are addressing those problems. They may feel that even though they do not have the authority to do so, they need to correct the course of their ward or even of the Church. However, the best intentions do not justify such interference with the Lord's Church by those who have not been duly called and appointed by God.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught: "It is a little dangerous for us to go out of our own sphere and try unauthoritatively to direct the efforts of a brother. You remember the case of Uzzah who stretched forth his hand to steady the ark [see 1 Chronicles 13:7–10]. He seemed justified when the oxen stumbled in putting forth his hand to steady that symbol of the covenant. We today think his punishment was very severe. Be that as it may, the incident conveys a lesson of life. Let us look around us and see how quickly men who attempt unauthoritatively to steady the ark die spiritually. Their souls become embittered, their minds distorted, their judgment faulty, and their spirit depressed. Such is the pitiable condition of men who, neglecting their own responsibilities, spend their time in finding fault with others" (in *Conference Report,* Apr. 1936, 60).

Doctrine and Covenants 85:9–11. "Shall not find an inheritance among the saints"

The inheritances of land that the Saints were to receive in Zion through the law of consecration and that are referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 85 can be likened to the eternal inheritances promised to the faithful. The record of the earthly inheritances received by faithful Church members through consecration included their names and a record of "their manner of life, their faith, and works" (D&C

85:2). The names of those who were unfaithful or who had apostatized were not found in "the book of the law of God" (D&C 85:5). Similarly, as we keep our covenants, we are assured to receive eternal inheritances in the celestial kingdom (see D&C 38:17–20; see also D&C 63:47–49).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency taught what we must do to obtain an eternal inheritance:

"Your Heavenly Father has high aspirations for you, but your divine origin *alone* does not guarantee you a divine inheritance. God sent you here to prepare for a future greater than anything you can imagine. …

"For this reason, we speak of walking the path of discipleship.

"We speak of obedience to God's commandments.

"We speak of living the gospel joyfully, with all our heart, might, mind, and soul" ("Living the Gospel Joyful," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 121).

Ponder what you will do to continue to keep the covenants you have made with God so that you may receive an eternal inheritance.

Doctrine and Covenants 86: Additional Historical Background

Sometime in the spring of 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith made inspired changes to Matthew 13 as part of his inspired translation of the New Testament. At that time he made very few changes to the parable of the wheat and the tares recorded in that chapter (see Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43). From July 1832 to February 1833, as Joseph was working on the inspired translation of the Old Testament, he reviewed changes he had made to the New Testament. While it is not clear whether he was reviewing Matthew 13 again or working on Old Testament passages regarding the gathering of Israel, his journal entry for December 6, 1832, which was the day the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 86 was received, states that he had been translating on that day and "received a Revelation explaining the Parable [of] the wheat and the [tares]" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* ed. Dean C. Jessee and others [2008], 11).

Doctrine and Covenants 86

The Lord explains the parable of the wheat and the tares

Read Doctrine and Covenants 86, looking for details that will help you to better understand the Lord's parable about the wheat and the tares.

Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7. "The parable of the wheat and of the tares"

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained that the parables recorded in Matthew 13 referred to the establishment of Christ's Church during His mortal life

and also to the growth and destiny of that Church in the latter days (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 294).



While reviewing his translation of the Bible, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 86, an inspired translation of the parable of the wheat and tares (see D&C 86, section heading).

Several years after the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 86 was received, Joseph Smith gave additional teachings regarding the parable of the wheat and the tares, and these teachings were published in the December 1835 issue of the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (see "To the Elders of the Church of the Latter Day Saints," 225–27). Speaking specifically of that parable, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained:

"Now we learn by this parable, not only the setting up of the Kingdom in the days of the Savior, which is represented by the good seed, which produced fruit, but also the corruptions of the Church, which are represented by the tares, which were sown by the enemy, which His disciples would fain have plucked up, or cleansed the Church of, if their views had been favored by the Savior. But He, knowing all things, says, Not so. As much as to say, your views are not correct, the Church is in its infancy, and if you take this rash step, you will destroy the wheat, or the Church, with the tares; therefore it is better to let them grow together until the harvest, or the end of the world, which means the destruction of the wicked, which is not yet fulfilled. …

"Now men cannot have any possible grounds to say that this [the Savior's clarification of the parable to His disciples, recorded in Matthew 13:36–39] is figurative, or that it does not mean what it says, for He is now explaining what He has previously spoken in parables; and according to this language, the end of the

world is the destruction of the wicked; the harvest and the end of the world have an allusion directly to the human family in the last days. …

"'As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world' [Matthew 13:40]; that is, as the servants of God go forth warning the nations, both priests and people, and as they harden their hearts and reject the light of truth, these first being delivered over to the buffetings of Satan, and the law and the testimony being closed up, … they are left in darkness, and delivered over unto the day of burning; thus being bound up by their creeds, and their bands being made strong by their priests, [they] are prepared for the fulfillment of the saying of the Savior—'The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' [Matthew 13:41–42.]

"We understand that the work of gathering together of the wheat into barns, or garners, is to take place while the tares are being bound over and preparing for the day of burning; that after the day of burnings, 'the righteous shall shine forth like the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear' [Matthew 13:43]" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith,* 299–301; see also Manuscript History of the Church, vol. B-1, 645–46, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 86:3–4. "Drive the church into the wilderness"

In the meridian of time, Jesus Christ established His Church and commanded His Apostles to take the gospel message to the world. After the Apostles had "fallen asleep," meaning after they died, the keys of the priesthood were withdrawn and the ordinances and organization of the early Church were corrupted (see D&C 86:3; see also D&C 1:15–16). Satan, and those who followed him, "[drove] the church into the wilderness," meaning that the Church was no longer guided by living prophets and apostles and people fell into apostasy and spiritual darkness (see D&C 86:3; see also Revelation 12:1–6). Centuries later, Joseph Smith was called by God to bring the Church of Jesus Christ "out of obscurity and out of darkness" (D&C 1:30; see also D&C 1:17; 5:14; 33:5; 86:3–4; 109:73).

Doctrine and Covenants 86:6–7. "Let the wheat and the tares grow together"

In the Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares, the wheat represented "the children of the kingdom" and the tares, or weeds, were planted by the enemy and represented "the children of the wicked one" (Matthew 13:38). The harvest referred to the time when the reapers would gather the tares to be burned and gather the wheat into the barn (see Matthew 13:30). In latter-day revelation, the Lord clarified the order of the reaping or harvesting, indicating that the wheat would be gathered first, and then the tares would be bound (see D&C 86:7; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 13:29 [in Matthew 13:30, footnote *b*]). The parable emphasized the decision to wait until harvest time to separate the wheat from the tares. This demonstrated God's mercy in giving His children time to be strengthened in their faith before the separation of the righteous from the wicked at the end of the world (see D&C 38:12; 63:54; 88:94; 101:64–66). Until the time of

harvest at the end of the world, the righteous and wicked will continue to "grow together" (D&C 86:7).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the challenge this presents to Latter-day Saints today:

"Church members will live in this wheat-and-tares situation until the Millennium. Some real tares even masquerade as wheat, including the few eager individuals who lecture the rest of us about Church doctrines in which they no longer believe. They criticize the use of Church resources to which they no longer contribute. They condescendingly seek to counsel the Brethren whom they no longer sustain. Confrontive, except of themselves of course, they leave the Church, but they cannot leave the Church alone (see ["The Net Gathers of Every Kind,"] *Ensign,* Nov. 1980, 14). …

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, quiet goodness must persevere, even when, as prophesied, a few actually rage in their anger against that which is good (see 2 Ne. 28:20). Likewise, the arrogance of critics must be met by the meekness and articulateness of believers. If sometimes ringed by resentment, we must still reach out, especially for those whose hands hang down (see D&C 81:5). If our shortcomings as a people are occasionally highlighted, then let us strive to do better" ("Becometh As a Child," *Ensign,* May 1996, 68).

Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11. "The priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers"

After revealing the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares, the Lord explained the implications of this parable for members of His Church "with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers" (D&C 86:8). The latter-day harvest of wheat, meaning the gathering of the righteous, is organized and carried out by the Lord's authorized servants. This was promised anciently to Abraham when Jehovah declared that Abraham's seed, or posterity, would "bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations" and that through this priesthood "shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal" (Abraham 2:9, 11). Although we cannot identify descendants of Abraham by their outward appearance, the Lord knows who and where they are. The Prophet Joseph Smith learned that the Latter-day Saints are literal descendants of Abraham and "heirs, according to the flesh," qualifying them to receive the blessings of the priesthood (see D&C 86:8–9; see also D&C 113:6, 8). The Lord revealed that the descendants of Abraham have a commission to provide the saving ordinances of the priesthood to others, thereby becoming "a savior unto my people Israel" (D&C 86:11; see also D&C 103:9–10).



Through the priesthood, the Prophet Joseph Smith has helped to bring about "the restoration of all things" (D&C 86:10).

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "You are one of God's noble and great spirits, held in reserve to come to earth at this time. (See D&C 86:8–11.) In your premortal life you were appointed to help prepare the world for the great gathering of souls that will precede the Lord's second coming. You are one of a covenant people. You are an heir to the promise that all the earth will be blessed by the seed of Abraham and that God's covenant with Abraham will be fulfilled through his lineage in these latter days. (See 1 Ne. 15:18; 3 Ne. 20:25.)" ("Choices," *Ensign,* Nov. 1990, 73).

What can you do to be a light to others and to help others receive salvation?

Doctrine and Covenants 87: Additional Historical Background

During the early history of the United States, there were serious disagreements over how much control the national government should have over individual states. A serious national crisis occurred in 1832, when the state of South Carolina passed an ordinance declaring national tariff laws (taxes on imported goods) to be unconstitutional, and many South Carolinians began to prepare for military action against the federal government. The President of the United States, Andrew Jackson, viewed this as rebellion, and, in a show of force, he sent federal troops to South Carolina and a warship to Charleston Harbor. The passing of a new tariff law in March 1833, which was viewed as a compromise, prevented civil war from occurring at that time.

Many newspapers, including the December 21, 1832, issue of the *Painesville Telegraph,* published accounts of this political turmoil and of other troubling circumstances throughout the world. Because Painesville, Ohio, was located just 10 miles from Kirtland, the *Painesville Telegraph* could have been one of the sources of information that led the Prophet Joseph Smith to report the following:

"Appearances of troubles among the nations became more visible, this season, than they had previously done since the church began her journey out of the wilderness. The ravages of the cholera were frightful, in almost all the large cities on the globe; and the plague broke out in India; while the United States, amid all her pomp and greatness, was threatened with immediate dissolution. The people of South Carolina, in convention assembled, (in November,) passed ordinances, declaring their state, a free and Independent Nation. …

"President [Andrew] Jackson issued his proclamation against this rebellion; called out a force sufficient to quell it, and implored the blessings of God to assist the Nation to extricate itself from the horrors of the approaching and Solemn Crisis.

"On Christmas day [1832] I received the following [revelation]" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 244, josephsmithpapers.org). This revelation is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 87.

Doctrine and Covenants 87

The Lord reveals that war will be poured out among all nations

Read Doctrine and Covenants 87, looking for details that demonstrate how the prophecy contained in in this revelation has been fulfilled.

Doctrine and Covenants 87:1–6. "War will be poured out upon all nations"

The gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to bring peace to those who obey God's commandments and who turn to Him in prayer (see D&C 27:15–16; 42:61; 59:23). Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace, and His followers are invited to receive the peace that He offers (see Isaiah 9:6; D&C 19:23; 84:102). While individuals are to seek for spiritual peace through the gospel, the Lord has declared that "the day speedily cometh … when peace shall be taken from the earth" (D&C 1:35). Through revelation, the Lord warned the Saints that the increasing wickedness of the world would lead to conflict and war (see D&C 38:29; 45:26, 63, 68–69). The news of troubling world events led the Prophet Joseph Smith to receive a "revelation and prophecy on war" (D&C 87, section heading).

In this revelation the Lord provided a warning "concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass" and declared that "war will be poured out upon all nations" (D&C 87:1–2). The condition of war would continue, along with famine, plagues, earthquakes, and other troubles "until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations" (D&C 87:6), which has reference to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see Revelation 11:15). While the prophecy recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 87 concerning the war between the Southern states and the Northern states was fulfilled during the American Civil War of 1861–1865 (see D&C 87:3),

these prophecies concerning the wars and calamities preceding the Lord's Second Coming continue to be fulfilled.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell noted the continuous number of wars that have been fought in the modern era:

"Alas, though we are asked to be peacemakers, we do live in a time when peace has been taken from the earth. (See D&C 1:35.) War has been the almost continuing experience of modern man. There have been 141 wars, large and small, just since the end of World War II in 1945. As the American Civil War was about to begin, the Lord declared there would be a succession of wars poured out upon all nations, resulting in the 'death and misery of many souls.' (D&C 87:1.)

"Moreover, that continuum of conflict will culminate in 'a full end of all nations.' (D&C 87:6.) Meanwhile, let mortals, if they choose, put overreliance upon mortal arms. As for us, we shall 'put on the whole armour of God'! (Eph. 6:11.) And in the midst of such affliction, if we are righteous and we die, we die unto Him; and if we live, we live unto Him. (See D&C 42:44.)" ("Be of Good Cheer," *Ensign,* Nov. 1982, 67).

Doctrine and Covenants 87:1–4. Joseph Smith's prophecy on war

In a revelation the Prophet Joseph Smith received on December 25, 1832, the Lord told of wars that would begin in the last days with "the rebellion of South Carolina" (D&C 87:1; see also D&C 130:12–13). That prophecy was fulfilled nearly 28 years later on December 20, 1860, when South Carolina became the first of 11 Southern states to announce that they were seceding, or withdrawing, from the United States. This led to a battle that occurred on April 12, 1861, at Fort Sumter, South Carolina. Other Southern states joined in a civil war against the Northern states. In time, as prophesied, the Southern states called on Great Britain for aid (see D&C 84:3). From 1861 to 1865 the terrible conflict known as the American Civil War raged between the Northern and Southern states.



The prophecy on war recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 87 was partially fulfilled when the first shots of the American Civil War occurred during a violent attack upon Union troops at Fort Sumter, South Carolina (see D&C 87:1–3).

The revelation the Prophet Joseph Smith received indicated that the wars that began with the American Civil War would "eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls" (D&C 87:1). It has been estimated that more American citizens died in the Civil War than the number of Americans who have died in all other wars combined (see Donald Q. Cannon, "Prophecy of War (D&C 87)," in *Studies in Scripture, Volume One: The Doctrine and Covenants,* ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson [1984], 337). In addition, the deaths of millions as the result of wars throughout the world since then give witness to the fulfilling of this prophecy.

The political turbulence that existed in 1832, when this revelation was given, centered on the action taken by the state of South Carolina to nullify or reject national tariff laws. The Prophet Joseph Smith, however, later prophesied that war between the Northern and Southern states would arise over the question of slavery (D&C 130:12–13). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) noted: "Scoffers have said it was nothing remarkable for Joseph Smith in 1832, to predict the outbreak of the Civil War and that others who did not claim to be inspired with prophetic vision had done the same. … It is well known that senators and congressmen from the South had maintained that their section of the country had a right to withdraw from the Union, for it was a confederacy, and in 1832, war clouds were to be seen on the horizon. It was because of this fact that the Lord made known to Joseph Smith this revelation stating that wars would shortly come to pass, beginning with the rebellion of South Carolina, which would eventually terminate in war being poured out upon all nations and in the death and misery of many souls. It may have been an easy thing in 1832, or even 1831, for someone to predict that there would come a division of the Northern States and the Southern States, for even then there were rumblings, and South Carolina had shown the spirit of rebellion. It was not, however, within the power of man to predict in the detail which the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, what was shortly to come to pass

as an outgrowth of the Civil War and the pouring out of war upon all nations" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:358–59).

How does understanding the prophecy in Doctrine and Covenants 87 and its fulfillment strengthen your testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God?

Doctrine and Covenants 87:8. "Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved"

Knowing the wicked and hostile conditions that would prevail in the last days, the Lord instructed the Saints to "stand … in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come" (D&C 87:8). These holy places are to be found in the safety provided in Zion (see D&C 45:66–68; 97:21). While serving in the Presidency of the Seventy, **Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander** explained:



The Lord counseled His Saints to "stand … in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come" (D&C 87:8).

"Three times in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord counsels His people to 'stand in holy places' (see D&C 45:32; 87:8; 101:22). The context of His counsel is all the more significant as we look at the current condition of our world. Desolating disease, persecution, and war have an all-too-familiar face and have imposed themselves into our daily experience. In the face of such perplexing problems, the Lord counsels, 'Behold, it is my will, that all they who call on my name, and worship me according to mine everlasting gospel, should gather together, and stand in holy places' (D&C 101:22).

"Holy places have always been essential to the proper worship of God. For Latter-day Saints, such holy places include venues of historic significance, our homes, sacrament meetings, and temples. Much of what we reverence, and what we teach our children to reverence as holy and sacred, is reflected in these places. The faith and reverence associated with them and the respect we have for what transpires or has transpired in them make them holy. The importance of holy places and sacred space in our worship can hardly be overestimated. …

"… These sacred places inspire our faith and give us encouragement to be true to that faith and to move forward, despite the challenges that may cross our path" ("Holy Place, Sacred Space," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2003, 71–72).

Consider ways that you can be obedient to the Lord's command to "stand … in holy places, and be not moved" (D&C 87:8). How might you act on this counsel from the Lord?

CHAPTER 33

Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–69

Introduction and Timeline

On December 27, 1832, during a conference of priesthood leaders in the upper room of the Whitney store, those present prayed to know the Lord's will concerning the establishment of Zion. The Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126 on December 27 and 28, 1832. The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–37 was received later, on January 3, 1833. The Prophet referred to the revelation as an "'olive leaf' … plucked from the Tree of Paradise" (D&C 88, section heading) perhaps because it was a message of peace with the potential to mend the harsh feelings some Saints in Missouri were having toward Church leaders in Kirtland, Ohio (see D&C 84:76). Four additional verses (D&C 88:138–41) were added during the publication of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Doctrine and Covenants 88 is addressed in two chapters in this student manual. This chapter includes Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–69, in which Jesus Christ declared that He is "the light … which giveth life to all things" (D&C 88:13) and then invited us to "draw near unto [Him]" (D&C 88:63).

June 1832–January 1833

Disagreements arose between Church leaders in Missouri and Church leaders in Ohio.

December 27–28, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126 was received.

January 3, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–37 was received. (D&C 88:138–141 was added later, in 1835.)

January 5, 1833

Frederick G. Williams was called by revelation to replace Jesse Gause as a counselor in the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

January 11, 1833

Joseph Smith sent Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126, and perhaps Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–37, to William W. Phelps in Missouri, describing it as an "olive leaf" and a "message of peace."

January 23, 1833

The School of the Prophets began in Kirtland, Ohio.

As you reflect upon your relationship with God, think about whether you are currently drawing closer to Him or moving away from Him. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–69, look for doctrine and principles that will help you better understand the nature of God and draw nearer to Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 88: Additional Historical Background

On December 27, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith met with several Church leaders and other members in the "translating room," located upstairs in Newel K. Whitney's store in Kirtland, Ohio. He desired further divine instruction about the elders' duties and about how to build up Zion. As this meeting, or conference, began, the Prophet explained that in order for revelation to be received, each person in the assembled group should exercise faith in God and be of one heart and mind. He proceeded to invite each person to take a turn praying aloud to know the Lord's will. The ensuing revelation was then dictated by Joseph Smith until 9:00 p.m. that evening, at which time they stopped for the night. The next morning

the group reassembled and prayed, and the remainder of the revelation was received. Later, on January 3, 1833, the Prophet received additional revelation that was later added to the revelation he had received in December (see D&C 88:127–37). Beginning with the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the revelation that was given on January 3, 1833, was added to the one received on December 27–28, 1832, along with four more verses that were added at the end (see D&C 88:138–41).

For many months before January 1833, Church leaders in Missouri had directed accusations and expressed unkind feelings toward Church leaders in Ohio. On January 11, 1833, Joseph Smith sent a letter to William W. Phelps in Independence, Missouri, and included a copy of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126 (and perhaps the portion in verses 127–37) and explained: "I send you the olive leaf which we have plucked from the tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us; for though our Brethren in Zion indulge in feelings towards us, which are not according to the requirements of the new covenant, yet we have the satisfaction of knowing that the Lord approves of us and has accepted us, and established His name in Kirtland for the salvation of the nations. … Let me say to you, seek to purify yourselves, and also all the inhabitants of Zion, lest the Lord's anger be kindled to fierceness. … The Brethren in Kirtland pray for you unceasingly, for knowing the terrors of the Lord, they greatly fear for you" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others (2013), 365, 367; capitalization, spelling, and punctuation standardized).

The olive leaf and olive branch have long been recognized as symbols of peace in many cultures. It is possible that Joseph Smith labeled this revelation as an "olive leaf" to provide a sign to the brethren in Missouri that spiritual safety was to be found in living the gospel, just as Noah learned that it was safe to walk again on the earth after the dove he sent out returned with an olive leaf in its beak (see Genesis 8:10–11).



Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–13

Jesus Christ declares that He is "the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things"

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–13, looking for the important role that the Light of Christ plays in your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–2. What is "the book of the names of the sanctified"?

The New Testament Apostle known as John the Revelator had a vision wherein he saw that God's children would be judged by their works, which are written in books kept in heaven. One of these books is called "the book of life" (see Revelation 20:12; D&C 128:6–7) and is reserved for the names and deeds of the righteous (see Revelation 3:5; Alma 5:58; D&C 132:19). "The book of the names of the sanctified" referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 88:2 is the same as "the book of life."

Doctrine and Covenants 88:3–5. "The Holy Spirit of promise"

In response to the earnest prayers of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the others who were assembled on December 27 and 28, 1832, the Lord promised to "send upon [them] another Comforter, … even the Holy Spirit of promise" (D&C 88:3). The Holy Spirit of Promise is another name for the Holy Ghost and should not be confused with the Second Comforter, which is spoken of in John 14:18, 21, 23 and Doctrine and Covenants 130:3.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained: "The Holy Spirit of Promise is not the Second Comforter. The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Ghost who places the stamp of approval upon every ordinance that is done righteously; and when covenants are broken he removes the seal" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 1:55.)

While each of those who were present had previously received the gift of the Holy Ghost, they were then being promised that they could receive an assurance of eternal life through a manifestation of the Holy Ghost (see Ephesians 1:13–14; D&C 76:51–54; 132:7). The Holy Spirit of Promise is an assurance from the Holy Ghost that the ordinances and covenants necessary for salvation have been properly entered into and have been kept. In essence, it is a witness from the Spirit that a person has the promise of eternal life.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained this role of the Holy Ghost:

"The Holy Spirit of Promise is the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost. When sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, an ordinance, vow, or covenant is binding on earth and in heaven. (See D&C 132:7.) Receiving this "stamp of approval" from the Holy Ghost is the result of faithfulness, integrity, and steadfastness in honoring gospel covenants "in [the] process of time" (Moses 7:21). However, this sealing can be forfeited through unrighteousness and transgression.

"Purifying and sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise constitute the culminating steps in the process of being born again" ("Ye Must Be Born Again," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 22).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:5–13. "This is the light of Christ"

Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of Heavenly Father's spirit children (see D&C 93:21). In the premortal life He obtained all knowledge and power and represented the Father as the Creator of all things (see D&C 38:1–3; 45:1; 76:23–24). It was through His power that the sun, moon, stars, and earth were made (see D&C 88:7–10). This creative power is identified as "the light of truth," or "the light of Christ," which "proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space" (D&C 88:6–7, 12). This "light … which giveth life to all things" (D&C 88:13) is also the spiritual power that "quickeneth [our] understandings" (D&C 88:11). In earlier revelations the Saints had learned that if they would receive and hearken to this light, it would lead them to Heavenly Father and the covenants of the gospel (see D&C 50:24; 84:45–48).



The light of truth is also the Light of Christ (see D&C 88:6–7).

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "The Light of Christ is that divine power or influence that emanates from God through Jesus Christ. It gives light and life to all things. It prompts all rational individuals throughout the earth to distinguish truth from error, right from wrong. It activates your conscience [see Moroni 7:16]. Its influence can be weakened through transgression and addiction and restored through proper repentance. The Light of Christ is not a person. It is a power and influence that comes from God and when followed can lead a person to qualify for the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost [see John 1:9; D&C 84:46–47]" ("Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2004, 15).

An understanding that the Light of Christ is also "the law by which all things are governed" (D&C 88:13) increases our appreciation for God's power and for the fact that it makes life possible for all. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** provided this description:

"This Light of Christ is not a personage. It has no body. I do not know what it is as far as substance is concerned; but it fills the immensity of space and emanates from God. …

"… Unless a man had the blessings that come from this Spirit, his mind would not be quickened; there would be no vegetation grow; the worlds would not stay in their orbits; because it is through this Spirit of Truth, this Light of Truth, according to this revelation [in D&C 88], that all these things are done" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 1:52).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:14–41

The Lord explains that all of God's kingdoms are governed by law

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:14–41, looking for the importance of learning and obeying God's law.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:14–16. "The spirit and the body are the soul of man"



"Through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead" (D&C 88:14).

The Resurrection of the dead is the reuniting of a person's spirit with his or her physical body, never again to be separated (see Alma 11:44–45). This redemption is made possible through Jesus Christ and His Atonement and Resurrection from the dead. The phrase "soul of man" in Doctrine and Covenants 88:15 refers to the spirit and the body when they are united. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that our understanding of this principle should influence how we care for our bodies and our spirits:

"We are dual beings. Each soul is comprised of body and spirit [see D&C 88:15], both of which emanate from God. A firm understanding of body and spirit will shape our thoughts and deeds for good. …

"Spirit and body, when joined together, become a living soul of supernal worth. Indeed, we are children of God—physically and spiritually.

"… The gift of a physical body is priceless. Without it, we cannot attain a fulness of joy [see D&C 138:17]. …

"How should these truths influence our personal behavior? …

"We will regard our body as a temple of our very own [see 1 Corinthians 3:16]. … We will control our diet and exercise for physical fitness.

"Should not equal attention be paid to spiritual fitness? [See 1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Hebrews 12:9.] Just as physical strength requires exercise, so spiritual strength requires effort. …

"Who are we? We are children of God. Our potential is unlimited. Our inheritance is sacred" ("We Are Children of God," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 85–87).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:17–20, 25–26. The earth will be "sanctified from all unrighteousness"

When Jesus Christ instructed His disciples during the Sermon on the Mount, He promised that the poor in spirit, those who are humble, would receive the kingdom of God and that the meek, those who are kind and forgiving, would inherit the

earth (see Matthew 5:3, 5). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:17, the Lord also said that "the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it." And the Old Testament prophet Isaiah declared that "the meek … and the poor" in the latter days will be those who rejoice in the Lord (see Isaiah 29:18–19; 2 Nephi 27:29–30).

To inherit the earth means to inherit the celestial kingdom. At the Fall of Adam and Eve, the earth was changed from having a paradisiacal or terrestrial glory and became a telestial world. At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the earth will "be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory" (Articles of Faith 1:10; see also D&C 101:24–25). Following that Millennial period, the earth will again undergo a change and become new—this time as a celestial world (see D&C 29:22–23; 77:1; 130:9). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:18–20, 25–26, in order to become an inheritance for those of the celestial kingdom, the earth will be "sanctified" and "crowned with glory" (D&C 88:18–19).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:21–24. The law of Christ and the kingdoms of glory

In February 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon witnessed a vision of the three kingdoms of glory and recorded a general description of the inhabitants of each kingdom (see D&C 76:50–112). Later, when the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88 was received, the Saints learned that "every kingdom is given a law" (D&C 88:38) and that the light of Christ "is the law by which all things are governed" (D&C 88:13). The glory and kingdom that a person inherits in the Resurrection will be based upon the law that he or she is able to abide. For example, a person must "abide the law of a celestial kingdom" in order to inherit celestial glory (D&C 88:22). **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles summarized the law of the celestial kingdom: "The law of the celestial kingdom is, of course, the gospel law and covenants, which include our constant remembrance of the Savior and our pledge of obedience, sacrifice, consecration, and fidelity" ("Come to Zion," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 38; see also D&C 105:3–5).

President Russell M. Nelson taught that we can choose to live according to the requirements of the celestial kingdom: "Each of you will be judged according to your individual works and the desires of your hearts [see D&C 137:9]. … Your eventual placement in the celestial, terrestrial, or telestial kingdom will not be determined by chance. The Lord has prescribed unchanging requirements for each. You can know what the scriptures teach and pattern your lives accordingly [see John 14:2; 1 Corinthians 15:40–41; D&C 76:50–119; 98:18]" ("Constancy amid Change," *Ensign,* Nov. 1993, 35).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:27–31. What is the difference between a "spirit body" and a "spiritual body"?

Just as there are three different kingdoms of glory that God has prepared for His children to inherit, He has also revealed that resurrected bodies possess different degrees of glory. As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:29–31, when a person is resurrected, the spirit and physical body will be "quickened by a portion of the … glory" that is either celestial, terrestrial, or telestial. Doctrine and Covenants 88:27 refers to the resurrected body as "a spiritual body." This is not to be confused with

the spirit body that every human being possesses as a "spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2010, 129; see also D&C 77:2; 130:22).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained the nature of a spiritual body: "After the resurrection from the dead our bodies will be spiritual bodies, but they will be bodies that are tangible, bodies that have been purified, but they will nevertheless be bodies of flesh and bones, but … they will no longer be quickened by blood but quickened by the spirit which is eternal and they shall become immortal and shall never die" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1917, 63).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:32–39. Governed, preserved, perfected, and sanctified by the law

The account in Doctrine and Covenants 76 of the vision received by the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon explains that "the sons of perdition" will "not be redeemed" but that "all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb" (D&C 76:32, 38–39). When the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88 was received, the fate of the sons of perdition was clarified when the Lord explained that they will be "quickened" (D&C 88:32), meaning they will be resurrected with a physical body, but since they "cannot abide the law of a telestial kingdom," they will inherit "a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory" (D&C 88:24). Because they "abideth not by law, … and altogether abideth in sin" (D&C 88:35), they cannot be "preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same" (D&C 88:34).

While the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 88 describes what the sons of perdition fail to obtain, it also teaches that when the righteous exercise agency and are "governed by [God's] law," they are "preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same" (D&C 88:34).

In what ways will you strive to live God's law more fully and to make the Savior central to your life?

Doctrine and Covenants 88:42–69

The Lord reveals that He governs and comprehends all things, and He invites individuals to draw near unto Him

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:42–61, looking for what we can learn about the nature of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:42–47. The "majesty and power" of God

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88 contributes to our understanding of the nature of God. The scope of God's power is dramatically illustrated by the explanation of His influence on the sun, moon, stars, earth, and all the planets. Anyone who has "seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power" (D&C 88:47).



The Savior revealed that all things are governed by divine law and that "any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power" (D&C 88:47).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) wrote some of his personal history during the summer of 1832. At that time he reflected on the spiritual schooling he had received in his home. He described how observing the vastness of God's creations in the heavens gave him confidence to go to God for answers when he wanted to know which church to join: "I learned in the scriptures that God was the same yesterday, today, and forever, that He was no respecter [of] persons, for He was God. For I looked upon the sun, the glorious luminary of the earth, and also the moon, rolling in their majesty through the heavens; and also the stars shining in their courses; and the earth also upon which I stood; and the beast of the field and the fowls of heaven and the fish of the waters; and also man walking forth upon the face of the earth in majesty and in the strength of beauty, whose [God's] power and intelligence in governing the things which are so exceeding great and marvelous, even in the likeness of Him who created them. And when I considered upon these things, my heart exclaimed, 'Well hath the wise man said it is a fool that saith in his heart there is no God' [see Psalm 14:1; 53:1]. My heart exclaimed, 'All … these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotent and omnipresent power, a Being who maketh laws and decreeth and bindeth all things in their bounds, who filleth eternity, who was and is and will be from all eternity to eternity.' And when I considered all these things and that that Being seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth [see John 4:23; Alma 34:38], therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy, for there was none else to whom I could go and obtain mercy" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2, July 1831–January 1833,* 281; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized).

In what ways do you think God's creations testify of Him? How does viewing God's creations influence your testimony of Him and His Son, Jesus Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 88:49–61. What is the meaning of this parable?

After providing an overview of the vast power that God has over His creations in the universe, the Lord explained that those who receive God's light will eventually become like Him and be united with Him. The righteous will come to understand God and even see God. (See D&C 88:49–50; see also D&C 35:2; 50:24, 40–43.)

Answering His own question, "Unto what shall I liken these kingdoms, that ye may understand?" (D&C 88:46), the Lord gave a parable of a man who sent servants into a field and then visited each of them (see D&C 88:51–61). This parable may have helped early Church members to understand that God has created many worlds that are inhabited by His children and that He visits each of them (see D&C 76:23–24; Moses 1:29–35). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:



***The Second Coming,* by Harry Anderson. The Lord will visit each of His kingdoms and their inhabitants in His time.**

"As to the Lord's continuing role amid His vast creations, so little has been revealed. There are inklings, however, about kingdoms and inhabitants. …

"Nevertheless, we do not worship a one-planet God!" ("Our Creator's Cosmos" [address given at the Church Educational System Conference, Aug. 13, 2002], 4–5).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:62–69, looking for reasons what we must do to draw near unto the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:62–69. "Call upon me while I am near"

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:62–63, the Lord referred to the Prophet Joseph Smith and those who were present with him as "my friends" and commanded them to call upon Him, to draw near to Him, to seek Him diligently, and to ask and knock. He went on to explain that through obedience to this commandment, these individuals would be able to hear the voice of the Spirit speaking truth to them (see D&C 88:66). Those who receive truth are filled with spiritual light, making it possible for them to eventually comprehend all things as God does (see D&C 88:41, 67).

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88 began with a promise that God would send to Joseph Smith and the others "another Comforter," who is the Holy Ghost functioning as the Holy Spirit of Promise (see D&C 88:3–4). Later, these brethren learned that there was another promise available to those who sanctify themselves, who have minds that are "single to God," and who "cast away [their] idle thoughts and [their] excess of laughter" (D&C 88:68–69). That "great and last promise" (D&C 88:69) is that God would "unveil his face" to the righteous (D&C 88:68; see also D&C 50:45; 67:10; 93:1; 130:3).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** referred to that appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ as the "other Comforter" or the "last Comforter": "There are two Comforters spoken

of. One is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. This first Comforter [is the] Holy Ghost. … The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person hath faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins, and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. … When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazard, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter. … Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more or less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter, that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and They will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. C-1, pages 8–9 [addenda], josephsmithpapers.org; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:62–63. "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you"

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88 contains rich promises that can bless the Saints now and in eternity. The Lord promised the Saints that He was ready to "draw near" to them if they would exercise faith and "draw near" to Him (D&C 88:63). While serving as a counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, **Sister Sheri L. Dew** illustrated how we can draw near to the Lord:

"There are no disclaimers or exceptions in His invitation [in D&C 88:63]. *We* are the ones who determine whether or not we will come unto Him. The drawing near, seeking, asking, and knocking are up to us. And the more we know about the Lord—meaning the more we experience His mercy, devotion, and willingness to guide us even when we may not feel worthy of His direction—the more confident we become that He *will* respond to our petitions. …

"There are many ways to draw near, seek, ask, and knock. If, for example, your prayers offered to Heavenly Father in the name of Christ have become a little casual, would you recommit yourself to meaningful prayer, offered in unrushed solitude and with a repentant heart? If you have not yet come to appreciate the peace and the power of temple worship, would you partake of the ordinances of the house of the Lord as often as your circumstances allow? If you have not yet found that immersion in the scriptures increases your sensitivity to the Spirit, would you consider incorporating the word of God into your life more consistently? Tonight would be a wonderful time to begin.

"These efforts and many others increase our connection with Jesus Christ. As our testimony of Him expands and matures, we begin to care more about life forever than life today, and we have no desire but to do what He needs us to do and to live

as He has asked us to live" ("Are You the Woman I Think You Are?" *Ensign,* Nov. 1997, 92).



"Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you" (D&C 88:63).

What has helped you to draw closer to your Heavenly Father and to the Savior? In what ways have you felt Them draw closer to you?

Doctrine and Covenants 88:64–65. "It shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you"

God has commanded His children to call upon Him in prayer and to ask for that which they stand in need of. The Lord promised that whatsoever we ask our Heavenly Father in His name "shall be given you, that is expedient for you" (D&C 88:64). **Elder Richard G. Scott** testified:

"[Heavenly Father] will always hear your prayers and will invariably answer them. …

"President David O. McKay testified, 'It is true that the answers to our prayers may not always come as direct and at the time, nor in the manner, we anticipate; but they do come, and at a time and in a manner best for the interests of him who offers the supplication' [in Conference Report, Apr. 1969, 153]. Be thankful that sometimes God lets you struggle for a long time before that answer comes. Your character will grow; your faith will increase. …

"It is so hard when sincere prayer about something you desire very much is not answered the way you want. It is difficult to understand why your exercise of deep and sincere faith from an obedient life does not grant the desired result. The Savior taught, 'Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, *that is expedient for you*' [D&C 88:64; emphasis added; see also D&C 88:63, 65]. At times it

is difficult to recognize what is *best* or *expedient* for you over time. Your life will be easier when you accept that what God does in your life is for your *eternal* good. …

"Some misunderstandings about prayer can be clarified by realizing that the scriptures define principles for effective prayer, but they do not assure *when* a response will be given" ("Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 9–10).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:67–69. "If your eye be single to my glory"

We see physical light when we open our eyes and focus on the world around us. According to Doctrine and Covenants 88:67, spiritual light comes into a person's soul when his or her spiritual eyes are "single to [God's] glory" (see also Matthew 6:21–23; Luke 11:34–36; 3 Nephi 13:22–23; D&C 4:5; 55:1; 82:19). Spiritual sight is lost when we yield to sin (see Alma 10:25). People "reject the Spirit of God" because of "blindness of their minds" (Alma 13:4; see also Alma 14:6; D&C 58:15).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained how receiving spiritual light prepares us to return to God: "We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker, and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210–11).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency taught that the process of obtaining spiritual light begins when we come to God: "As we draw near to Heavenly Father, we become more holy. And as we become more holy, we will overcome disbelief and our souls will be filled with His blessed light. As we align our lives with this supernal light, it leads us out of darkness and toward greater light. This greater light leads to the unspeakable ministerings of the Holy Spirit, and the veil between heaven and earth can become thin" ("The Love of God," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 23–24).

Think about what you have learned about light and why it is important to seek for it. What changes can you make in your life that will help you obtain greater light so that God "will draw near unto you" (D&C 88:63)?

CHAPTER 34

Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–141

Introduction and Timeline

The Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126 on December 27 and 28, 1832. About a week later, on January 3, 1833, the Prophet dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–37, after high priests at a conference had prayed to know the Lord's will concerning the establishment of Zion. The Prophet referred to the revelation as an "'olive leaf' … plucked from the Tree of Paradise" (D&C 88, section heading), perhaps because it was a message of peace with the potential to mend the harsh feelings some Saints in Missouri were having toward Church leaders in Kirtland, Ohio (see D&C 84:76). Four additional verses (D&C 88:138–41) were added before the publication of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

This is the second of two chapters in this student manual that addresses Doctrine and Covenants 88. In the portion of the revelation discussed in this chapter, the Lord instructed the elders of the Church to teach each other and to prepare to serve as missionaries. He also revealed signs of His Second Coming, the general order in which all people will be resurrected, and some events surrounding the final battle with Satan at the end of the Millennium. Additionally, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a house of God in Kirtland and commanded the elders to organize "the school of the prophets" (D&C 88:127) under Joseph Smith's direction. Those participating in the school were to learn together by study and faith and to show each other love and friendship.

June 1832–January 1833

Disagreements arose between Church leaders in Missouri and Church leaders in Ohio.

December 27–28, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126 was received.

January 3, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–37 was received.

January 5, 1833

Frederick G. Williams was called by revelation to replace Jesse Gause as a counselor in the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

January 11, 1833

Joseph Smith sent Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126, and perhaps Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–137, to William W. Phelps in Missouri, describing it as an "olive leaf" and a "message of peace."

January 23, 1833

The School of the Prophets began in Kirtland, Ohio.

September 1835

Doctrine and Covenants 88 was published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants; it included the revelations received in December 1832 and January 1833 with four additional verses.

Think of times when someone has helped you better understand gospel principles and times when you have helped others learn the gospel. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–141, look for truths that can help you to better learn and teach gospel principles.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–141: Additional Historical Background

On December 27–28, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:1–126 in an upstairs room in Newel K. Whitney's store in Kirtland, Ohio. On January 3, 1833, the Prophet received a separate revelation, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–37. Four additional

verses, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:138–41, were added sometime while the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was being prepared for publication.

The revelation given on December 27–28, 1832, directed the Saints to establish a school where Church elders could be taught "in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God" (D&C 88:78) as well as temporal subjects so that they would be prepared to preach the gospel (see D&C 88:74, 77–80, 118, 122). The revelation given on January 3, 1833, referred to this school as "the school of the prophets" (D&C 88:127, 136–37), suggesting that this school would be similar to the schools of the prophets in Old Testament times. The members of those schools were sometimes called "the sons of the prophets" and received instruction from Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha (see 2 Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38; 6:1; see also 1 Samuel 10:10–11; 19:19–20; Bible Dictionary, "Schools of the Prophets"). Further, the Saints were commanded to "establish … a house of God" where the School of the Prophets was to be held (D&C 88:119).

The Prophet Joseph Smith included this revelation in a letter that he sent to William W. Phelps in Independence, Missouri, on January 11, 1833, and wrote: "You will see that the Lord commanded us in Kirtland to build an house of God, and establish a school for the prophets. This is the word of the Lord to us, and we must—yea, the Lord helping us, we will obey" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 367; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized). In his letter the Prophet also described the revelation as an "olive leaf" and a "message of peace" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 365; spelling and capitalization standardized).

For additional historical background for Doctrine and Covenants 88, see chapter 33 in this manual.



Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–86

The Lord commands Church elders to tarry and prepare for their ministry

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–86, looking for what Church elders were commanded to do to prepare to teach the gospel as missionaries.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–76. "Call a solemn assembly"

Anciently, solemn assemblies were a prominent part of worship among the Israelites and were a time for fasting and praying to the Lord (see Leviticus 23:36; Deuteronomy 16:8; Joel 1:14; 2:15–17). The Lord commanded the members of His restored Church to continue these sacred meetings as an important part of their worship (see D&C 124:39; 133:6). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88, the Saints were commanded to prepare themselves to hold a solemn assembly where the Lord would fulfill "the great and last promise" of unveiling His face to them (see D&C 88:68–70, 75) and, as He had previously promised, endowing them with "power from on high" (D&C 38:32; see also D&C 95:8–9). They were directed to prepare for this solemn assembly by sanctifying and purifying themselves (see D&C 88:68, 74). Solemn assembly meetings were held in Missouri in 1833 and also in Kirtland, Ohio, from 1833 to 1837, some of which were held in the Kirtland Temple. (See "Solemn assembly," in Glossary, josephsmithpapers.org/topic/solemn-assembly.) There was an outpouring of spiritual manifestations at some of these meetings.



The elders of the Church were told to tarry in Kirtland, Ohio, until the solemn assembly could be held when they would be "endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:32; see D&C 88:70). Anciently, the Lord's disciples were told to tarry in Jerusalem until they received a similar power (see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4).

A solemn assembly was held three days after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple on March 27, 1836, and may have been a fulfillment of the command to "call a solemn assembly … of those who are the first laborers in this last kingdom" (D&C 88:70; see also D&C 88:117; 95:7; 108:4; 109:6, 10). The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded that on March 30, 1836, a congregation of about three hundred Church leaders and members met in the Kirtland Temple and participated in the ordinances of the washing of feet and the sacrament. The Prophet gave instruction, and Church leaders pronounced blessings and prophesied. Joseph Smith recorded that he left the meeting "at about 9 o'clock in the evening," and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles continued the meeting, during which there was "exhorting, prophesying and speaking in tongues until 5 o'clock in the morning—the Savior made His appearance to some, while angels ministered unto others, and it was a Pentecost and [an] endowment indeed, long to be remembered" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* 215–16; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized).

Solemn assemblies continue to be held in modern times, as explained by **Elder David B. Haight** (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "A solemn assembly, as the name implies, denotes a sacred, sober, and reverent occasion when the Saints assemble under the direction of the First Presidency. Solemn assemblies are used for three purposes: the dedication of temples, special instruction to priesthood leaders, and sustaining a new President of the Church" ("Solemn Assemblies," *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 14).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–76. "Tarry ye, tarry ye"

The phrase "tarry ye in this place" (D&C 88:70) is reminiscent of the Lord's command to His ancient disciples "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). The disciples were to receive power through the Holy Ghost that would qualify them to be the Lord's witnesses in Jerusalem and throughout the world (see Acts 1:8). That promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" and they preached the message of the gospel with convincing power (Acts 2:4; see Acts 2:1–6, 41).

The Saints had learned previously that they could be "endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:32, 38). Through that endowment of power bestowed upon the Saints in the house of the Lord, they would be prepared to take the gospel to others (see D&C 43:15–16; 95:8–9; 105:33; 109:22–23). At the Kirtland Temple dedication and in subsequent gatherings, the Lord poured out the promised manifestations of spiritual power. On April 3, 1836, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple and confirmed that the endowment of power had been given and that "the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house" (D&C 110:9).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–73. "I will hasten my work in its time"

The Lord assured the early leaders and missionaries of the Church that the restored gospel was His work and that He would "hasten [His] work in its time" (D&C

88:73). **President Thomas S. Monson** described how this promise has been fulfilled in our day through missionary work and temple service:

"Do you realize that the restored Church was 98 years old before it had 100 stakes? But less than 30 years later, the Church had organized its second 100 stakes. And only eight years after that the Church had more than 300 stakes. Today we are [thousands of] stakes strong.

"Why is this growth taking place at an accelerated rate? Is it because we are better known? Is it because we have lovely chapels?

"These things are important, but the reason the Church is growing today is that the Lord indicated it would. In the Doctrine and Covenants, He said, 'Behold, I will hasten my work in its time' [D&C 88:73].

"We, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, were sent to earth at this time that we might participate in hastening this great work.

"The Lord has never, to my knowledge, indicated that His work is confined to mortality. Rather, His work embraces eternity. I believe He is hastening His work in the spirit world" ("Hastening the Work," *Ensign,* June 2014, 4).

In what ways can you assist the Lord in hastening His work?

Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–80. "Teach ye diligently"

The Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church elders to establish a school where they would "be perfected in [their] ministry" to preach the gospel and prepare God's children for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (D&C 88:84; see also D&C 88:80, 127). He instructed them to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" as well as all other topics relating to "things both in heaven and in the earth, … things which are at home, things which are abroad" (D&C 88:77, 79). These instructions illustrate the importance of learning both spiritual and temporal truths in preparation for preaching the gospel.

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency emphasized the importance of both spiritual learning and secular learning:

"It is clear that our first priority should go to spiritual learning. For us, reading the scriptures would come for us before reading history books. Prayer would come before memorizing those Spanish verbs. A temple recommend would be worth more to us than standing first in our graduating class. But it is also clear that spiritual learning would not replace our drive for secular learning.

"The Lord clearly values what you will find in that history book and in a text on political theory. Remember His words. He wants you to know 'things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations' (D&C 88:79). And He favors not only Spanish verbs but the study of geography and demography. You remember that His educational charter requires that we have 'a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms' (v. 79). There is also an endorsement for questions we study in the sciences. It is clear that putting spiritual

learning first does not relieve us from learning secular things. On the contrary, it gives our secular learning purpose and motivates us to work harder at it" ("Education for Real Life," *Ensign,* Oct. 2002, 17–18).



The Saints are commanded to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (see D&C 88:77–78).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife **Sister Kristen M. Oaks** taught why seeking a broad education is important for Church members: "Our quest for truth should be as broad as our life's activities and as deep as our circumstances permit. A learned Latter-day Saint should seek to understand the important religious, physical, social, and political problems of the day. The more knowledge we have of heavenly laws and earthly things, the greater influence we can exert for good on those around us and the safer we will be from scurrilous and evil influences that may confuse and destroy us" ("Learning and Latter-day Saints," *Ensign,* Apr. 2009, 22–23).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:81. "It becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor"

In November 1831 the Lord declared that "all people" were to hear the warning message of the gospel "by the mouths of my disciples" (D&C 1:4). The gospel of Jesus Christ invites people to come unto the Savior and warns them to repent of their sins and to prepare for the Lord's Second Coming. The Lord instructed the Saints that this warning must be given to their neighbors "in mildness and in meekness" (D&C 38:41; see also D&C 88:81).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught about our responsibility to share the gospel:

"We all share this great responsibility [of missionary work]. We cannot avoid it. Let no man or woman think that because of where we live, or because of our place in

society, or because of our occupation or status, we are exempt from this responsibility.

"Membership in the Lord's Church is a gift and a blessing which the Lord has given us in mortality, and He expects us to share that blessing with those who do not have it" ("Our Responsibility to Share the Gospel," *Ensign,* May 1985, 8).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:84–85. "The desolation of abomination"

Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus Christ prophesied that Jerusalem and the great temple would be destroyed. He referred to these events as "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:12; see also Daniel 11:31; 12:11). The Lord also prophesied that in the last days, after the gospel is "preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, … again shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:31–32). The Lord repeated this prophecy in 1832 when He told the assembled elders to prepare "to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time, … and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come; that their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination which awaits the wicked, both in this world and in the world to come" (D&C 88:84–85).

See also the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 84:117 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:87–116

The Lord reveals events surrounding His Second Coming

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:87–116, looking for signs of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Lord's explanation of the order of the Resurrection.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:87–91. Signs of the Second Coming

The Lord instructed His elders to prepare themselves to preach the gospel so that they could "prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come" (D&C 88:84; see also D&C 24:19; 39:19–21; 43:28). The impending "hour of judgment" includes the events that will take place before and during the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Lord declared that after the testimony of His servants, He will send forth the testimony of earthquakes, lightnings, tempests, and other destructive forces upon the inhabitants of the earth (see D&C 88:88–90). The destruction described in these verses can be worrisome, but their purpose is to prepare the earth and its inhabitants for the return of Jesus Christ.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained why so many severe judgments will be poured out upon the wicked world in the last days: "It is not the will of the Lord that there should come upon the people disaster, trouble, calamity, and depression … , but because man himself will violate the commandments of God and will not walk in righteousness, the Lord permits all of these evils to come upon him" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:27–28).



In the last days the wrath and indignation of the Lord will come upon the people as "the voice of thunderings, and the voice of lightnings" (see D&C 88:88–90).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:92–110. "And angels shall fly … sounding the trump of God"

Seven trumpets, each sounded by a different angel, will signal key events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Among these events are the fall of "the mother of abominations" (see D&C 88:94, 105), the orderly resurrection of the dead (see D&C 88:95–102), the announcement that "the hour of [God's] judgment is come" (see D&C 88:103–4), and the proclamation that God's work is finished (see D&C 88:106). The seven angels will sound their trumpets a second time, and each will announce a review of 1,000 years of the earth's history, from the Fall of Adam to the Millennium (see D&C 88:108–10).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:93. "There shall appear a great sign in heaven"

Although Doctrine and Covenants 88:93 does not reveal what the "great sign in heaven" will be, it does say that "all people shall see it together." The Lord taught His disciples in Jerusalem that "after the tribulation of [the last] days, … then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:36; see also Matthew 24:29–30).

Describing the signs preceding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) declared: "Then will appear one grand sign of the Son of Man in heaven. But what will the world do? They will say it is a planet, a comet, etc. But the Son of Man will come as the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, which will be as the light of the morning cometh out of the east" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 252–53).

After sharing that declaration by the Prophet Joseph Smith, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "All people shall see it together! It shall spread over all the earth as the morning light! 'For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.' [Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:26.] Surely this is that of which Isaiah said: 'And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' (Isa. 40:5.) Surely this is that of which our revelation

speaks: 'Prepare for the revelation which is to come, when the veil of the covering of my temple, in my tabernacle, which hideth the earth, shall be taken off, and all flesh shall see me together.' (D&C 101:23.) Surely this is that day of which Zechariah prophesied: 'The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. … And the Lord shall be king over all the earth.' (Zech. 14:5–9.)" (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 419–20).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:96–102. Angels shall declare the sequence of the resurrection

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88:96–102, the order of the Resurrection will be announced by the sounding of the trump by angels of God. The resurrection of the dead is made possible through Jesus Christ and His Atonement (see D&C 88:14, 16; see also D&C 76:39). All who have lived upon the earth will be resurrected. The order they will come forth from the grave will be according to their obedience to the law of Christ (see D&C 88:21–24).

The righteous will come forth first in the resurrection of the just, also known as the First Resurrection (see D&C 76:64–65). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught: "While there was a general resurrection of the righteous at the time Christ arose from the dead, it is customary for us to speak of the resurrection of the righteous at the Second Coming of Christ as the *first resurrection.* It is the first *to us.* … The Lord has promised that at the time of his Second [Coming] the graves will be opened, and the just shall come forth to reign with him on the earth for a thousand years" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 2:295).

The righteous who are alive during the Lord's Second Coming "shall be quickened and be caught up to meet him" (D&C 88:96). Those who will inherit the celestial kingdom will be resurrected first (see D&C 88:96–98). After those who will inherit the celestial kingdom are resurrected, those who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom will be resurrected (see D&C 88:99; see also D&C 76:71–79). These are individuals who did not receive Jesus Christ while they were alive but received Him in the spirit world (see D&C 88:99). After the Millennium, the "last resurrection" (D&C 76:85), or the resurrection of the unjust, will occur. These individuals are those who will inherit the telestial kingdom and, lastly, the sons of perdition "who shall remain filthy still" (see D&C 88:100–102).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:107. "The saints shall be filled with his glory … and be made equal with him"

Relating their vision of the kingdoms of glory in February 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon recorded that those who inherit the celestial kingdom "are they into whose hands the Father has given all things" and "who have received of his fulness, and of his glory" (D&C 76:55–56). In the revelation on the priesthood received in September 1832, the Savior promised that the Saints would inherit "all that my Father hath" (see D&C 84:33–38). In Doctrine and Covenants 88, the Lord emphasized this same glorious doctrine again, proclaiming

that "the saints shall be filled with [God's] glory, and receive their inheritance and be made equal with him" (D&C 88:107).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained that to be "heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ" means "to inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until [they] arrive at the station of a god, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 222). He further explained: "God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. E-1, page 1971, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:111–16. "He shall be loosed for a little season"

At the conclusion of the Savior's Millennial reign—the 1,000-year period of righteousness and peace—Satan "shall be loosed for a little season, that he may gather together his armies" (D&C 88:111; see also D&C 43:30–31). Satan and his hosts of hell shall fight against the hosts of heaven led by Michael, or Adam. Satan and his followers will be defeated and cast out forever (see D&C 88:112–15). For more information, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 29:22 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:117–41

The Lord commands priesthood holders to build the faith of others, seek learning by faith, establish a house of God, and organize the School of the Prophets

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:117–26, looking for counsel that would prepare the Saints to obtain a greater understanding of the gospel and prepare for temple worship.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:117–18. "Seek learning, even by study and also by faith"

To help prepare the Saints for the events that will precede "the hour of judgment" (D&C 88:84), the Lord commanded them to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77) and hold a solemn assembly (see D&C 88:70, 117). He commanded the elders to seek learning both in the gospel and in all other fields of study (see D&C 88:78–80). The Lord also explained that we are to learn "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

To learn by faith means that "we have an honest desire to know the truth (see Moroni 10:4–5) and are willing to live according to that which God has revealed (see John 7:17). Our sincere desire will lead us to seek truth through prayer (see James 1:5–6; 2 Nephi 32:8–9) and a serious study of the word of God (see 2 Timothy 3:15–17; 2 Nephi 32:3)" (*Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* [Church Educational System manual, 2016], 2).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what is required of us to learn by faith and the blessings that result:

"A learner exercising agency by acting in accordance with correct principles opens his or her heart to the Holy Ghost and invites His teaching, testifying power, and

confirming witness. Learning by faith requires spiritual, mental, and physical exertion and not just passive reception. It is in the sincerity and consistency of our faith-inspired action that we indicate to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, our willingness to learn and receive instruction from the Holy Ghost. …

"The learning I am describing reaches far beyond mere cognitive comprehension and the retaining and recalling of information. The type of learning to which I am referring causes us to put off the natural man (see Mosiah 3:19), to change our hearts (see Mosiah 5:2), to be converted unto the Lord, and to never fall away (see Alma 23:6). Learning by faith requires both 'the heart and a willing mind' (D&C 64:34). Learning by faith is the result of the Holy Ghost carrying the power of the word of God both unto and into the heart. Learning by faith cannot be transferred from an instructor to a student through a lecture, a demonstration, or an experiential exercise; rather, a student must exercise faith and act in order to obtain the knowledge for himself or herself" ("Seek Learning by Faith," *Ensign,* Sept. 2007, 64).

What can you do to more earnestly seek learning by study and faith?

Doctrine and Covenants 88:119. The Saints are commanded to "establish … a house of God"

The Lord's commandment to the Saints to establish "a house of God" (D&C 88:119) refers specifically to the building of a temple, the first in this dispensation (see D&C 95:8, 11). The Lord's temple was not only to be a place of worship but also "a house of learning" (D&C 88:119), or a place where missionaries could be prepared to preach the gospel.



All temples are designated as "The House of the Lord," signifying their sacredness (see D&C 88:119).

The Lord's commandment to establish a house of prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, and order—a house of God—applies to more than the construction of a temple. **Elder Gary E. Stevenson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught how the standards that the Lord established for His house can be applied to our own homes: "In order to keep the temple and those who attend it sacred and worthy, the Lord has established standards through His servants, the prophets. We may be well-advised to consider together, in family council, standards for our homes to keep them sacred and to allow them to be a 'house of the Lord.' The admonition to 'establish … a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God' [D&C 88:119] provides divine insight into the type of home the Lord would have us build. Doing such begins the construction of a 'spiritual mansion' in which we all may reside regardless of our worldly circumstance" ("Sacred Homes, Sacred Temples," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 102).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:121–26. The Lord prepares us to receive His counsel

Many of the instructions in Doctrine and Covenants 88 were directed to those who would participate in the School of the Prophets. The principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 88:121–26 would help Church elders become spiritually and mentally ready to receive instruction in the house of God. However, all Latter-day Saints can apply these principles to invite the Holy Ghost to help them learn and to prepare them for temple worship. **Elder L. Lionel Kendrick** of the Seventy shared the following regarding our preparation to attend the temple:

"When we enter the temple, we should leave the world behind. We should feel what it would be like when we enter the presence of the Lord. We may consider what thoughts we would think and what communications we would have in His holy presence. If we can catch the vision of this eventual event, it will help us in preparing to enter His presence and in leaving the world behind as we enter His temple. …

"As we enter the temple grounds, we should leave our worldly thoughts behind and focus on the sacred responsibilities that are ours as we serve in the house of the Lord. …

"The Savior has given us great counsel concerning our communications in the temple. He said: 'Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, … from all your pride and light-mindedness' (D&C 88:121).

"Just as we leave our worldly thoughts behind as we enter the temple grounds, we should also leave our worldly discussions behind. It is inappropriate to discuss matters of business, pleasure, or current events in the temple.

"It is important not only what we speak in the temple, but also the manner in which we speak. We must always speak in soft and subdued tones in all places in the temple" ("Enhancing Our Temple Experience," *Ensign,* May 2001, 79).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–41, looking for ways that the School of the Prophets would prepare participants to learn spiritual truth.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:127–41. The School of the Prophets

In the revelation received on December 27–28, 1832, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a "house of God" and to establish a school for the elders (see D&C 88:1–126). On January 3, 1833, the Lord gave further instruction regarding the organization and operation of the School of the Prophets (see D&C 88:127–37).



The School of the Prophets met in an upper room of the Newel K. Whitney store until the Kirtland Temple was built.

Even though the temple was not yet constructed, the School of the Prophets was organized on January 23, 1833, as part of a two-day conference in an upstairs room in the Newel K. Whitney store in Kirtland, Ohio. Although the school was intended for men who had been ordained to the priesthood, both men and women attended the first meeting of the conference on January 22. During this meeting, "great and glorious were the divine manifestation[s] of the Holy Spirit, praises were [sung] to God [and] the Lamb besides much speaking [and] praying all in tongues" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 381). During the second day of the conference, the Prophet Joseph Smith washed Church elders' hands, faces, and feet, an act that could be considered "the defining ceremony in the establishment of the School of the Prophets" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 380).

"Unlike a conventional school, with semesters and set schedules in a fixed location, the School of the Prophets was intermittent and moved around. In farming communities such as Kirtland, winter months provided more time for such activities as schooling. The first session lasted about three months and closed in April. Subsequent sessions, called variously the 'school of the prophets,' the 'school of mine apostles,' and 'Elders school,' were held that summer in Missouri and again in Kirtland in fall 1834 and winter 1835–36 in the Church's printing office or in the attic floor of the unfinished Kirtland Temple" (Nathan Waite, "A School and an Endowment," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 175–76, or history.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:138–41. "The ordinance of the washing of feet"

The Prophet Joseph Smith instituted the ceremony or ordinance of washing feet in conjunction with organizing the School of the Prophets on January 23, 1833. Each of those present washed their own hands and feet, and then Joseph Smith washed

the feet of each individual, symbolizing their purification. In doing so, he was following the example set by Jesus Christ (see John 13:4–17). This important ceremony was repeated at other meetings of the School of the Prophets and also during some meetings in the Kirtland Temple after it was completed. (See Waite, "A School and an Endowment," in *Revelations in Context,* 177, or history.lds.org.)

Consider how following the Lord's commandment to "seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118) helps us accomplish the purpose He gave in Doctrine and Covenants 88:80–81. What can you do to learn more about the gospel of Jesus Christ and prepare to teach it to others?

CHAPTER 35

Doctrine and Covenants 89–92

Introduction and Timeline

After the School of the Prophets began meeting in early z833, the Prophet Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord concerning priesthood holders' use of tobacco during their meetings. On February 27, 1833, in response to Joseph's inquiry, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 89. In this revelation, which became known as the Word of Wisdom, the Lord warned against the use of harmful substances, encouraged the consumption of wholesome foods, and promised blessings to the obedient.

On March 8, 1833, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 90. This revelation contains instructions to the Presidency of the High Priesthood and was "a continuing step in the establishment of the First Presidency" (D&C 90, section heading).

While working on the inspired translation of the Old Testament, the Prophet inquired of the Lord concerning whether he should include the Apocrypha as part of his translation of the Bible. On March 9, 1833, the Lord responded to Joseph Smith's question through the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 91 and told him he did not need to translate the Apocrypha.

On March 15, 1833, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 92, instructing Frederick G. Williams to be an active member of the United Firm, which had been established to oversee the welfare and business affairs of the Church.

February 2, 1833

Joseph Smith finished reviewing his translation of the New Testament.

February 27, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 89 was received.

March 8, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 90 was received.

March 9, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 91 was received.

March 15, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 92 was received.

March 18, 1833

Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams were ordained as Presidents (counselors) in the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

Think about ways that harmful or addictive substances are presented today in order to entice people to use them. As you read Doctrine and Covenants 89, look for principles that can help you avoid the entrapment of addiction and enjoy both temporal and spiritual blessings.

Doctrine and Covenants 89: Additional Historical Background

In the 1830s the use of tobacco and alcohol was prevalent in the United States, even among the Latter-day Saints. Beginning in the late 1700s and into the early 1800s, different religious groups began a temperance movement that called for reform and abstinence from the use of alcohol. A temperance society was organized locally in Kirtland, Ohio, in October 1830 before the missionaries arrived from New York to preach the gospel (see Jed Woodworth, "The Word of Wisdom," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 184–86, or

history.lds.org; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 12).

The School of the Prophets, organized January 23, 1833, began meeting regularly in an upstairs room in the Newel K. Whitney store in Kirtland, Ohio. That room was part of the living space in which Joseph and Emma Smith resided. The use of tobacco during these meetings brought about the circumstances that prompted the Prophet Joseph Smith to seek for a revelation.

In a sermon given in 1868, President Brigham Young described the setting in the School of the Prophets: "The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen [feet, or three by four meters]. When they assembled together in this room after breakfast, the first they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom, and spit all over the room; and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths, a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean so filthy a floor, made the prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the elders in using tobacco, and the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom was the result of his inquiry" ("Remarks," *Deseret News,* Feb. 26, 1868, 18).

Zebedee Coltrin, one of participants in the School of the Prophets, reported that after the Prophet read this revelation to the brethren, they "immediately threw their tobacco and pipes into the fire" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 15, note 73).



Doctrine and Covenants 89

The Lord reveals the Word of Wisdom

Read Doctrine and Covenants 89:1–4, looking for reasons why the Lord gave the Word of Wisdom to the Saints.

Doctrine and Covenants 89:1–2. "Not by commandment or constraint"

Many of the revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith came to the Saints as commandments from the Lord. The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 89, however, was identified as coming "not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation and the word of wisdom" (D&C 89:2). This revelation came to be known by members of the Church as the Word of Wisdom. Although Church members were not required to live the Word of Wisdom immediately after it was given, Church leaders gradually invited the Saints to more fully live the Word of Wisdom throughout the early history of the Church. During the fall general conference of 1851, President Brigham Young proposed that all Saints formally covenant to abstain from tea, coffee, tobacco, and whiskey. On October 13, 1882, the Lord revealed to President John Taylor that the Word of Wisdom was to be

considered a commandment. In 1919 the First Presidency, under President Heber J. Grant, made the observance of the Word of Wisdom a requirement for receiving a temple recommend. The Word of Wisdom continues to be an important commandment today, and obeying it is a prerequisite for baptism, temple attendance, missionary service, and other worthy service in the Church.



Participants in the School of the Prophets threw their tobacco and pipes into the fire when they learned of the revelation that became known as the Word of Wisdom.

The gradual manner in which the Lord required the Saints to obey this revelation is an example of God's mercy and love for His children. **President Joseph F. Smith** (1838–1918) explained: "At that time, … if [the Word of Wisdom] had been given as a commandment it would have brought every man, addicted to the use of these noxious things, under condemnation; so the Lord was merciful and gave them a chance to overcome, before He brought them under the law" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1913, 14).

Doctrine and Covenants 89:2. For "the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days"

At the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 89 was received, medical science had not yet identified the physical health benefits of abstaining from the use of alcohol and tobacco. The Lord declared in this revelation that the teachings of the Word of Wisdom showed "the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days" (D&C 89:2). This temporal salvation may have reference to a promise of increased physical health and strength. The Lord has revealed that the physical body is a gift from God and is an important part of a person's eternal future (see Alma 11:43; 40:23; D&C 88:15).

The Lord had earlier taught the Saints, "All things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; … for my

commandments are spiritual" (D&C 29:34–35). Therefore, the temporal benefits of living the Word of Wisdom are ultimately spiritual blessings. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained some ways that the physical body can impact the spirit:

"Remarkable as your body is, its prime purpose is even of greater importance—to serve as tenement for your spirit. …

"Your spirit acquired a body at birth and became a soul to live in mortality through periods of trial and testing. Part of each test is to determine *if* your body can become mastered by the spirit that dwells within it. …

"If you yield to anything that can addict, and thus defy the Word of Wisdom, your spirit surrenders to the body. The *flesh* then enslaves the *spirit.* This is contrary to the purpose of your mortal existence. And in the process of such addiction, your life span is likely to be shortened, thereby reducing the time available for repentance by which your spirit might attain self-mastery over your body" ("Self-Mastery," *Ensign,* Nov. 1985, 30–31).

Doctrine and Covenants 89:3. "A principle with promise"

From the time that the Word of Wisdom was received, Church leaders have interpreted the revelation as prohibiting the use of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, and tea. The use of illegal drugs and the abuse of prescription drugs are also prohibited. Beyond that, the Saints are left to decide what other substances may not be in harmony with the Word of Wisdom. Fortunately, the Lord explained that the instructions were "given for a principle with promise" (D&C 89:3), meaning that there is sufficient truth contained in the revelation that can guide a person's decisions. **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described how the Word of Wisdom embodies specific principles that we can use to guide our decisions:

"The Word of Wisdom was 'given for a principle with promise' (D&C 89:3). That word *principle* in the revelation is a very important one. A principle is an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Generally principles are not spelled out in detail. That leaves you free to find your way with an enduring truth, a principle, as your anchor.

"Members write in asking if this thing or that is against the Word of Wisdom. It's well known that tea, coffee, liquor, and tobacco are against it. It has not been spelled out in more detail. Rather, we teach the principle together with the promised blessings. There are many habit-forming, addictive things that one can drink or chew or inhale or inject which injure both body and spirit which are not mentioned in the revelation.

"Everything harmful is not specifically listed; arsenic, for instance—certainly bad, but not habit-forming! He who must be commanded in all things, the Lord said, 'is a slothful and not a wise servant' (D&C 58:26).

"In some cultures, native drinks are claimed to be harmless because they are not specifically mentioned in the revelation. Yet they draw members, particularly men, away from their families to parties which certainly offend the principle. Promises made in the revelation will be denied to the careless or the reckless.

"Obedience to counsel will keep you on the safe side of life" ("The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises," *Ensign,* May 1996, 17–18).

Doctrine and Covenants 89:4. "In consequence of evils and designs"

The Lord warned the Saints that "evils and designs … exist in the hearts of conspiring men" (D&C 89:4). **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) explained:

"There is another part of this revelation [D&C 89] that constitutes a pertinent warning to this modern generation. 'In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation.' (D&C 89:4.)

"The Lord foresaw the situation of today when motives for money would cause men to conspire to entice others to take noxious substances into their bodies. Advertisements which promote beer, wine, liquors, coffee, tobacco, and other harmful substances are examples of what the Lord foresaw. But the most pernicious example of an evil conspiracy in our time is those who induce young people into the use of drugs.

"My young brothers and sisters, in all love, we give you warning that Satan and his emissaries will strive to entice you to use harmful substances, because they well know if you partake, your spiritual powers will be inhibited and you will be in their evil power. Stay away from those places or people which would influence you to break the commandments of God. Keep the commandments of God and you will have the wisdom to know and discern that which is evil" ("A Principle with a Promise," *Ensign,* May 1983, 54–55).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 89:5–17, looking for the specific counsel given regarding what we should avoid taking into our bodies and what the Lord identifies as useful to our bodies.

Doctrine and Covenants 89:5–7. "Wine or strong drink"

While the consumption of alcoholic beverages was a common practice in the early 1800s in America, some religious groups and community organizations argued against its use (see Woodworth, "The Word of Wisdom," in *Revelations in Context,* 184–86, or history.lds.org). Soon after the Church was organized, the Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith to use only homemade wine with the sacrament and warned him against purchasing it from his enemies (see D&C 27:3–4). The 1833 revelation on the Word of Wisdom indicated that the use of "wine or strong drink" was "not good" (D&C 89:5). However, homemade wine continued to be acceptable for use as part of the sacrament.

When the Word of Wisdom was first made known to the Saints, some Church members immediately stopped drinking alcohol, while others saw occasional or moderate use to be acceptable. Others viewed it as appropriate to drink alcohol for medical needs (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 15–17). At the time this revelation was given, medicines were rare and alcohol was a valuable cleansing agent and disinfectant for wounds. Over time, the Word of Wisdom was understood by Church leaders and members to

prohibit the drinking of any alcohol (see Woodworth, "The Word of Wisdom," in *Revelations in Context,* 186, or history.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 89:9. What does the phrase "hot drinks" refer to?

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith were reported to have specifically identified coffee and tea as the "hot drinks" mentioned in the Word of Wisdom, and President Brigham Young later confirmed this explanation (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 14).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–21, looking for the promises the Lord made to those who obey the commandments and the Word of Wisdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–21. "And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise"

The Lord promised specific blessings to those who follow the teachings in the Word of Wisdom and who also walk "in obedience to the commandments" (D&C 89:18). The promise of finding "wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19) can refer to the ability to gain increased access to personal revelation. **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "When we obey the Word of Wisdom, windows of personal revelation are opened to us and our souls are filled with divine light and truth. If we keep our bodies undefiled, the Holy Ghost 'shall come upon [us] and … dwell in [our] heart[s]' [D&C 8:2] and teach us 'the peaceable things of immortal glory' [Moses 6:61]" ("Windows of Light and Truth," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 76).

President Boyd K. Packer taught:

"I have come to know … that a fundamental purpose of the Word of Wisdom has to do with revelation. …

"If someone 'under the influence' [of harmful substances] can hardly listen to plain talk, how can they respond to spiritual promptings that touch their most delicate feelings?

"As valuable as the Word of Wisdom is as a law of health, it may be much more valuable to you spiritually than it is physically" ("Prayers and Answers," *Ensign,* Nov. 1979, 20).



Temporal and spiritual blessings are promised to those who keep the Word of Wisdom along with all of the Lord's commandments (see D&C 89:18–21).

Increased physical health can also be a blessing received from keeping the Word of Wisdom. Some members of the Church, however, are obedient to the Word of Wisdom and still suffer from ill health. It may be helpful to consider how some of the promises associated with the Word of Wisdom have greatest fulfillment after this mortal life, in the Resurrection. For example, the obedient are promised that they "shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint" (D&C 89:20). The prophet Isaiah used similar phrases to describe the tireless strength of God Himself and prophesied that "they that wait upon the Lord" will become like God and receive the same unending strength (see Isaiah 40:28–31; see also Romans 8:11; Alma 11:42–45).

In what ways has living the Word of Wisdom blessed you or those you know who have followed its principles?

Doctrine and Covenants 90: Additional Historical Background

In April 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were sustained as "the first elder" and "the second elder" of the Church (D&C 20:2–3). At that time the Lord did not implement the organizational structure of the Church that we are familiar with today. In November 1831 a revelation instructed the Saints that "it must needs be that one be appointed of the High Priesthood to preside over the priesthood, and he shall be called President of the High Priesthood of the Church" (D&C 107:65; see D&C 107, section heading for the date of this revelation). In a conference held in Amherst, Ohio, in January 1832, Joseph Smith was ordained as the President of the High Priesthood in fulfillment of that divine instruction (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed.

Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 491–92). Then, on March 8, 1832, Joseph Smith called Jesse Gause and Sidney Rigdon to serve as his counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood. Jesse Gause did not remain faithful, however, and the Lord called Frederick G. Williams to take Brother Gause's place in the Presidency on January 5, 1833 (see the additional historical background for Doctrine and Covenants 81 in this manual). On March 8, 1833, the Lord clarified that Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams were to be "equal with [the Church President] in holding the keys of this last kingdom" (D&C 90:6). They were subsequently ordained as counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood on March 18, 1833. The Prophet Joseph Smith described the events of that day:

"I laid my hands on Brothers Sidney and Frederick, and ordained them to take part with me in holding the keys, of this last kingdom, and to assist in the presidency of the high priesthood, as my counselors; after which, I exhorted the brethren to faithfulness, and diligence in keeping the commandments of God, and gave much instruction for the benefit of the saints, with a promise, that the pure in heart should see a heavenly vision; and, after remaining a short time in secret prayer, the promise was verified; for many present had the eyes of their understanding opened by the Spirit of God so as to behold many things. …

"After [partaking of the sacrament] many of the brethren saw a heavenly vision of the Savior, and concourses of angels, and many other things, of which each one has a record of what he saw" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 281, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling standardized).

By 1835 the Presidency of the High Priesthood became known as the First Presidency (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 26).

Doctrine and Covenants 90

The Lord instructs the members of the First Presidency concerning their duties and authority

Read Doctrine and Covenants 90:1–5, looking for the warning the Lord gave the Saints regarding the "oracles" of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 90:1–4. The Prophet Joseph Smith holds the keys of the kingdom

In a revelation received in April 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery learned that the Lord had given His ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John "the keys of this ministry until I come" (D&C 7:7), bestowing upon them priesthood authority to be the earthly leaders of His Church at that time. Many hundreds of years later, Peter, James, and John, as heavenly messengers, bestowed the same priesthood keys upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (see Joseph Smith—History 1:72; D&C 27:12–13; 128:20). These keys are "the right of presidency" (D&C 107:8), the directing power by which the priesthood is governed (see D&C 42:69; 65:2; 90:2–3).

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 90, the Prophet Joseph Smith was reminded that he held the keys of the kingdom and would continue to do so in the next life (see D&C 90:2–3). The Lord also explained that under the keys held by this Presidency, the "oracles," or revelations of God, would be given (D&C 90:4).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) explained how the priesthood keys have continued from Joseph Smith to the current living prophet in this dispensation: "That same authority which Joseph held, those same keys and powers which were the very essence of his divinely given right to preside, were by him conferred upon the Twelve Apostles with Brigham Young at their head. Every president of the Church since then has come to that most high and sacred office out of the Council of the Twelve. Each of these men has been blessed with the spirit and power of revelation from on high. There has been an unbroken chain from Joseph Smith, Jr., to [the current prophet]. Of that I bear solemn witness and testimony before you this day" (quoted in *Teachings of the Living Prophets* [Church Educational System manual, 2016], 14).



The Prophet Joseph Smith held "the keys of the kingdom" (see D&C 90:2–3).

Doctrine and Covenants 90:4–5. The Prophet receives "oracles" for the entire Church

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles explained one meaning of the term *oracles:* "Revelations given by God through his prophets are *oracles.* (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12.) The First Presidency are appointed 'to receive the oracles for the whole church.' (D. & C. 124:126.)" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 547).

The term *oracles* also can refer to those divinely authorized persons who receive revelation from God (see 1 Peter 4:11). **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency referred to the responsibilities and qualifications of living oracles:

"Through the ages, God's messages to his children generally have been revealed through prophets. Amos tells us, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.' (Amos 3:7.) These are the prophetic oracles who have tuned in over the centuries to the 'celestial transmitting station,' with a responsibility to relay the Lord's word to others. The principal qualifications of a prophet in any age are not wealth, title, position, physical stature, scholarship, or intellectual attainment. The two qualifications are that a prophet

must be called as such by God, by open prophecy, and ordained by one known to have legal and spiritual authority, and he must receive and declare revelation from God. (See D&C 42:11.) No man knows the ways of God except they be revealed unto him. (See Jacob 4:8.). …

"This Church constantly needs the guidance of its head, the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This was well taught by President George Q. Cannon: 'We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; but all these books, without the living oracles and a constant stream of revelation from the Lord, would not lead any people into the Celestial Kingdom' [*Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of George Q. Cannon,* comp. Jerreld L. Newquist [1987], 252]" ("Continuous Revelation," *Ensign,* Nov. 1989, 8–10).

Members of the Church are warned of the condemnation that will come to those who do not receive the oracles, meaning the Lord's servants as well as the counsel and revelations they provide. Those Saints who treat the oracles lightly will "stumble and fall" (D&C 90:5; see also D&C 124:45–46).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 90:6–11, looking for what the Lord taught about the First Presidency of the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 90:6–9. "Accounted as equal with thee in holding the keys"

With the ordination of Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams on March 18, 1833, as counselors to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Presidency of the High Priesthood, a quorum was established and became known as the First Presidency (see D&C 107:22; 124:125–26). These counselors held the keys of the kingdom jointly with the President. However, to be "accounted as equal" with the President meant that what Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams did under the direction of the President of the Church should be considered the same as if it were done by the President (see Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler, *Revelations of the Restoration* [2000], 659). The counselors were not to act independently from the direction and consent of the Church President. When the President of the Church dies, the Quorum of the First Presidency is automatically dissolved. The Counselors who served in the First Presidency then return to their places of seniority within the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles if they were members of that Quorum before they were called as Counselors.

Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 90, "the preeminence of the President of the Church was maintained. The question as to whether the Counselors held the same power as the President was soon debated among the people. What could the Counselors do without direct appointment from the President? These questions were answered in a meeting on January 16, 1836. The Prophet there said, 'The Twelve are not subject to any other than the First Presidency … *and where I am not, there is no First Presidency over the Twelve*' [see *History of the Church,* 2:374]. In other words were the President taken, the Counselors would have no authority. The Counselors do not possess the power of

the President and cannot act in Church matters without direction and consent of the President" (*Joseph Smith: Seeker after Truth, Prophet of God* [1951], 303). Furthermore, only the President of the Church can receive revelation for the entire Church (see D&C 28:2; 43:2–5).

President Gordon B. Hinckley explained how counselors are to function in a bishopric or presidency:

"In some circumstances, *a counselor may serve as a proxy for his president.* The power of proxy must be granted by the president, and it must never be abused by the counselor. The work must go forward notwithstanding absences of the president for reasons of illness, employment, or other factors beyond his control. In these circumstances, and in the interest of the work, the president should give his counselors authority to act with full confidence, he having trained them as they have served together as a bishopric or presidency. …

"… During the time that President Kimball was ill, President Tanner's health failed and he passed away. President Romney was called as First Counselor, and I as Second Counselor to President Kimball. Then President Romney became ill, thus leaving to me an almost overwhelming burden of responsibility. I counseled frequently with my Brethren of the Twelve, and I cannot say enough of appreciation to them for their understanding and for the wisdom of their judgment. In matters where there was a well-established policy, we moved forward. But no new policy was announced or implemented, and no significant practice was altered without sitting down with President Kimball and laying the matter before him and receiving his full consent and full approval. …

"President Benson is now ninety-one years of age and does not have the strength or vitality he once possessed in abundance. Brother Monson and I, as his counselors, do as has been done before, and that is to move forward the work of the Church, while being very careful not to get ahead of the President nor to undertake any departure of any kind from long-established policy without his knowledge and full approval" ("In … Counsellors There Is Safety," *Ensign,* Nov. 1990, 50).



The Lord has promised that in the last days "every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language" (see D&C 90:11).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 90:19–27, looking for the counsel the Lord gave to various individuals regarding how to "walk uprightly" and serve in His kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 90:24: "All things shall work together for your good"

The Lord promised the members of the First Presidency that "all things [would] work together for [their] good" if they were righteous and remembered the covenant they had made (D&C 90:24). All Church members can find hope in the Lord's promise that all things will work together for their good as they follow the pattern given in Doctrine and Covenants 90:24 (see also Mormon 9:27). **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled: "We are to 'search diligently, pray always, and be believing[. Then] all things shall work together for [our] good, if [we] walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith [we] have covenanted' [D&C 90:24]. The latter days are *not* a time to fear and tremble. They *are* a time to be believing and remember our covenants" ("The Ministry of Angels," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 30).

What do you think it means that all things will work together for our good? When have you experienced this promise as you have tried to faithfully live the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 90:25–27. "Let your families be small, … as pertaining to those who do not belong to your families"

In 1833, because many of the Saints were in temporal need, Church leaders, including the Prophet Joseph Smith's father, had opened their homes to assist them. This circumstance had the potential of hindering Church leaders' efforts to

accomplish the Lord's work. The counsel to "let your families be small" (D&C 90:25) did not refer to the number of children the Saints might choose to have in their families but rather was a caution to Joseph Smith Sr. and other Church leaders to exercise wisdom and judgment in giving of their temporal resources to those outside their own families and to not include more in their household than they could adequately care for.

Doctrine and Covenants 90:28–31. "My handmaid Vienna Jaques"

Emma Smith and Vienna Jaques are the only women who are mentioned by name in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 25; 90:28). Vienna Jaques is an example of the faithfulness of many early Latter-day Saints. She was born June 10, 1787. After she met the missionaries in Boston, Massachusetts, she traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831. She stayed there six weeks and was baptized. Upon returning to Boston, Vienna was active in missionary work, helping to bring several members of her family into the Church, and helped the missionaries establish a small branch of the Church there. She then "settled up her business, and went back to Kirtland to unite her interests forever with the Church" ("Home Affairs," *Woman's Exponent,* July 1, 1878, 21; see also "In Memoriam," *Women's Exponent,* Mar. 1, 1884, 152; Brent M. Rogers, "Vienna Jaques: Woman of Faith," *Ensign,* June 2016, 42).

In 1833, Vienna donated a substantial amount of money to the Church during a time when the money was desperately needed to purchase land in Kirtland, including land for the temple, and in Missouri. On March 8, 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation directing her to "go up unto the land of Zion [Missouri], and receive an inheritance" (D&C 90:30). She traveled to Missouri, but soon after she arrived she suffered persecution with the Saints there. In June 1834, when the company of Zion's Camp was strcken with cholera, she was among those who helped attend to the sick. Heber C. Kimball wrote, "I received great kindness from them and also from sister Vienna Jaques, who administered to my wants and also to my brethren—may the Lord reward them for their kindness" ("Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons,* Mar. 15, 1845, 839–40; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 289, 291; Rogers, "Vienna Jaques," 42–43).

With the other Saints in Missouri, Sister Jaques was driven from her home to Nauvoo, Illinois. She eventually traveled west to Utah in 1847 and, at the age of 60, drove her own wagon across the plains. She settled in Salt Lake City and for the rest of her life worked hard to support herself and diligently study the scriptures. Vienna died on February 7, 1884, at the age of 96. One remembrance written about her stated, "She was true to her covenants and esteemed the restoration of the Gospel as a priceless treasure" ("In Memoriam," *Woman's Exponent,* Mar. 1, 1884, 152; see also Rogers, "Vienna Jaques," 44–45).

Doctrine and Covenants 91: Additional Historical Background

The Old Testament Apocrypha is a collection of ancient texts that were not included in the Hebrew Bible but were included in the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. These ancient texts subsequently became part of

the Christian Bible until Martin Luther placed them in a separate section titled "Apocrypha." Over time, many Bible editions removed this section, while others preserved it. The Prophet Joseph Smith translated the Bible using a King James edition that contained a section labeled "Apocrypha" located between the Old and New Testaments. After completing the New Testament translation and while continuing to work on books in the Old Testament, the Prophet wondered whether he was to translate the Apocrypha when he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 91 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 32–33).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 91, looking for the way that a person can discover truth.

Doctrine and Covenants 91

The Lord instructs Joseph Smith not to translate the Apocrypha

Doctrine and Covenants 91. "Whoso readeth [the Apocrypha] … and … is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery purchased a copy of the King James Version of the Bible on October 8, 1829, from E. B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York (see "Bible Used for Bible Revision," josephsmithpapers.org). It was a large pulpit-style edition that contained the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha. It had been printed in 1828 by the H. and E. Phinney Company, located in Cooperstown, New York (for images of this Bible, see "Bible Used for Bible Revision," josephsmithpapers.org). This was the book that the Prophet used for his inspired translation of the Bible.

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 91:1–3, in response to the Prophet's inquiry about whether to translate the Apocrypha, the Lord said that it contains truths as well as errors and instructed Joseph not to translate it. The Lord further explained that those who wish to benefit from the study of these ancient texts should seek to have the Lord's Spirit to help them discern those things which are true (see D&C 91:4–6). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: "To gain any real value from a study of apocryphal writings, the student must first have an extended background of gospel knowledge, a comprehensive understanding of the standard works of the Church, plus the guidance of the Spirit" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 42). The Bible Dictionary in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible contains an entry titled "Apocrypha," which provides a brief overview of each of the texts that often comprise the Apocrypha.

Doctrine and Covenants 92: Additional Historical Background

Frederick G. Williams was called on January 5, 1833, to replace Jesse Gause as a counselor in the Presidency of the High Priesthood. On March 15, 1833, the Lord directed that Brother Williams also become a member of the United Firm. This meant that he was to join the previously called nine members of the United Firm in managing the literary and mercantile operations of the Church.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 92, and consider the responsibility that members of the First Presidency have for the temporal affairs of the Church in addition to their spiritual responsibilities.

Doctrine and Covenants 92

Frederick G. Williams is called to join the United Firm

Doctrine and Covenants 92. The United Firm

After Frederick G. Williams was called to be a new member of the First Presidency, the Lord directed him to join the group of men who had charge over the financial and temporal matters of the Church (see D&C 78:1–8; 82:11–12, 15–24). This group was called the United Firm or the United Order.

Ponder the truths you have learned while studying Doctrine and Covenants 89–92. Consider any changes you need to make in your life so you can be faithful in keeping the Lord's commandments and "be blessed forever" (D&C 92:2).

CHAPTER 36

Doctrine and Covenants 93

Introduction and Timeline

On May 6, 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93. In this revelation the Savior taught the Saints how to worship and "come unto the Father in my name, and … receive of his fulness" (D&C 93:19). He also taught how we can receive truth and light and instructed the Prophet and other Church leaders to "set in order" their homes so that their families could be strengthened and protected (see D&C 93:43–50).

February 2, 1833

Joseph Smith finished his translation of the New Testament.

March 8, 1833

Joseph Smith continued his translation of the Old Testament.

April 1833

The School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio, adjourned for the summer.

May 4, 1833

A committee was selected to raise money in order to construct a building for the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio.

May 6, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 93 was received.

Consider the difference between simply attending Church meetings and truly worshipping God. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 93, look for doctrine and principles that can help you worship God by striving to become like Him and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 93: Additional Historical Background

In a revelation received at the end of December 1832, the Lord commanded the Saints to establish "a house of learning" and "a house of God" (D&C 88:119). Later, in January 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote to William W. Phelps in Independence, Missouri, telling him of this revelation and declaring, "The Lord commanded us in Kirtland to build an house of God, [and] establish a school for the Prophets" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 367). Soon thereafter, acting on the Lord's directive, members of the School of the Prophets began meeting in a small room above the Newel K. Whitney store. The meetings continued until they adjourned for the summer in April 1833.

On May 4, 1833, a group of high priests met to discuss construction of a building where the School of the Prophets could hold future meetings. A committee of three men—Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon—was appointed to raise needed funds for the construction of this building. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 82.) The committee sent a letter to the Saints, inviting them to contribute money for the construction, declaring that the purpose of the building was to "establish an house and prepare all things necessary whereby the Elders may gather into a school called the school of the prophets and receive that instruction that the Lord designs they should receive" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents,*

Volume 3: February 1833–March 1824, 82). The Lord later clarified that this building was also to be a house of worship (see D&C 95:8–17).

Two days after that group of high priests met, on May 6, 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a significant revelation about the nature of God and man and the eternal destiny of God's children. While it is unknown why the Lord revealed the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93 at that specific time, it is interesting to note that just as the Saints were preparing to build a temple in which to worship the Lord and a building in which the School of the Prophets could be instructed, the Lord gave a revelation comparing the human body to "the tabernacle of God" or a "temple" (D&C 93:35) and emphasized the need for God's children to receive truth and light (see D&C 93:28, 31–32, 42, 53). The revelation also contains specific instructions for Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, who were members of the First Presidency, and for Bishop Newel K. Whitney.



Doctrine and Covenants 93:1–20

The Lord teaches how we can come to know Him and obtain a fulness of glory

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:1–5, looking for the pattern the Lord gave to help us come to know Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:1–3. "Shall see my face and know that I am"

The Lord introduced the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93 with a glorious promise that emphasizes the purpose of His gospel and the great plan of salvation. Speaking to every faithful soul who repents of his or her sins, comes to Him, calls on Him, and obeys His commandments, the Lord declares that he or she "shall see my face and know that I am" (D&C 93:1).

Anciently, the Lord commanded Moses to bring the children of Israel to Sinai after their deliverance from Egypt and to prepare the people to meet with Him (see Exodus 19:1–17). Unfortunately, the people rebelled, and because of their sin, the Lord declared they could not see His face (see Joseph Smith Translation, Exodus 33:20 [in the Bible appendix]).

In these latter days the Lord has renewed His promise to His people that they may see His face, know Him, and "receive of his fulness" (D&C 93:20). Latter-day revelation teaches that seeing God is a blessing that is granted according to His own time and will (see D&C 88:68; 130:3) and is given only to those who have overcome the natural man, received the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and come unto Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 3:19; D&C 67:10–13; 84:21–23; 93:1). For many, the promise of seeing the face of God may be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns to earth at His Second Coming (see D&C 29:11; 35:21; 38:8; 45:44; 101:23). When the righteous are blessed to see the Lord, they come to know with certainty that He lives (see D&C 93:1), that He is "the true light" (D&C 93:2), and that "the Father and [Jesus Christ] are one" (D&C 93:3).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: "I have learned that where there is a prayerful heart, a hungering after righteousness, a forsaking of sins, and obedience to the commandments of God, the Lord pours out more and more light until there is finally power to pierce the heavenly veil and to know more than man knows. A person of such righteousness has the priceless promise that one day he shall see the Lord's face and know that he is (see D&C 93:1)" ("Give the Lord Your Loyalty," *Ensign,* Mar. 1980, 4).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:3–5. "The Father and I are one"

During the First Vision, Joseph Smith saw that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are two separate Personages (see Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Their separate natures are clarified in Doctrine and Covenants 130:22: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also" (see also Articles of Faith 1:1). However, these revelations also illustrate the oneness and unity that exist between God the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost (see D&C 20:28; 93:3).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "The Father and the Son are one. They have the same character, perfections, and attributes. They think the same thoughts, speak the same words, perform the same acts, have the same desires, and do the same works. They possess the same power, have the same mind, know the same truths, live in the same light and glory. To know one is to know the other; to see one is to see the other; to hear the voice of one is to hear the voice of the other. Their unity is perfect" (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 9).

Each of God's children who chooses to believe in Jesus Christ and overcome the world can also become "one" with the Father and the Son (see D&C 35:2; 50:40–43; see also John 17:20–23; 3 Nephi 11:27, 31–36; 19:20–23).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:6–20, looking for what this passage teaches about the nature of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:6–18. What is "the record of John"?

The Gospel of John in the New Testament was written by John the Beloved, one of the ancient Apostles of Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of his writings, the Apostle John included a portion of a record written by John the Baptist (see John 1:6–34). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith a portion of the writings of John the Baptist and further promised that "the fulness of the record of John" would someday be revealed (D&C 93:18; see also D&C 93:6). The references to "John" in Doctrine and Covenants 93 speak of John the Baptist.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

"John the Baptist [was] destined to write … the gospel of that Lord whose witness he is, but his account, perhaps because it contains truths and concepts that the saints and the world are not yet prepared to receive, has so far not been given to men. On May 6, 1833, however, the Lord did reveal to Joseph Smith eleven verses of the Baptist's writings, and promised that 'the fulness of the record of John' would be revealed when the faith of men entitled them to receive it. (D&C 93:6–18.)

"… John the Apostle had before him the writings of John the Baptist when he wrote his Gospel" (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary* [1979], 1:426–27).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:8. "In the beginning the Word was, … even the messenger of salvation"

Anciently, the Apostle John testified that "in the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1), and then he identified "the Word" as Jesus Christ, who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what that title for Jesus Christ means: "In the Greek language of the New Testament, that *Word* was *Logos,* or 'expression.' It was another name for the Master. That terminology may seem strange, but it is appropriate. We use words to convey our expression to others. So Jesus was the

Word, or expression, of His Father to the world" ("Jesus the Christ: Our Master and More," *Ensign,* Apr. 2000, 4).

As revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, John the Baptist testified that Jesus Christ is "the Only Begotten of the Father" (D&C 93:11) and "the light and Redeemer of the world" (D&C 93:9). **President Russell M. Nelson** testified of the significance of these truths:

"Before the foundation of the earth, the plan of salvation was prepared. It included the glorious possibility of a divine inheritance in the kingdom of God.

"Central to that plan was the Atonement of Jesus Christ. In premortal councils, He was foreordained by His Father to atone for our sins and break the bands of physical and spiritual death. Jesus declared, 'I … was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. … In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name' [Ether 3:14]" ("How Firm Our Foundation," *Ensign,* May 2002, 75).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:11–17. The Savior "continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness"



Jesus Christ "received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace" (see D&C 93:12–14).

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93:16–17, John the Baptist testified that Jesus Christ "received a fulness of the glory of the Father," or "all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him." **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) testified: "The Savior did not have a fulness at first, but after he received his body and the resurrection all power was given unto him both in heaven and in earth" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 315). In the premortal world Jesus Christ was the Great Jehovah, who had all power and represented the Father as the Creator of all things. However, when Jesus was born on the earth, "he received not of the fulness at the first" (see D&C 93:12–14; see also Philippians 2:5–7).

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) explained: "When Jesus lay in the manger, a helpless infant, He knew not that He was the Son of God, and that formerly He created the earth. When the edict of Herod was issued, He knew nothing of it; He had not power to save Himself; and [Joseph and Mary] had to take Him and [flee] into Egypt to preserve Him from the effects of that edict. … He grew up to manhood, and during His progress it was revealed unto Him who He was, and for what purpose He was in the world. The glory and power He possessed before He came into the world was made known unto Him" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* [2012], 279).



Joseph and Mary protected young Jesus, such as when they took Him into Egypt, until He had power to protect Himself.

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught:

"Our Savior was a God before he was born into this world, and he brought with him that same status when he came here. He was as much a God when he was born into the world as he was before. But as far as this life is concerned it appears that he had to start just as all other children do and gain his knowledge line upon line. …

"… Without doubt, Jesus came into the world subject to the same condition as was required of each of us—he forgot everything, and he had to grow from grace to grace" (*Teachings: Joseph Fielding Smith,* 314–15).

The term *grace* refers to "divine help and strength … given through the mercy and love of God" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Grace," scriptures.lds.org). In mortality, Jesus Christ had to learn and grow "line upon line." He sought Heavenly Father's grace, or divine help and strength, daily, and He obtained greater knowledge and power until He received a fulness of His Father's glory.



The Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus Christ when He was baptized, and a voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son" (D&C 93:15).

How can understanding that Jesus Christ grew from "grace to grace" help you in your efforts to become more like the Savior and Heavenly Father?

Doctrine and Covenants 93:19–20. The Lord invites us to become like Him and the Father

The Lord has revealed that those who inherit celestial glory will receive "of [God's] fulness and of his grace" (D&C 76:94). This "fulness" is the promise of eternal life—to enter God's presence and to become like the Father and the Son (see D&C 76:53–62). The Lord explained why He revealed the teachings of John the Baptist regarding Him:

"I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.

"For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father" (D&C 93:19–20).

On April 7, 1844, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught the following to the Saints in Nauvoo:

"Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, … by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, … until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. …

"… [The righteous who have died] shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die any more, but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a god, and

ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 221–22).

What can you do now in your life to become more like Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father?

Doctrine and Covenants 93:21–39

The Lord teaches the Saints how to receive truth and light

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:21–39, looking for how you can obtain truth and light.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:21–22. "The church of the Firstborn"

Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of all the spirit children of Heavenly Father. As such, He is the "appointed heir" of all the Father has (Hebrews 1:2). However, He wants all of Heavenly Father's children to share in this inheritance. By receiving and obeying the ordinances and covenants of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can become "joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17) and be numbered among "the church of the Firstborn" in eternity (D&C 93:22; see also D&C 76:51–54). In this way we also can receive all that the Father has (see D&C 76:55; 84:37–38).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:21–28. "I am the Spirit of truth"

To His disciples in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). In our day the Lord testified that He is "the Spirit of truth" because He "received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth" (D&C 93:26). In earlier revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Spirit of Christ is identified as the source of all truth and light (see D&C 84:45–46; 88:6–13). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93, the Lord explained that we too can grow in truth and light by keeping the commandments until we are "glorified in truth and knoweth all things" (D&C 93:28; see also D&C 50:24). This is an example of how Jesus Christ makes it possible for His followers to become like Him.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught why we should seek to obtain truth and light: "God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker, and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 210–11).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:29. "Intelligence … was not created or made"

The term *intelligence* can be used to describe "the spirit element that existed before we were begotten as spirit children" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Intelligence,

Intelligences," scriptures.lds.org). However, the Lord has revealed very few details concerning the nature of intelligences. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught:

"Some of our writers have endeavored to explain what an intelligence is, but to do so is futile, for we have never been given an insight into this matter beyond what the Lord has fragmentarily revealed. We know, however, that there is something called intelligence which always existed. It is the real eternal part of man, which was not created or made. This intelligence combined with the spirit constitutes a spiritual identity or individual.

"The spirit of man, then, is a combination of the intelligence and the spirit which is an entity begotten of God" (*The Progress of Man* [1936], 11).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught the following concerning the eternal nature of intelligence:

"I have another subject to dwell upon, which is calculated to exalt man. … It is associated with the subject of the resurrection of the dead,—namely, the soul—the mind of man—the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but it is not so: the very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine; I know better. Hear it, all ye ends of the world; for God has told me so; and if you don't believe me, it will not make the truth without effect. …

"I am dwelling on the immortality of the spirit of man. Is it logical to say that the intelligence of spirits is immortal, and yet that it has a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. …

"Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age and there is no creation about it. …

"The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 209–10).

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) of the First Presidency explained the relationship between eternal intelligence and our identities as spirit children of God: "The spirits of men 'are begotten sons and daughters unto God' (D&C 76:24). Through that birth process, self-existing intelligence was organized into individual spirit beings" ("The Worth of Souls," *Ensign,* Nov. 1978, 14).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:30–32. The agency to act

The premortal war in heaven occurred when Satan rebelled against God "and sought to destroy the agency of man" (Moses 4:3) and those who followed Satan used their agency to choose evil and rebelled against God (see D&C 29:36). Here on earth we have the agency to act for ourselves (see D&C 58:26–29). Without agency and the ability to act, "there is no existence" (D&C 93:30; see also 2 Nephi 2:11–13).

God provides truth and light to help His children become aware of alternatives. Those who choose not to receive God's light will be "under condemnation" (D&C 93:32)—even when they reject God's light in the belief that doing so will make them happier. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed: "So many have erred, thinking that freedom, included both freedom to obey or not to obey eternal laws and, wrongly, that it included freedom to change those laws. Not so. Ultimately, freedom involves choice between eternal alternatives, *but not the altering of the alternatives.* We can choose wickedness or happiness, but not wickedness with happiness" ("Insights from My Life" [Brigham Young University devotional, Oct. 26, 1976], 7, speeches.byu.edu).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:33–35. "Spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy"

The Lord taught that eventually the spirit body and the physical body are to be "inseparably connected," which will bring "a fulness of joy" (D&C 93:33; see also D&C 138:16–17). **President Joseph F. Smith** (1838–1918) taught: "We are called mortal beings because in us are seeds of death, but in reality we are immortal beings, because there is also within us the germ of eternal life. Man is a dual being, composed of the spirit which gives life, force, intelligence and capacity to man, and the body which is the tenement of the spirit. … The two combined constitute the soul" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 88). The only way we can receive a fulness of joy like the Savior has is for our "spirit and element" to be "inseparably connected" (D&C 93:33).

Because we were created in God's image and receive life through the Spirit of Christ, our bodies are called "tabernacle[s] of God" or "temples" (D&C 93:35; see also 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; D&C 88:12–13; Moses 2:26–27).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us of the importance of our physical bodies:

"Because the physical body is so central to the Father's plan of happiness and our spiritual development, we should not be surprised that Lucifer seeks to thwart our progression by enticing us to use our bodies improperly. …

"Our physical bodies indeed are temples of God. Consequently, you and I must carefully consider what we take *into* our temple, what we put *on* our temple, what we do *to* our temple, and what we do *with* our temple. And we can learn a number of important lessons by comparing the Church's temples to our physical bodies as temples" ("Ye Are the Temple of God," *Ensign,* Sept. 2001, 18).

Ponder the similarities between the Church's temples and your own physical body. How might treating your body like the temple it is bring you greater light and truth?

Doctrine and Covenants 93:36. "The glory of God is intelligence"

The Lord taught the Saints that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). This intelligence is not just knowledge but the wisdom to use knowledge in a righteous manner according to God's plan (see D&C 130:18–19). **President Joseph F. Smith** taught:

"If you love the truth, if you have received the gospel in your hearts and love it, your intelligence will be added upon; your understanding of truth will be expanded, larger than in any other way. Truth is the thing, above all other things in the world, that makes men free. … If you will learn the truth and walk in the light of truth you shall be made free from the errors of men … ; you will be above suspicion and above wrong-doing of every description. God will approve of you and bless you. …

"It isn't all that is necessary, to learn the truth or to cease to be ignorant. Following that comes the application of the understanding and knowledge that we gain, to those works and things that are needful for our protection and for the protection of our children, our neighbors, our homes, our happiness.

"Search out the truth of the written word; listen for and receive the truth declared by living prophets and teachers; enrich your minds with the best of knowledge and facts. Of those who speak in his name, the Lord requires humility, not ignorance. Intelligence is the glory of God; and no man can be saved in ignorance [see D&C 93:36; 131:6]" (*Teachings: Joseph F. Smith,* 314, 318–19).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:37–39. "Light and truth forsake that evil one"

God's children are born into the world "innocent before God" because they are redeemed by Jesus Christ from the consequences resulting from the Fall of Adam and Eve (D&C 93:38). The Light of Christ is given to "every [person] that cometh into the world" (D&C 84:46). Parents have a duty to "bring up [their] children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40). However, when God's children are disobedient, the "wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth" (D&C 93:39). **Elder Robert D. Hales** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the darkness that results when we fail to keep the commandments:

"Light dispels darkness. When light is present, darkness is vanquished and must depart. More importantly, darkness cannot conquer light unless the light is diminished or departs. When the spiritual light of the Holy Ghost is present, the darkness of Satan departs.

"Beloved young men and young women of the Church, we are engaged in a battle between the forces of light and darkness. If it were not for the Light of Jesus Christ and His gospel, we would be doomed to the destruction of darkness. But the Savior said, 'I am come a light into the world' [John 12:46]. 'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' [John 8:12]. …

"… In this world, the darkness is never far away. In fact, it is always just around the corner, waiting for an opportunity to come in. 'If thou doest not well,' the Lord said, 'sin lieth at the door' [Genesis 4:7].

"It is as predictable as any physical law: if we let the light of the Spirit flicker or fade by failing to keep the commandments or by not partaking of the sacrament or praying or studying the scriptures, the darkness of the adversary will surely come in. 'That wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience' [D&C 93:39]" ("Out of Darkness into His Marvelous Light," *Ensign,* May 2002, 70–71).

When have you or someone you know noticeably grown in light and truth?

Doctrine and Covenants 93:40–53

The Lord commands His servants to bring up their children in light and truth

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:40–53, looking for the counsel the Lord gave to Church leaders regarding their families.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:40. "Bring up your children in light and truth"



The Lord commanded the Saints to "bring up [their] children in light and truth" (see D&C 93:38–40).

Just as God the Father has provided light and truth for His children, parents are commanded to "bring up [their] children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40). **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"I have heard a few parents state that they don't want to impose the gospel on their children but want them to make up their own minds about what they will believe and follow. They think that in this way they are allowing children to exercise their agency. What they forget is that the intelligent use of agency requires knowledge of the truth, of things as they really are (see D&C 93:24). Without that, young people can hardly be expected to understand and evaluate the alternatives that come before them. Parents should consider how the adversary approaches their children. He and his followers are not promoting objectivity but are vigorous, multimedia advocates of sin and selfishness.

"Seeking to be neutral about the gospel is, in reality, to reject the existence of God and His authority. We must, rather, acknowledge Him and His omniscience if we want our children to see life's choices clearly and be able to think for themselves" ("Moral Discipline," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 107).

See also the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28 and for Doctrine and Covenants 68:25 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:41–50. "Set in order your own house"

At the conclusion of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93, the Lord chastened each member of the First Presidency as well as Bishop Newel K. Whitney about the way that they were raising their families. The divine instructions

given to these Church leaders are important words of counsel for all parents who seek to raise a family in righteousness (see D&C 93:41–50). **Elder Robert D. Hales** provided the following inspired guidance to parents:

"The First Presidency issued a call to all parents 'to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church. The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.'

"… The First Presidency taught that by teaching and rearing children in gospel principles, parents can protect their families from corrosive elements. They further counseled parents and children 'to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform' (First Presidency letter, 11 Feb 1999; cited in *Church News,* 27 Feb. 1999, 3).

"With the help of the Lord and His doctrine, all the hurtful effects from challenges a family may meet can be understood and overcome. Whatever the needs of family members may be, we can strengthen our families as we follow the counsel given by prophets.

"The key to strengthening our families is having the Spirit of the Lord come into our homes. The goal of our families is to be on the strait and narrow path" ("Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," *Ensign,* May 1999, 32–33).

In His counsel to Newel K. Whitney, the Lord encouraged him to "set in order his family, and see that they are more diligent and concerned at home" (D&C 93:50). **Elder David A. Bednar** used this passage to illustrate ways that parents can create a home filled with the Spirit of the Lord:

"We can begin to become more diligent and concerned at home by telling the people we love that we love them. Such expressions do not need to be flowery or lengthy. We simply should sincerely and frequently express love. …

"We also can become more diligent and concerned at home by bearing testimony to those whom we love about the things we know to be true by the witness of the Holy Ghost. The bearing of testimony need not be lengthy or eloquent. … Within the walls of our own homes, we can and should bear pure testimony of the divinity and reality of the Father and the Son, of the great plan of happiness, and of the Restoration. …

"Each family prayer, each episode of family scripture study, and each family home evening is a brushstroke on the canvas of our souls. … Our consistency in doing seemingly small things can lead to significant spiritual results. 'Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great' (D&C 64:33). Consistency is a key principle as we lay the foundation of a great work in our individual lives and as we become more diligent and concerned in our own homes. …

"As we seek the Lord's help and in His strength, we can gradually reduce the disparity between what we say and what we do, between expressing love and consistently showing it, and between bearing testimony and steadfastly living it. We can become more diligent and concerned at home as we are more faithful in learning, living, and loving the restored gospel of Jesus Christ" ("More Diligent and Concerned at Home," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 17–20).

Doctrine and Covenants 93:51–53. "Make haste"

The Lord instructed Sidney Rigdon, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and Frederick G. Williams to "make haste" and preach the gospel (see D&C 93:51–52). The Lord also directed the Prophet to "hasten to translate my scriptures" (D&C 93:53), referring to the Prophet's inspired translation of the Bible. In demonstration of the willingness of these men to be obedient to the Lord's counsel, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon finished the translation of the Bible on July 2, 1833, just two months after this revelation was given (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 166).

Take a moment to write about the importance of the decisions you make each day and how these decisions can help or hinder you from gaining light and truth.

CHAPTER 37

Doctrine and Covenants 94–97

Introduction and Timeline

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94, the Lord directed the Saints to plan the city of Kirtland "according to the pattern" He had given them (D&C 94:2). The Lord also commanded the Saints in Kirtland to build a house for the Presidency of the Church and a printing house.

In a revelation given on December 27–28, 1832, the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland, Ohio (see D&C 88:119). More than five months later, Church leaders and members still had not begun constructing the temple. On June 1, 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 95, in which the Lord sternly chastened the Kirtland Saints for delaying building the temple. He also promised to endow the Saints with power in the temple and gave instructions regarding its construction.

On June 4, 1833, several high priests met to discuss how to use and manage the recently acquired Peter French farm. Unable to come to a consensus, they inquired of the Lord, and in response, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 96. In this revelation the Lord gave Bishop Newel K. Whitney the responsibility for overseeing the French farm, which included property on which the Kirtland Temple would be built, and appointed John Johnson as a member of the United Firm.

In the summer of 1833, in obedience to the Lord's instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88, Church leaders in Missouri organized a school similar to the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio. In early July these Church leaders wrote to the Prophet Joseph Smith, asking for further instruction regarding this school. The Presidency of the Church sent a reply on August 6, 1833, which included the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94; 97–98. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 97, the Lord commanded the Missouri Saints to build the temple in Missouri "speedily" (D&C 97:11) and described the blessings they would receive for doing so. The Lord also warned the Saints that they would experience "sore affliction" if they did not follow His commandments (D&C 97:26).

December 27–28, 1832

The Lord commanded the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, to build a temple.

April 10, 1833

The Church purchased 103 acres of land in Kirtland from Peter French.

June 1, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 95 was received.

June 4, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 96 was received.

July 20, 1833

A mob in Independence, Missouri, destroyed the printing office and tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Partridge and Charles Allen.

July 23, 1833

Under pressure, the Saints agreed to the mob's demand that they begin leaving Jackson County, Missouri, by the end of the year.

August 2, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 97 and 94 were received.

August 6, 1833

The Presidency of the Church wrote a letter to Church leaders in Missouri and included the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94; 97–98.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the Lord gathers His people "in any age of the world" in order to build temples so that He may "reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house … and teach the people the way of salvation" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 416). As you study Doctrine and Covenants 94–97, look for truths about the importance and blessings of the temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 94: Additional Historical Background

Early in 1833, Church agents began purchasing several tracts of land in Kirtland, Ohio, including the Peter French farm. This property, along with large land holdings owned by Frederick G. Williams and Newel K. Whitney, "became the focal point of new city-planning efforts" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 208). On May 4, 1833, a conference of high priests appointed Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon to serve on a building committee. These men were charged with raising money for and overseeing the construction of Church buildings in Kirtland (see D&C 94:13–15; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 82). One month later the Saints began constructing the Kirtland Temple on the newly acquired land. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94, the Lord revealed His will concerning additional structures to be built in Kirtland near the temple.

In early publications of the Doctrine and Covenants, the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94 was incorrectly dated as May 6, 1833. The corrected date of the revelation, August 2, 1833, is included in the 2013 edition of the scriptures, though the order in which the sections appear has not changed.



Doctrine and Covenants 94

The Lord gives instructions for the construction of Church buildings and reaffirms the need to build a temple

Read Doctrine and Covenants 94, looking for what buildings the Lord commanded the Saints to construct in Kirtland.

Doctrine and Covenants 94:1–2. What pattern did the Lord reveal for the city of Kirtland?

In the summer of 1831, the Lord designated Independence, Missouri, as the "center place" of Zion, where the Saints would gather to build a holy city dedicated to the Lord and live together in righteousness (see D&C 57:1–3). In a June 25, 1833, letter to Church leaders in Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his counselors sent architectural plans for a temple and the layout for the city of Zion to be built in Independence. Frederick G. Williams, a counselor to the Prophet, wrote, "The plot for the City and the size, form, and dime[n]sions of the [temple] were given us of the Lord" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 203–4; punctuation standardized).

In a revelation received in August 1833, the Lord designated the city of Kirtland, Ohio, as a "stake of Zion" (D&C 94:1). The Lord instructed the Saints to lay out the city of Kirtland "according to the pattern" which He had given to the Prophet Joseph Smith (D&C 94:2). This pattern likely refers to the plan for the city of Zion in Missouri. Frederick G. Williams drew a plan, or plat, for the city of Kirtland similar to the one for the city of Zion. The Kirtland plat reflected the Lord's instructions that the city be laid out with the temple as the starting point and that the rest of the city be built in relation to it (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 208–11). The temple was to be the focus of their community, which is shown by its central location and the priority of its construction.

What do you think is significant about the Lord's command to build the cities of Zion beginning with a temple as the center place?

Doctrine and Covenants 94:3–12. The Lord gives instructions for erecting buildings for the work of His kingdom

The Lord commanded the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, to construct two houses, or buildings: one "for the work of the presidency" (D&C 94:3) and the other "for the work of the printing of the translation of my scriptures" and other works commanded of the Lord (D&C 94:10). The phrase "translation of my scriptures" refers to the Prophet Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Bible, which he had recently finished in July 1833. Both houses were to be two-story buildings with similar dimensions as the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 95:15). The instructions to construct these two buildings, together with the temple, illustrate the importance of the temple, the work of the First Presidency, and the publication of scriptures.



The Lord instructed the Saints to construct two buildings on the lots south of the Kirtland Temple, but they were never built (see D&C 94:3, 10).

The two buildings meant for the Presidency of the Church and printing were never constructed in Kirtland. After the violent expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County, Missouri, in the fall of 1833, the Kirtland Saints shifted resources to provide relief to Church members in Missouri. Furthermore, completing the Kirtland Temple consumed all available resources for several years. The Saints eventually constructed a smaller two-story building to the west of the Kirtland Temple, which served as a printing office and meeting place for the School of the Prophets (see Letterbook 1, pages 57–58, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 95: Additional Historical Background

In the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 88, which were given in late December 1832 and early January 1833, the Lord instructed the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, to organize a "school of the prophets" (see D&C 88:70–74, 117–41) and to build "a house of God" that would serve as a place of worship and learning (see D&C 88:119, 137). In a letter to William W. Phelps in Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith emphasized the urgency of constructing the house of God in Kirtland and providing a school to instruct the elders of the Church. "This is the word of the Lord to us," the Prophet wrote. "Yea the Lord helping us we will obey, as on conditions of our obedience, he has promised us great things, yea even a visit from the heavens to honor us with his own presence" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 104–5; see also D&C 110:1–4).

Despite the promise of this glorious blessing, during the months following the receipt of this revelation the Saints did little to fulfill the Lord's commandment. In April 1833, Church leaders purchased land on which to build the Lord's house. On May 4, 1833, a conference appointed a committee consisting of Hyrum Smith, Jared Carter, and Reynolds Cahoon to raise money to construct the building. However, nearly a month later, when the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 95, neither the committee nor other Church members had begun construction of the Lord's house. The Saints did not seem to understand at first that they were building a temple. Records suggest that they envisioned "the house" the Lord commanded them to establish as a schoolhouse (see Lisa Olsen Tait and Brent Rogers, "A House for Our God," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 166, or history.lds.org). The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 95 expanded the Saints' vision and prepared them to better understand the nature of the house of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 95

The Lord chastens the Saints for delaying construction of the temple

Read Doctrine and Covenants 95:1–9, looking for reasons the Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland, Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 95:1–3. "Whom I love I also chasten"

By June 1, 1833, the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, had not adequately established, or begun to construct, a house as instructed in revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in late December 1832 and early January 1833 (see D&C 88:119, 137). The Lord chastened and rebuked the Saints for neglecting to obey His "great commandment … concerning the building of [His] house" in Kirtland, and He called their neglect "a very grievous sin" (D&C 95:3). The Lord reminded them that He chastened them because He loved them. As used in this revelation, to *chasten* means to "correct by punishment" and to "purify" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary,* 11th ed. [2004], "chasten"). The Lord's chastening was not meant to punish but rather to correct and bring His people to repentance, "that their sins may be forgiven" (D&C 95:1). Other scripture passages attest to the Lord's loving purposes for chastening His people, including to help them "remember him" (Helaman 12:3), to help them "learn obedience" (D&C 105:6), and to refine them "as gold" (Job 23:10). Thus, disciples of Jesus Christ should take to heart the words in Job: "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (Job 5:17).

Speaking of divine chastening, **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "Correction is vital if we would conform our lives 'unto a perfect man, [that is,] unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13). … Though it is often difficult to endure, truly we ought to rejoice that God considers us worth the time and trouble to correct" ("As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 97–98).

The Lord explained that with His chastisement of the Saints, He also "prepare[d] a way for their deliverance" (D&C 95:1). In other words, the Lord not only pointed out how the Saints had sinned but also provided instruction to help them accomplish His commandment to build the temple (see D&C 95:11–17).

Consider times in your life when you have experienced chastening from God. How do you think such chastening indicates His love for you?

Doctrine and Covenants 95:4–9. In the Lord's house, He prepares His servants to do His work and endows them with power

The Lord said that completion of His house was needed "to prepare mine apostles to prune my vineyard for the last time" (D&C 95:4). The word *apostles* in this revelation refers broadly to those called by the Lord and sent forth to preach the gospel. The organization of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles would not occur until February 1835. The phrase "prune my vineyard" likely has reference to the

allegory of the olive trees spoken of in the Book of Mormon (see Jacob 5:61–77). The pruning of the Lord's vineyard for the last time represents the final effort of the Lord's servants to proclaim the gospel and gather Israel in preparation for Jesus Christ's Second Coming.



***Kirtland and the First Temple,* by Dan Burr. The Kirtland Temple was built on property acquired from Peter French.**

The Lord's house would provide a place for His servants to be taught "the doctrine of the kingdom" and "be instructed more perfectly" (D&C 88:77–78) and to be endowed "with power from on high" (D&C 95:8). To *endow* means to give something. To be endowed in the temple is to receive a bestowal of spiritual knowledge and power. The endowment spoken of in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 95 is not the same as the ordinance administered in later temples. The first complete temple endowment in this dispensation was introduced by the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois, in May 1842. The endowment received by the Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, included occasions when the Lord poured out His Spirit and endowed them with spiritual power, when they received revelations or other gifts, when priesthood keys were given, and also when sacred ceremonies were performed, which included washings and anointings as well as the washing of feet for priesthood leaders (see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–76 in this manual).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught the following: "The Kirtland Temple was necessary before the [Lord's servants] could receive the endowment which the Lord had in store for them. The elders had been out preaching the Gospel and crying repentance ever since the Church was organized and many great men had heard and embraced the truth, nevertheless the elders could not go forth in the power and authority which the Lord intended them to possess until this Temple was built where he could restore keys and powers essential to the more complete preaching of the Gospel and the administering of its ordinances" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:406).

In temples today, the Lord continues to endow His servants with power and prepare them to accomplish His sacred work of salvation. **Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the blessings of being endowed with power in the Lord's temple:

"When men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which by definition is priesthood power. …

"Our Father in Heaven is generous with His power. All men and all women have access to this power for help in their lives. All who have made sacred covenants with the Lord and who honor those covenants are eligible to receive personal

revelation, to be blessed by the ministering of angels, to commune with God, to receive the fulness of the gospel, and, ultimately, to become heirs alongside Jesus Christ of all our Father has" ("Men and Women and Priesthood Power," *Ensign,* Sept. 2014, 32).

Doctrine and Covenants 95:4. What is the Lord's "strange act"?

Isaiah prophesied that before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the Lord would "do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act" (Isaiah 28:21). The "strange act" mentioned by Isaiah, and reaffirmed in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 95, refers to the restoration of the gospel and all that God will yet do to accomplish His work in the last days (see D&C 95:4; 101:95). As part of this work, the Lord promised to "pour out [His] Spirit upon all flesh" (D&C 95:4; see also Joel 2:28–32). Those who do not believe in heavenly visitations, revelation, visions, gifts of the Spirit, and other spiritual matters may view the restored gospel as "strange." In context of this revelation on the temple, the Lord's promise to pour out His Spirit likely relates to the promised endowment of spiritual power that He taught would come from His holy house.

Doctrine and Covenants 95:5–6. What does it mean to be "called" but not "chosen"?

For information on what it means to be called but not chosen, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–36 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 95:7. "Call your solemn assembly"

For an explanation of this solemn assembly, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–76 in this manual.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 95:10–17, looking for the Lord's instructions regarding the Kirtland Temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 95:11–12. "If you keep my commandments you shall have power to build it"

The Lord promised the Saints in Kirtland that they would have "power to build" His house if they kept His commandments (D&C 95:11). "Building the temple would be a huge challenge for the Saints. In the summer of 1833, there were only 150 members of the Church living in the area. None of them had the traditional qualifications to oversee such an ambitious construction project—there was not a single architect or engineer among them, or even an experienced draftsman to draw up the plans" (Tait and Rogers, "A House for Our God," in *Revelations in Context,* 169, or history.lds.org).

On June 4, 1833, three days after the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 95, Church leaders held a conference to discuss the construction of the temple. Some members suggested they construct a simple, inexpensive structure. Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, recalled: "A council was called and Joseph requested the brethren, each one, to rise and give his views, and after they were through he would give his opinion.

… Some thought that it would be better to build a frame [house]. Others said that a frame [house] was too costly … , and the majority concluded upon the putting up [of] a log house and made their calculations about what they could do towards building it. Joseph rose and reminded them that they were not making a house for themselves or any other man but a house for God: 'And shall we, brethren, build a house for our God of logs? No, brethren. I have a better plan than that. I have the plan of the house of the Lord given by Himself. You will see by this the difference between our calculations and His ideas.' " The Prophet then provided the "plan in full of the house of the Lord at Kirtland," which "highly delighted" the brethren. After the meeting, they walked to the building site and began to work—removing a fence, clearing the ground, and digging a trench for the wall ("Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," book 14, pages 1–2, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized).

For the next three years, Church members made enormous sacrifices to build the temple. During that time the Lord inspired individuals with means to help finance the temple's construction. New converts, such as Artemus Millet, contributed their skills in carpentry and masonry to building the temple. Despite their poverty, afflictions, and the opposition they faced, the Saints indeed were given power to build the Lord's temple (see Tait and Rogers, "A House for Our God," in *Revelations in Context,* 170–71, or history.lds.org).



Quarry where stone was obtained for the construction of the Kirtland Temple

When have you felt the Lord's help to accomplish something because you strived to keep the commandments?

Doctrine and Covenants 95:13–17. "After the manner which I shall show unto three of you"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 95, the Lord specified the dimensions of His house—the Kirtland Temple—and the functions of specific rooms. He explained that the Saints were not to build the house "after the manner of the world" but "after the manner which [He would] show unto three of [His servants]" (D&C 95:13–14). Frederick G. Williams, counselor to the Prophet Joseph Smith, recalled the fulfillment of the Lord's promise: "Joseph [Smith] received the word of the Lord for him to take his two counselors, [Frederick G.] Williams and [Sidney] Rigdon, and come before the Lord, and He would show them the plan or model of the house to be built. We went upon our knees, called on the Lord, and the building appeared within viewing distance, I being the first to discover it. Then all of us viewed it together. After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us" (in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church:*

Joseph Smith [2007], 271). When the temple was nearing completion, President Williams said it looked like the building he had seen in vision to the smallest detail, and he could not tell the difference between the temple he saw in vision and the temple as built (see Tait and Rogers, "A House for Our God," in *Revelations in Context,* 167, or history.lds.org).



Building the Kirtland Temple, **by Walter Rane. Construction began on the Kirtland Temple in June 1833.**

Doctrine and Covenants 96: Additional Historical Background

In April 1833, Joseph Coe, acting as agent for the Church, purchased 103 acres of land in Kirtland, Ohio, belonging to Peter French. The Kirtland Temple would eventually be built on a portion of this property. On June 4, 1833, a conference of high priests gathered in council to discuss the use and management of the newly acquired property. Unable to come to an agreement, Church leaders inquired of the Lord about the issue. In response, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 96 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 108–9).



Doctrine and Covenants 96

The bishop is appointed to oversee all of the property held by the Church

Read Doctrine and Covenants 96, looking for what the Lord instructed Church leaders to do with the Peter French farm in Kirtland, Ohio.

Doctrine and Covenants 96:1–5. "That my word should go forth unto the children of men"

In answer to Church leaders' inquiry, the Lord appointed Bishop Newel K. Whitney to manage the newly acquired property in Kirtland, Ohio. As bishop of the Church in Ohio, he served as the Lord's steward over temporal matters (see D&C 72:8–13). The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 96 designated a portion of the property for the building of the Lord's house and instructed Church leaders to divide the remainder of the land into lots for those seeking inheritances. "Church members who consecrated their property [to the Church] through the bishop … were eligible to receive an 'inheritance' of land on which to live" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 111, note 276).

A portion of the property was to be used to benefit the Lord's "order, for the purpose of bringing forth [His] word to the children of men" (D&C 96:4). This had reference to the United Order, or United Firm. "A subset of the United Firm, the Literary Firm, was responsible for publishing the revelations [see D&C 70)]. 'That portion' [D&C 96:4] to be devoted to bringing forth God's word may refer either to acreage allotted for building a print shop or to land-sale proceeds that could be used to support such a printing operation" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 111, note 277).

The Lord emphasized the "most expedient" need to publish and send forth His word "for the purpose of subduing the hearts of the children of men" (D&C 96:5). Hearts are subdued when they are softened and become receptive to God's will and commandments. The Book of Mormon prophet Alma taught that God's word has "a great tendency to lead the people to do that which is just" and has a "more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else" (Alma 31:5). The scriptures contain many examples of the power of God's word to

bring a mighty change to the hearts of people and lead them to obey His commandments (see Acts 2:37–38, 41–47; Mosiah 5:1–2; Helaman 15:7–8).

Doctrine and Covenants 96:6–9. "John Johnson whose offering I have accepted"

Shortly after the conversion of their son Lyman in February 1831, John and Alice (Elsa) Johnson began studying the Book of Mormon. They traveled the 30 miles from their home in Hiram, Ohio, to Kirtland to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith in person. During their visit the Prophet miraculously healed Alice's crippled arm. Convinced that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God, John and Alice were baptized and became members of the Church. After their conversion, the Johnsons generously supported the Prophet and the gospel cause. They opened their home in Hiram to the Prophet and his family, who stayed there from September 1831 to September 1832. (See Curtis Ashton, "Kirtland through the Eyes of the John and Elsa Johnson Family," history.lds.org.) The Johnsons' home became the headquarters of the Church during this time, and it was there that the Prophet Joseph Smith worked on the inspired translation of the Bible, received several revelations, and held Church conferences.

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 96, the Lord said he had accepted John Johnson's "offering" (D&C 96:6). This may refer to Brother Johnson's financial support of the Prophet Joseph Smith as well as to funds he provided the Church to help purchase the Peter French properties (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 549). The Lord also directed in this revelation that John Johnson be made a member of the United Firm and "assist in bringing forth [God's] word" (D&C 96:8). Later, when John and Alice sold their large, prosperous farm in Hiram, Ohio, they consecrated much of the proceeds to the Church (see Ashton, "Kirtland through the Eyes of the John and Elsa Johnson Family," history.lds.org). As a member of the firm, John helped manage Church assets. Much of the French farm was eventually deeded to him (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 109). In a later revelation, given April 23, 1834, the Lord instructed John to "sell the lots," or parts of the French farm, that were "laid off for the building up" of Kirtland (D&C 104:34–36).

Doctrine and Covenants 97: Additional Historical Background

In obedience to the Lord's counsel, Church members in Missouri started a School of the Elders in the summer of 1833 (see D&C 88:77–80, 117–41). By early July, 1833, they desired further instruction regarding the school and sent two letters to the Prophet Joseph Smith requesting that he inquire "of the Lord … concerning the school in Zion" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 199). In response, the Prophet and his counselors wrote a letter on August 6, 1833, which included the three revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94; 97–98. They referred to the revelation recorded in section 97 as "the communication which we received from the Lord concerning the school in Zion" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 199). The Prophet received this revelation a few weeks after mob violence broke out in

Jackson County, Missouri. On July 23, 1833, under pressure, Church leaders in Missouri signed an agreement to leave Jackson County. Joseph Smith was unaware of these events when he dictated this revelation.

Doctrine and Covenants 97

The Lord emphasizes His will that the Saints in Missouri build a temple

Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:1–9, looking for what the Lord said about the Saints in Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 97:1–2. "Many of whom are truly humble and are seeking diligently"

The Lord said that many of the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, were "truly humble and … seeking diligently to learn wisdom and to find truth" (D&C 97:1). **Elder Richard G. Scott** (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught of the importance of humility and diligence in acquiring spiritual knowledge:

"*Humility* is essential to the acquiring of spiritual knowledge. To be humble is to be teachable. Humility permits you to be tutored by the Spirit and to be taught from sources inspired by the Lord, such as the scriptures. The seeds of personal growth and understanding germinate and flourish in the fertile soil of humility. Their fruit is spiritual knowledge to guide you here and hereafter. …

"Since it requires much personal effort to gain and use worthwhile knowledge, you cannot endlessly sample from every fascinating arena of life. Therefore, you should select carefully a few vital areas where you can focus energy to learn and share vital truths. I know that to gain knowledge of great worth requires extraordinary personal effort. This is particularly true when our desire is to obtain spiritual knowledge. President Kimball said it this way:

"'The treasures of both secular and spiritual knowledge are hidden ones—but hidden from those who do not properly search and strive to find them. … Spiritual knowledge is not available merely for the asking; even prayers are not enough. It takes persistence and dedication of one's life. … Of all treasures of knowledge, the most vital is the knowledge of God' (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball,* pp. 389–90)" ("Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge," *Ensign,* Nov. 1993, 87).

Why do you think humility and diligent seeking are necessary in order to obtain wisdom and truth?

Doctrine and Covenants 97:3–5. "The school in Zion"

In the summer of 1833, a "school of Elders" began in Zion, with Parley P. Pratt as its teacher. Its main purpose was to prepare the brethren living there to go forth as missionaries during the coming winter. Elder Pratt wrote the following description of the school and his call to preside over it: "A school of Elders was … organized, over which I was called to preside. This class, to the number of about sixty, met for

instruction once a week. The place of meeting was in the open air, under some tall trees, in a retired place in the wilderness, where we prayed, preached and prophesied, and exercised ourselves in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here great blessings were poured out, and many great and marvelous things were manifested and taught. The Lord gave me great wisdom, and enabled me to teach and edify the Elders, and comfort and encourage them in their preparations for the great work which lay before us. I was also much edified and strengthened" (*Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 93–94).

Doctrine and Covenants 97:6–9. Those "willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice … are accepted of me"

While many members of the School of the Elders in Zion were humble and faithful, some had become prideful and disobedient. The Lord likened the Saints in Missouri to trees. Those members who "bringeth not forth good fruit," referring to those who do not perform works of righteousness, would be "hewn down and cast into the fire" (D&C 97:7; see also Matthew 3:10; Alma 5:52). In other words, if they did not repent and live righteously, they would suffer God's judgments. In contrast, those with honest and broken hearts and contrite spirits, and who were "willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice," were accepted by the Lord (D&C 97:8).

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the necessity of making sacrifices consistent with our covenants:

"President Hinckley has taught, 'Without sacrifice there is no true worship of God' [*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 565]. Sacrifice is the crowning test of the gospel. It means consecrating time, talents, energy, and earthly possessions to further the work of God. In Doctrine and Covenants 97, verse 8, it concludes, 'All … who … are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command—they are accepted of me.'

"Saints who respond to the Savior's message will not be led astray by distracting and destructive pursuits and will be prepared to make appropriate sacrifices. The importance of sacrifice to those who want to be Saints is exemplified by the atoning sacrifice of the Savior, which is at the center of the gospel [see Alma 34:8–16]. …

"… In order to serve God and be holy, are we making sacrifices consistent with our covenants?" ("Are You a Saint?" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2003, 96).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:10–17, looking for why the Lord commanded the Saints in Missouri to build a temple and the blessings He promised them if they did so.

Doctrine and Covenants 97:10–12. "A house should be built unto me in the land of Zion"

In a July 1831 revelation, the Lord designated the site where the Saints were to build a temple in Independence, Missouri (see D&C 57:2–3). A few days later the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the site for the temple. Two years passed, however, without the Saints taking any further action to begin construction. In June 1833 the Lord gave the "pattern" for the construction of the temple in a revelation to the Prophet and his counselors (see D&C 95:14–17). With a letter dated June 25, 1833,

Joseph Smith, Frederick G. Williams, and Sidney Rigdon sent the plans for the temple and a plat map for the city of Zion to Church leaders in Missouri (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 147).

In the revelation given in August 1833, the Lord commanded the Saints to build the temple "like unto the pattern" that He had previously given them (D&C 97:10). He instructed that the house, or temple, "be built speedily, by the tithing of [His] people" (D&C 97:11). As used in this revelation, *tithing* referred to any freewill offering or donation (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 201, note 241). To construct the temple in Zion according to the pattern the Lord gave would require tremendous sacrifice in time, labor, and financial resources. Nevertheless, the Saints' sacrifice in building the temple would be "for the salvation of Zion" (D&C 97:12; see also D&C 97:18–28).

Doctrine and Covenants 97:13–14. The temple is a place of thanksgiving and instruction

The Lord said that the temple in Missouri was to be "a place of thanksgiving for all saints, and for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry" (D&C 97:13). It was to serve as a meeting place for the school of the elders, where they could be instructed in principles and doctrines pertaining to God's kingdom. This instruction would help prepare those who had been called to do the work of the Lord. Temples today continue to serve as places of thanksgiving, or worship, and instruction for Latter-day Saints. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) taught:

"I am satisfied that every man or woman who goes to the temple in a spirit of sincerity and faith leaves the house of the Lord a better man or woman. There is need for constant improvement in all of our lives. …

"This sacred edifice becomes a school of instruction in the sweet and sacred things of God. Here we have outlined the plan of a loving Father in behalf of His sons and daughters of all generations. Here we have sketched before us the odyssey of man's eternal journey from premortal existence through this life to the life beyond. Great fundamental and basic truths are taught with clarity and simplicity well within the understanding of all who hear. …

"The temple is also a place of personal inspiration and revelation. Legion are those who in times of stress, when difficult decisions must be made and perplexing problems must be handled, have come to the temple in a spirit of fasting and prayer to seek divine direction. Many have testified that while voices of revelation were not heard, impressions concerning a course to follow were experienced at that time or later which became answers to their prayers" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* [2016], 316–17).

How has the temple been a place of thanksgiving and instruction for you?

Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–17. "All the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God"

The Lord will not dwell in unholy temples (see D&C 97:17; Alma 7:21). As long as the Saints strive to keep the temple a holy and sacred place by not permitting any unclean thing to come into it, the glory, power, and presence of the Lord will be there. It is for this reason that strict worthiness standards must be met in order to enter into the temple and participate in temple ordinances. **Sister Silvia H. Allred**, who served in the General Relief Society Presidency, taught how we can worthily enter the temple:

"The temple is the house of the Lord. He directs the conditions under which it may be used, the ordinances that should be administered, and the standards that qualify us to enter and participate in temple worship. …

"The Lord has designated the bishop and stake president to be responsible for determining the worthiness of individuals to receive a recommend to enter His holy house. We have to be completely honest with our bishop and stake president when they interview us before issuing a temple recommend. The gift we bring to the altar is a pure heart and a contrite spirit. Personal worthiness is an essential requirement to enjoy the blessings of the temple" ("Holy Temples, Sacred Covenants," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 113).



The Lord promised that those who are pure in heart would find His presence in the temple (see D&C 97:15–16).

The Lord promised that "all the pure in heart that shall come into [the temple] shall see God" (D&C 97:16; see also Matthew 5:8). **Elder David B. Haight** (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the promise of seeing God in the temple includes more than seeing Him with our natural eyes:

"It is true that some have actually seen the Savior, but when one consults the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word *see,* such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him.

"Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us" ("Temples and Work Therein," *Ensign,* Nov. 1990, 61).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:18–28, looking for the warnings and promises the Lord gave to the Saints regarding Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 97:18–28. "Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her"

The promised blessings of the Lord are always conditioned upon obedience to His commandments (see D&C 130:21). The Lord promised the Saints that if they obeyed His command to build a temple in Independence, Missouri, Zion would flourish and become "very glorious, very great," and immovable (see D&C 97:18–19). He would be their "salvation" and "high tower" (D&C 97:20). Anciently, a community's high tower served as a place from which to see approaching danger and defend against attack. For the Saints in Zion, the power of the Lord would be their defense. Furthermore, the Lord promised that if they "observe[d] to do all things whatsoever [He] commanded" (D&C 97:25), they would escape the judgments He would pour out upon "the ungodly" (D&C 97:22). However, if the Saints did not do as He commanded, they would experience "sore affliction" (D&C 97:26).

In November 1833, mobs violently expelled the Saints from Jackson County, Missouri, and the Church members were eventually driven from the entire state of Missouri in 1838 and 1839. In a revelation given in January 1841, the Lord, in His mercy, explained that His previous commandment to the Saints to build His house in Jackson County, Missouri, was no longer required of them (see D&C 124:49–54).

For more information regarding the persecution the Saints in Missouri suffered, see the additional historical background for Doctrine and Covenants 98; 101; and 121 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 97:21. "Zion—THE PURE IN HEART"

The revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants often refer to Zion as a geographical place. For example, the Lord designated Independence, Missouri, as "the place for the city of Zion" (see D&C 57:2–3), and He spoke of "the stake of Zion" in Kirtland, Ohio (D&C 94:1). However, the Lord also declared that Zion was also a group of people who are "pure in heart" (D&C 97:21). A pure heart is free from the contamination of evil and the stain of sin. Those who are pure in heart have received a remission of their sins through faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel. **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) taught of the role that purity of heart plays in building Zion today:

"The length of time required 'to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion' [D&C 105:37] is strictly up to us and how we live, for creating Zion 'commences in the heart of each person.' ([Brigham Young, in] *Journal of Discourses,* 9:283.) …

"… Zion can be built up only among those who are the pure in heart, not a people torn by covetousness or greed, but a pure and selfless people. Not a people who are pure in appearance, rather a people who are pure in heart. Zion is to be in the world and not of the world, not dulled by a sense of carnal security, nor paralyzed by materialism. No, Zion is not things of the lower, but of the higher order, things that exalt the mind and sanctify the heart" ("Becoming the Pure in Heart," *Ensign,* May 1978, 80–81).

Prayerfully consider the doctrine and principles you have learned from Doctrine and Covenants 94–97 about the temple and the building of Zion. What will you do to make temple service a priority in your life? What will you do to become pure in heart and help establish Zion where you live?

CHAPTER 38

Doctrine and Covenants 98–100

Introduction and Timeline

In 1833 the growing population of Latter-day Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, became a great concern to the original settlers of the county because of the significant cultural, political, and religious differences between the two groups. On July 20, 1833, a group of Missouri citizens demanded that the Latter-day Saints leave Jackson County. Before the Saints could adequately respond, a mob destroyed the Church's printing office and tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Partridge and Charles Allen. Three days later a large mob threatened further violence, and Church leaders were forced to sign an agreement that all Mormons would leave Jackson County no later than April 1, 1834. On August 6, 1833, in Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 98, in which the Lord taught the Saints how to respond to persecution. The Lord also counseled the Saints to follow "the constitutional law of the land" (D&C 98:6) and warned them to keep their covenants.

John Murdock joined the Church when the first missionaries from New York arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, in November 1830. He immediately began preaching the gospel. In June 1832 he returned from serving a mission to areas in the midwestern United States. In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith on August 29, 1832, which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 99, the Lord called John Murdock to continue serving as a missionary.

In October 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon departed for a brief mission to Upper Canada. On October 12, 1833, they stopped in Perrysburg, New York, and the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 100. The Lord assured the Prophet and Sidney that their families in Ohio were well. He also comforted them concerning the Saints in Missouri, who were suffering persecution.

June 1832

John Murdock returned from a mission to areas in the midwestern United States.

August 29, 1832

Doctrine and Covenants 99 was received.

July 20, 1833

A mob in Jackson County, Missouri, destroyed the Church's printing office in Independence and tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Partridge and Charles Allen.

July 23, 1833

Under threat of mob violence, Church leaders in Missouri signed an agreement that Mormons would begin leaving Jackson County by the end of the year.

August 6, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 98 was received.

August 9, 1833

Oliver Cowdery arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, with news of the mob violence toward the Saints in Missouri.

October 5, 1833

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon left Kirtland, Ohio, to preach the gospel in New York and in Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada (now Ontario).

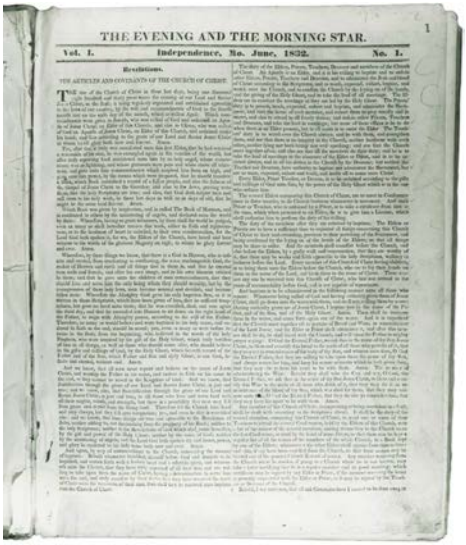
October 12, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 100 was received.

When have you or someone you care about been wronged or treated unfairly? How did you respond in this situation? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 98, look for counsel that can help you respond to mistreatment in a Christlike way, even in the most difficult circumstances.

Doctrine and Covenants 98: Additional Historical Background

Shortly after the Lord declared that the city of Zion and a temple were to be built in Independence, Missouri (see D&C 57:1–3), hundreds of Latter-day Saints began to gather to the surrounding Jackson County area. By the summer of 1833, it is estimated that more than 1,200 Church members had settled in Missouri (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 121). This growing population of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, became a great concern to the original settlers of Jackson County because of the significant cultural, political, and religious differences between the two groups, which led to misunderstanding and conflict.


THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR.

Vol. I. Independence, Mo. June, 1832. No. I.

Revelations.

The Evening and the Morning Star **was the Church's first newspaper and was published beginning in June 1832 in Independence, Missouri, until the printing office was destroyed by a mob. It was later published in Kirtland, Ohio, until September 1834.**

In July 1833, William W. Phelps published an editorial titled "Free People of Color" in the Church newspaper in Missouri, *The Evening and the Morning Star.* Some of the local citizens who supported slavery viewed the title of William W. Phelps's article as a political statement and interpreted it as an invitation for former slaves to settle in Missouri. This created significant tension, and days later, approximately 300 citizens signed a document calling for all Mormons to leave Jackson County. On July 20, 1833, a committee representing these citizens presented Church leaders in Jackson County with their list of demands and ordered that they respond within 15 minutes. When Church leaders refused to comply with the group's demands, a hostile crowd in the city of Independence proceeded to destroy the Church's print shop where the Book of Commandments was being produced. The mob also tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Partridge and Charles Allen. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 186–87). Three days later, on July 23, 1833, a mob of about 500 residents threatened further violence against Church members living in Jackson County. Six Church leaders "'offered themselves as a ransom [to the mob] for the church, willing to be scourged or die, if that [would] appease their anger toward the church' ["To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin," *The Evening and the Morning Star,* Dec. 1833, 114], but the mob declared that all church members must leave or die" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 187). Under this threat of violence, Church leaders signed an agreement pledging that Church leaders and half of the members of the Church would leave Jackson County by January 1, 1834, with the rest leaving by April 1, 1834 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 187).

Oliver Cowdery immediately left Independence, Missouri, and traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, to provide the Church leaders there with a firsthand account of what had happened. He arrived in Kirtland on August 9, 1833. On August 6, 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith had dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 98, in which the Lord taught the Saints how they should respond to persecution. That revelation, along with the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94 and 97, was copied into a letter and sent to Missouri Church leaders on August 7, two days before Oliver Cowdery arrived in Kirtland. While the Prophet was certainly aware of increasing tensions between Church members and non-Mormon residents in Jackson County, he could not have known of the hostilities that had occurred on July 20 and 23 in Independence, Missouri, before receiving this revelation.



The public square in Independence, Missouri, near the location where Bishop Edward Partridge and Brother Charles Allen were assaulted by a mob

Doctrine and Covenants 98:1–22

The Lord comforts the Saints and counsels them to follow the law of the land and keep their covenants

Read Doctrine and Covenants 98:1–22, looking for the counsel and instruction the Lord gave to the afflicted Saints.

Doctrine and Covenants 98:1–3. "All things … shall work together for your good"

Even though the Prophet Joseph Smith had not yet received news of the violence and hostilities that occurred in Jackson County, Missouri, on June 20 and 23, 1833, the revelation he received on August 6, in Kirtland, Ohio, shows that the Lord was very aware of the trials and suffering of the Church members there. The Lord assured the Saints that He had heard their prayers and encouraged them to "fear not," saying, "All things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good" (D&C 98:1, 3; see also Romans 8:28). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that trials can refine and strengthen us:

"The revelations, for which we are grateful, show that we should even give thanks for our afflictions because they turn our hearts to God and give us opportunities to prepare for what God would have us become. … Brigham Young understood [this principle]. Said he, 'There is not a single condition of life [or] one hour's experience but what is beneficial to all those who make it their study, and aim to improve upon the experience they gain' (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 179). …

"… We read these words of President John Taylor on the subject of gratitude for suffering: 'We have learned many things through suffering. We call it suffering. I call it a school of experience. … I have never looked at these things in any other light than trials for the purpose of purifying the Saints of God that they may be, as the scriptures say, as gold that has been seven times purified by the fire' (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* [2001], 203). Pioneers like President John Taylor, who witnessed the murder of their prophet and experienced prolonged persecution and incredible hardships for their faith, praised God and thanked Him. Through their challenges and the courageous and inspired actions they took to meet them, they grew in faith and in spiritual stature. Through their afflictions they became what God desired them to become, and they laid the foundation of the great work that blesses our lives today" ("Give Thanks in All Things," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2003, 96).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency expanded our understanding of giving thanks *in* all things:

"It is easy to be grateful *for* things when life seems to be going our way. But what then of those times when what we wish for seems to be far out of reach?

"Could I suggest that we see gratitude as a disposition, a way of life that stands independent of our current situation? In other words, I'm suggesting that instead of being thankful *for* things, we focus on being thankful *in* our circumstances—whatever they may be. …

"When we are grateful to God *in* our circumstances, we can experience gentle peace in the midst of tribulation. In grief, we can still lift up our hearts in praise. In pain, we can glory in Christ's Atonement. In the cold of bitter sorrow, we can experience the closeness and warmth of heaven's embrace.

"We sometimes think that being grateful is what we do *after* our problems are solved, but how terribly shortsighted that is. How much of life do we miss by waiting to see the rainbow before thanking God that there is rain?

"Being grateful in times of distress does *not* mean that we are pleased with our circumstances. It *does* mean that through the eyes of faith we look beyond our present-day challenges.

"This is not a gratitude of the lips but of the soul. It is a gratitude that heals the heart and expands the mind" ("Grateful in Any Circumstances," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2014, 75–76).

When have your afflictions worked for your good?

Doctrine and Covenants 98:4–8. "The constitutional law of the land"

The Saints who suffered harsh treatment in Jackson County, Missouri, during the summer of 1833 should have received protection based on the constitutional law of the United States. The Lord explained that when the "law of the land … is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges," that law "belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before [Him]" (D&C 98:5). The Saints are then justified in following that law (see D&C 98:6; see also D&C 101:77–80). The Lord taught the Saints that despite what they had endured by those who ignored the law, they were to befriend, or follow, "the constitutional law of the land" (D&C 98:6).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: "The Constitution under which we [in the United States] live, and which has not only blessed us but has become a model for other constitutions, is our God-inspired national safeguard ensuring freedom and liberty, justice and equality before the law" ("The Times in Which We Live," *Ensign,* Nov. 2001, 73).

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles urged Saints around the world to learn about and support the laws in their own nations: "As Church members, we live under the banner of many different flags. How important it is that we understand our place and our position in the lands in which we live! We should be familiar with the history, heritage, and laws of the lands that govern us. In those countries that allow us the right to participate in the affairs of government, we should use our … agency and be actively engaged in supporting and defending the principles of truth, right, and freedom" ("A Meaningful Celebration," *Ensign,* Nov. 1987, 72).

Doctrine and Covenants 98:9–10. "Good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold"

The Lord instructed the Saints to support "the constitutional law of the land" (D&C 98:6), which was designed to maintain the "rights and privileges" of all people (D&C 98:5), and to seek "diligently" for civic leaders who were "honest," "good," and "wise" (D&C 98:10). No matter how ethical the law is, when government leaders are corrupt, "the people mourn" and suffer the effects of unrighteous leadership (D&C 98:9; see also Proverbs 29:2).

Because it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked (see D&C 10:37), members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are encouraged to actively study issues and the positions of candidates in

their local and national areas. **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"We should seek to support those we believe will act with integrity and carry out our ideas of good government. …

"The Church maintains a policy of strict political neutrality, favoring no party or candidate, but every member should take an active part in the political process. We should study the issues and the candidates to be sure our votes are based on knowledge rather than hearsay. We need to pray for our public officials and ask the Lord to help them in making momentous decisions that affect us" ("Seeking the Good," *Ensign,* May 1992, 87–88).

Doctrine and Covenants 98:11–15. "I will prove you … , whether you will abide in my covenant"

The Lord promised His Saints in Missouri that if they were obedient to His commandments, they had no need to fear their enemies (see D&C 98:14). He also explained that He would provide spiritual instruction to His people "line upon line" (D&C 98:12), meaning that they would receive understanding in parts rather than all at once. With the limited knowledge the Saints had received, God would "try [them] and prove [them]" to see if they would be faithful and keep the covenant He had offered them (D&C 98:12; see also D&C 66:2). **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency taught: "The test a loving God has set before us is not to see if we can endure difficulty. It is to see if we can endure it well. We pass the test by showing that we remembered Him and the commandments He gave us. And to endure well is to keep those commandments whatever the opposition, whatever the temptation, and whatever the tumult around us" ("In the Strength of the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 17).

Why do you think it was important for the Saints living in Missouri in 1833 to remember the importance of keeping their covenants while enduring persecution? Why do you think it is important for us today to remember the importance of keeping our covenants, especially during difficult times?

Doctrine and Covenants 98:19–22. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against you"

The Lord said that He was "not well pleased with many" of the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, because "they do not forsake their sins, and their wicked ways, the pride of their hearts, and their covetousness, and all their detestable things, and observe the words of wisdom, and eternal life which [He had] given unto them" (D&C 98:19–20). He warned that He would chasten them if they did not repent and obey His commandments (see D&C 98:21).

The Lord assured the Saints in Missouri that if they obeyed His commandments, He would "turn away all wrath and indignation" and "the gates of hell [would] not prevail against" them (D&C 98:22). **President Gordon B. Hinckley** taught:

"Our safety lies in repentance. Our strength comes of obedience to the commandments of God.

"Let us be prayerful. Let us pray for righteousness. Let us pray for the forces of good. Let us reach out to help men and women of goodwill, whatever their religious persuasion and wherever they live. Let us stand firm against evil, both at home and abroad. Let us live worthy of the blessings of heaven, reforming our lives where necessary and looking to Him, the Father of us all. He has said, 'Be still, and know that I am God' (Ps. 46:10)" ("The Times in Which We Live," 74).

Doctrine and Covenants 98:23–48

The Lord teaches the Saints how to respond to persecution and explains when war is justified

Read Doctrine and Covenants 98:16, 23–48, looking for the Lord's counsel regarding how the Saints were to respond to persecution.

Doctrine and Covenants 98:16, 23–48. "Renounce war and proclaim peace"

The counsel to "renounce war and proclaim peace" (D&C 98:16), together with the detailed instructions the Lord gave regarding when war is justified, helped to clarify how the Saints should respond to the violent persecution they were facing in Jackson County, Missouri.

Principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 98 have been reemphasized by modern prophets and apostles. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles discussed how we can "proclaim peace" as individuals: "As a Church, we must 'renounce war and proclaim peace' [D&C 98:16]. As individuals, we should 'follow after the things which make for peace' [Romans 14:19]. We should be personal peacemakers. We should live peacefully—as couples, families, and neighbors. We should live by the Golden Rule. … We should … expand our circle of love to embrace the whole human family" ("Blessed Are the Peacemakers," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 41).



A depiction of the Church's printing office and home of William W. Phelps that was destroyed by a mob on July 20, 1833, in Independence, Missouri.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught the importance of proclaiming peace, but he also pointed out that there are times when war is justified:

"In a democracy we can renounce war and proclaim peace. … However, we all must also be mindful of another overriding responsibility. …

"It is clear [from examples in the scriptures] that there are times and circumstances when nations are justified, in fact have an obligation, to fight for family, for liberty, and against tyranny, threat, and oppression.

"When all is said and done, we of this Church are people of peace. We are followers of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the Prince of Peace. But even He said, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matthew 10:34).

"This places us in the position of those who long for peace, who teach peace, who work for peace, but who also are citizens of nations and are subject to the laws of our governments. Furthermore, we are a freedom-loving people, committed to the defense of liberty wherever it is in jeopardy. I believe that God will not hold men and women in uniform responsible as agents of their government in carrying forward that which they are legally obligated to do. It may even be that He will hold us responsible if we try to impede or hedge up the way of those who are involved in a contest with forces of evil and repression" ("War and Peace," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2003, 80).

On August 9, 1833, several days after the Presidency of the High Priesthood sent the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 94 and 97–98 to the Saints in Missouri, Oliver Cowdery arrived from Jackson County and informed the Prophet Joseph Smith of the hostilities and attacks that had occurred in Missouri. The Prophet wrote a letter on August 18, 1833, to comfort the Saints in Missouri. News

of the mob violence in Missouri also emboldened enemies of the Saints in Ohio, making it necessary for Church members to watch their homes at night "to keep off the Mob[b]ers" (Joseph Smith, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 263).

In his August 18 letter to the Saints in Missouri, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught that the Lord would deliver them if they were faithful:

"Satan has come down in great wrath upon all the Church of God and there is no safety, only in the arm of Jehovah. None else can deliver, and He will not deliver unless we prove ourselves faithful to him in the severest trouble, for he that will have his robes washed in the blood of the Lamb must come up through great tribulation, even the greatest of all affliction. But know this: when men thus deal with you and speak all manner of evil of you falsely for the sake of Christ, that He is your friend, and I verily know that He will speedily deliver Zion, for I have His immutable covenant that this shall be the case. But God is pleased to keep it hid from mine eyes the means how exactly the thing will be done. …

"… We must wait patiently until the Lord come[s]" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 263–65; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized).

Doctrine and Covenants 99: Additional Historical Background

John Murdock received a copy of the Book of Mormon when the missionaries from New York first arrived in the Kirtland, Ohio, area in November 1830. "He wrote that 'the spirit of the Lord rested on me' when he read the Book of Mormon, 'witnessing to me of the truth.' John's wife, Julia Clapp Murdock, 'was filled with the spirit as [he] read' to her. They were baptized and confirmed, and he was ordained an elder. 'It was truly a time of the outpouring of the spirit,' he wrote. 'I know the spirit rested on me as it never did before'" (Steven C. Harper, "Murdock, John," in Dennis L. Largey and Larry E. Dahl, eds., *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion* [2012], 429). In April 1831, Julia died giving birth to twins, leaving John with five young children to care for. Emma Smith had also given birth to twins in April, but they had died at birth. Following these tragedies, John allowed Joseph and Emma to adopt his twins and raise them as their own. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 272.)

In a revelation the Prophet Joseph Smith received on June 6, 1831, the Lord called John Murdock to Missouri to preach the gospel (see D&C 52:2–3, 8–9). John arranged for the care of his older three children and then accompanied the elders to Missouri, where he continued to preach the gospel for many months. When he returned to Ohio in June 1832, he learned that one of the twins who were adopted by Joseph and Emma had died of measles in March of that year following the violent mob incident in Hiram, Ohio, during which the Prophet had been tarred and feathered. (See Lisa Olsen Tait, "'I Quit Other Business': Early Missionaries," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 87–88, or history.lds.org.)

John Murdock spent the summer of 1832 caring for his three oldest children. In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith on August 29, 1832, John was again called to serve as a missionary. In this revelation the Lord instructed him to send his three children to Missouri to be cared for by Bishop Edward Partridge (see D&C 99:6). After making arrangements for the care of his children, John departed for the eastern area of the United States on September 24, 1832. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 272–73.)

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 99 is not in chronological sequence with other sections in the book because an error was made in the dating of the revelation when the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was printed. That error was corrected in the 1981 edition, but the placement of the revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants and its section number were preserved so that references to the section number in other publications would remain correct. (See Dennis A. Wright, "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 99," in *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 805.)



Doctrine and Covenants 99

The Lord calls John Murdock to proclaim the gospel

Read Doctrine and Covenants 99, looking for the Lord's counsel, promises, and blessings to John Murdock.

Doctrine and Covenants 99:1–4. "And who receiveth you receiveth me"

During Jesus Christ's mortal ministry, He called, commissioned, and sent His servants to proclaim the gospel. In doing so, He told them, "He that receiveth you receiveth me" (Matthew 10:40). The Lord repeated this promise in August 1832 when He called John Murdock to continue proclaiming the gospel (see D&C 99:2; see also D&C 84:35–38).

This principle of receiving those whom the Lord calls also applies to our sustaining of Church leaders. **President Marion G. Romney** (1897–1988) of the First Presidency taught: "This statement is worth emphasizing. 'He that receiveth my servants receiveth me' [D&C 84:36]. Who are his servants? They are his representatives in the offices of the Priesthood—the General, Stake, Priesthood Quorum, and Ward officers. It behooves us to keep this in mind when we are tempted to disregard our presiding authorities, bishops, quorum and stake presidents, etc., when, within the jurisdiction of their callings, they give us counsel and advice" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, 73).

Doctrine and Covenants 99:2. "You shall have power to declare my word in the demonstration of my Holy Spirit"

The Lord promised John Murdock, "You shall have power to declare my word in the demonstration of my Holy Spirit" (D&C 99:2). Those called to teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are to rely upon the Spirit rather than on their own abilities and talents. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** declared: "No man can preach the Gospel without the Holy Ghost" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 332).

President Brigham Young (1801–1877) taught the following regarding the Spirit's convincing power:

"Anything besides that influence [of the Spirit] will fail to convince any person of the truth of the gospel of salvation. …

"… When I saw a man without eloquence, or talents for public speaking, who could only just say, 'I know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of the Lord[,' t]he Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminate[d] my understanding, and light, glory, and immortality [were] before me. I am encircled by it, filled with it, and know for myself that the testimony of the man is true. … My own judgment, natural endowments, and education, bowed to this simple, but mighty testimony" ("A Discourse," *Deseret News,* Feb. 9, 1854, 4).

Doctrine and Covenants 99:6. Leaving family in order to serve a mission

In obedience to the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 99, John Murdock sent his three older children to Bishop Edward Partridge in Missouri, who then arranged for them to live with Latter-day Saint families in Zion. John then departed on his mission to the eastern United States (see D&C 99:1). In later years he moved to Missouri and then to Nauvoo, Illinois, where he served as a bishop. After going west with the Saints to Utah, John again served as a bishop and then served as one of the first missionaries to Australia. (See Harper, "Murdock, John" in *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 429.)



John Murdock was among the early converts in Kirtland, Ohio, and served as a missionary and Church leader throughout his life.
Courtesy LDS Church Archives

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) recounted a similar example of commitment when speaking of his father, George T. Benson:

"When I think of how we show faith, I cannot help but think of the example of my own father. I recall vividly how the spirit of missionary work came into my life. I was about thirteen years of age when my father received a call to go on a mission. …

"We gathered around the old sofa in the living room, and Father told us about his mission call. Then Mother said, 'We're proud to know that Father is considered worthy to go on a mission. We're crying a bit because it means two years of separation.' …

"And so Father went on his mission. Though at the time I did not fully comprehend the depths of my father's commitment, I understand better now that his willing acceptance of this call was evidence of his great faith. Every holder of the priesthood, whether young or old, should strive to develop that kind of faith" ("Godly Characteristics of the Master," *Ensign,* Nov. 1986, 45–46).

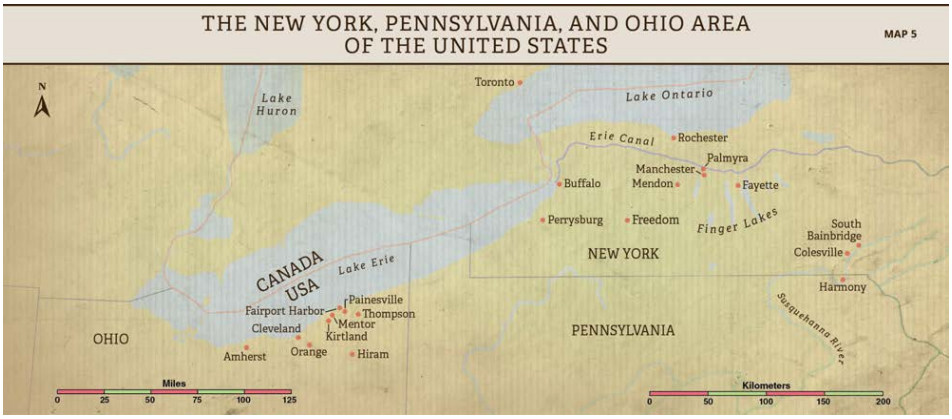
Doctrine and Covenants 100: Additional Historical Background

Freeman Nickerson lived in Perrysburg, New York, and was baptized in April 1833 with his wife, Huldah. Two months later, the Nickersons' son Moses visited them from Upper Canada and expressed interest in hearing the gospel. In September 1833, Freeman and Huldah traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, and asked the Prophet Joseph Smith to travel to New York and Upper Canada to preach the gospel to their family members. In response to their request, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney

Rigdon left with the Nickersons on October 5, 1833, arriving at their home in Perrysburg, New York, on October 12, 1833.

On the day they arrived in Perrysburg, the Prophet wrote in his journal, "I feel very well in my mind the Lord is with us but have much anxiety about my family" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1833,* 323; see pages 321–23). And on that same day, he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 100, containing assurances from the Lord. The Prophet and Sidney Rigdon then continued their journey to Canada and preached the gospel for more than a week, baptizing 14 people, including Moses Nickerson and his brother Eleazer.

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon returned home to their families in Kirtland on November 4, 1833, after which the Prophet wrote that his family was "all well according to the promise of the Lord, for which blessings I feel to thank his holy name" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 323; punctuation standardized).



Doctrine and Covenants 100

The Lord comforts and instructs Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon

Read Doctrine and Covenants 100, looking for how the Lord responded to the Prophet Joseph Smith's and Sidney Rigdon's concerns and the additional counsel and promises He gave them.

Doctrine and Covenants 100:1. "Your families are well; they are in mine hands"

By October 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith had left his home and family on a number of occasions to preach the gospel and conduct Church business, including taking two lengthy journeys to Jackson County, Missouri, and back. When he left for a mission to New York and Upper Canada with Sidney Rigdon on October 5, 1833, he had understandable concerns about leaving his family. He and Emma had had four young children die within the first six years of their marriage, and in October 1833, Joseph and Emma had two young children at home—Julia, who was two years old, and Joseph III, who was nearly one year old. The Prophet was also

anxious for the safety of his family because opposition to the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, was increasing. (See Eric Smith, "A Mission to Canada," in *Revelations in Context,* 202–3, or history.lds.org.) The Prophet's anxiety for his family was calmed when the Lord assured him and Sidney, "Your families are well; they are in mine hands" (D&C 100:1).

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency gave the following comforting counsel and promise to those who serve the Lord:

"As we give devoted service to [the Lord], He draws closer to those we love in our families. Every time I have been called in the Lord's service to move or to leave my family, I have come to see that the Lord was blessing my wife and my children. …

"You remember the Lord's promise to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon when they were away from their families on His errands: 'My friends Sidney and Joseph, your families are well; they are in mine hands, and I will do with them as seemeth me good; for in me there is all power' [D&C 100:1]. …

"My promise to you who pray and serve the Lord cannot be that you will have every blessing you may wish for yourself and your family. But I can promise you that the Savior will draw close to you and bless you and your family with what is best. You will have the comfort of His love and feel the answer of His drawing closer as you reach out your arms in giving service to others. As you bind up the wounds of those in need and offer the cleansing of His Atonement to those who sorrow in sin, the Lord's power will sustain you. His arms are outstretched with yours to succor and bless the children of our Heavenly Father, including those in your family" ("Come unto Me," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2013, 24).

Why might this promise from President Eyring regarding the families of those who are called to serve in the Lord's work be comforting and encouraging?

Doctrine and Covenants 100:3–4. "An effectual door shall be opened … for the salvation of souls"

Beginning in early 1833, missionaries visited western New York and baptized many converts (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 321). During their one-month mission to upstate New York and Upper Canada, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to open "an effectual door" as they preached the gospel to many individuals (D&C 100:3). Moses Nickerson, the son of Freeman Nickerson, was baptized after hearing the gospel message from these missionaries. In 1836, Elder Parley P. Pratt returned to the same area of Upper Canada to preach the gospel. Moses Nickerson provided Elder Pratt with a letter of introduction, which Elder Pratt used to meet John Taylor, who would become the third President of the Church. (See Smith, "A Mission to Canada," in *Revelations in Context,* 206, or history.lds.org.)

Doctrine and Covenants 100:5–8. "Speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts"

The Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to preach the gospel by speaking "the thoughts that [He would] put into [their] hearts" (D&C 100:5). The Lord then promised, "For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say" (D&C 100:6), echoing the promise He had made to His disciples during His mortal ministry (see Matthew 10:19–20).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how the Lord puts thoughts into our hearts: "It is the Holy Ghost that bears witness of your words when you teach and testify. It is the Holy Ghost that, as you speak in hostile venues, puts into your heart what you should say and fulfills the Lord's promise that 'you shall not be confounded before men' (D&C 100:5)" ("The Power of Covenants," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 22).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Trust the Lord. He is the Good Shepherd. He knows His sheep, and His sheep know His voice; and today the voice of the Good Shepherd is your voice and my voice. …

"You don't have to be an outgoing person or an eloquent, persuasive teacher. If you have an abiding love and hope within you, the Lord has promised if you 'lift up your voices unto this people [and] speak the thoughts that [He] shall put into your hearts, … you shall not be confounded before men;

"'[And] it shall be given you … in the very moment, what ye shall say' (D&C 100:5–6)" ("Put Your Trust in the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2013, 44).

Ponder occasions when the Lord has helped you know what to say as you shared the gospel. Consider ways you can share your testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

Doctrine and Covenants 100:9–11. "A spokesman unto this people"

In fulfillment of a prophecy recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Lord appointed Sidney Rigdon to be "a spokesman" for the Prophet Joseph Smith (see 2 Nephi 3:17–18; D&C 100:9–11). **President George Q. Cannon** (1827–1901) of the First Presidency said: "Those who knew Sidney Rigdon know how wonderfully God inspired him, and with what wonderful eloquence he declared the word of God to the people. He was a mighty man in the hands of God, as a spokesman, as long as the prophet lived, or up to a short time before his death" ("Discourse by Prest. George Q. Cannon," *Deseret News,* Apr. 23, 1884, 210).

While Sidney was to be "a spokesman" for the Prophet, Joseph Smith was to be "a revelator" unto Sidney, and in this way Sidney Rigdon was to "know the certainty of all things pertaining to the things of [the Lord's] kingdom on the earth" (D&C 100:11). Sadly, it was this calling as "spokesman" that Sidney Rigdon used to falsely claim the right to be "a guardian to the people," or the person who should lead the Church, in the weeks following the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith (see *History of the Church,* 7:229–30).

Doctrine and Covenants 100:13–17. "I will raise up unto myself a pure people"

In late August 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith sent Orson Hyde and John Gould to Jackson County, Missouri, with letters and other documents to comfort the suffering Church members there. These two men returned to Kirtland, Ohio, on November 25, 1833, with the unfortunate news that attacks on the Saints in Jackson County had resumed. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March, 1834,* 325, note 39.)

On October 12, 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith had received a promise from the Lord that Zion would be redeemed after a season of chastening (see D&C 100:13). Such chastening was the means of preparing "a pure people" who would "serve [the Lord] in righteousness" (D&C 100:16). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "For the Church, the scriptures suggest both an accelerated sifting and accelerated spiritual and numerical growth—with all this preceding the time when the people of God will be 'armed with righteousness'—not weapons—and when the Lord's glory will be poured out upon them (1 Nephi 14:14; see also 1 Peter 4:17; D&C 112:25). The Lord is determined to have a tried, pure, and proven people (see D&C 101:4; 100:16; 136:31), and 'there is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it' (Abraham 3:17)" ("For I Will Lead You Along," *Ensign,* May 1988, 8).

Reread Doctrine and Covenants 100:15. Think of specific changes you can make that will help you better "walk uprightly" before the Lord. Write a goal to implement one of these changes so that you can more fully invite the promised blessing into your life that "all things shall work together for [your] good."

CHAPTER 39

Doctrine and Covenants 101

Introduction and Timeline

In late 1833, mobs attacked Church members in Jackson County, Missouri, and forced them from their homes. When news of the violence reached the Prophet Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, he grieved for the Missouri Saints and pled with the Lord to return them to their lands and homes. On December 16–17, 1833, the Lord revealed to the Prophet why He had allowed His Saints to suffer. This revelation, which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 101, also included counsel and words of comfort regarding "the redemption of Zion" (D&C 101:43).

July 23, 1833

Under threat of mob violence, Church leaders in Missouri signed an agreement that all Mormons would leave Jackson County by April 1, 1834.

October 20, 1833

Church leaders in Missouri announced that the Saints intended to remain in Jackson County and defend their property rights.

October 31–November 8, 1833

Mobs attacked Mormon settlements in Jackson County, burning homes and forcing the Saints to leave the county.

November 25, 1833

The Prophet Joseph Smith learned that mob violence had expelled the Saints from Jackson County.

December 16–17, 1833

Doctrine and Covenants 101 was received.

Think of a time when you were chastised or corrected. How did you respond? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 101, look for doctrine and principles that can guide you when you experience chastening or correction from the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 101: Additional Historical Background

Due to mob violence against the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, during the summer of 1833, Church leaders there were forced to sign an agreement that half of the Saints would leave Jackson County by January 1, 1834, and the remainder would leave by April 1, 1834. However, in August 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith and a council of Church leaders in Kirtland, Ohio, advised the Missouri Saints not to leave their homes and to ask the state government for help. In early October 1833, elders Orson Hyde and William W. Phelps met with Missouri governor Daniel Dunklin and requested help and protection for the Saints in Jackson County. The governor advised the Saints to seek help through the local courts. After Church leaders filed their suit in the Jackson County courts, the Saints prepared to defend themselves. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 386; *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual,* 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 134–35.)



In early November 1833, a mob attacked the Saints in the Whitmer Settlement, west of the Big Blue River in Jackson County, Missouri.

On the evening of October 31, 1833, a mob of about 50 men on horses raided the Whitmer Settlement, west of Independence, Missouri. They went to the home of Church leader David Whitmer and "drew his wife out of the house by the hair of the head and proceeded to throw down the house" (affidavit of Orrin [Oren] Porter Rockwell, in *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict,* ed. Clark V. Johnson [1992], 526). They continued their violence until they had "unroofed and partly demolished ten dwelling houses." Church members fled into the woods, but not before the mob "whipt and beat, in a savage manner, several of the men." The next evening a mob in Independence "commenced stoning houses, breaking down doors and windows, [and] destroying furniture." Later that night they "split open" the doors of the Church-owned Gilbert and Whitney store in Independence and threw the wares out into the street. (Parley P. Pratt, "History of the Late Persecution," in *Mormon Redress Petitions,* 65–66.)

A few days later, approximately 60 armed Missourians gathered outside a Church member's home and threatened violence. A group of Latter-day Saints rushed to the scene to defend their settlement. As each side exchanged gunshots, two Missourians and one Church member were killed, with many more wounded on both sides. Later, exaggerated rumors spread throughout the county that the Saints had taken Independence with the Indians as their allies. Missourians heard other false rumored reports of Church members threatening death to citizens who had participated in hostilities against them. Though these rumors were unsupported, Missouri vigilantes used these allegations as a reason to call out the militia. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others [2012], 217–18; affidavit of Orrin Porter Rockwell, in *Mormon Redress Petitions,* 527–28.)

Recognizing that they were outnumbered and fearing that many of the Saints could be killed, the Church members sought for a peaceful resolution. Colonel Thomas Pitcher of the militia, who had taken an active part in the mob violence, forced the Saints to give up their weapons and leave the county immediately. However, even after the Saints pledged to leave, armed vigilantes marched throughout the county, expelling the Saints by force. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* 219–21.)

The exiled Saints took refuge in temporary shelters along the north bank of the Missouri River in the midst of winter. Describing these awful conditions, Parley P. Pratt wrote:

"The shore [of the Missouri River] began to be lined on both sides of the ferry with men, women and children; goods, wagons, boxes, provisions, etc., while the ferry was constantly employed. … Hundreds of people were seen in every direction,

some in tents and some in the open air around their fires, while the rain descended in torrents. Husbands were inquiring for their wives, wives for their husbands; parents for children, and children for parents. Some had the good fortune to escape with their families, household goods, and some provisions; while others knew not the fate of their friends, and had lost all their goods. The scene was indescribable, and, I am sure, would have melted the hearts of any people on the earth, except our blind oppressors, and a blind and ignorant community. …

"… Every member of [our] society was driven from the county, and fields of corn were ravaged and destroyed; stacks of wheat burned, household goods plundered, and improvements and every kind of property destroyed" (*Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 102–3).

More than 1,000 Saints were driven from Jackson County, and more than 200 of their homes were burned.



Some of the displaced Saints from Jackson County, Missouri, lived from 1834–1836 near here on the Michael Arthur farm, south of Liberty in Clay County, Missouri.

When the Prophet Joseph Smith heard that the Saints had been driven out of Zion, he was greatly dismayed. In a letter to Church leaders in Missouri on December 10, 1833, the Prophet wrote: "I have always expected that Zion would suffer some affliction, from what I could learn from the commandments which have been given. … I know that Zion, in the own due time of the Lord will be redeemed; but how many will be the days of her purification, tribulation and affliction, the Lord has kept hid from my eyes; and when I enquire concerning this subject, the voice of the Lord is, Be still, and know that I am God! All those who suffer for my name shall reign with me, and he that layeth down his life for my sake, shall find it again. Now, there are two things of which I am ignorant, and the Lord will not shew them [unto] me; … why God hath suffered so great calamity to come upon Zion; and what the great moving cause of this great affliction is: And again, by what means

he will return her back to her inheritance" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 393, josephsmithpapers.org). The Prophet continued to inquire of God for answers, and on December 16–17, 1833, he received a revelation concerning Zion and the suffering of the Missouri Saints.





Doctrine and Covenants 101:1–21

The Lord explains why He allowed the Saints to suffer and offers counsel and comfort

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:1–8, looking for reasons the Lord allowed the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, to suffer persecution and affliction.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:1–8. "I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them"

The Lord revealed that the Missouri Saints were afflicted and driven from Jackson County because of "their transgressions," which included "contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires" (D&C 101:2, 6; see also

D&C 105:2–9). Consequently, they had "polluted their inheritances" in the land of Zion (D&C 101:6).

Some of the Missouri Saints had transgressed the Lord's commandments by rushing to Jackson County contrary to the Lord's counsel to the Saints not to gather "in haste, lest there be confusion, which bringeth pestilence" (D&C 63:24). Only those who had prepared themselves materially and spiritually and who, upon arrival, would live the law of consecration were supposed to go to Zion. Moreover, they were to be called, or "appointed by the Holy Spirit to go unto Zion," and upon arrival they were to present "a certificate from three elders of the church, or a certificate from the bishop," indicating their worthiness and good standing (D&C 72:24–25). John Corrill, a Church leader in Missouri before his apostasy from the faith, wrote that many Saints did not follow these instructions, "for the church got crazy to go up to Zion. … The rich were afraid to send up their money to purchase lands, and the poor crowded up in numbers, without having any places provided, contrary to the advice of the bishop and others" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847,* 146). The rapid influx of Latter-day Saints into Jackson County alarmed the local Missourians, who feared they would lose economic and political power if the Saints became the majority in the county.

Disunity among the Church members in Missouri occurred when they disregarded the law of consecration by refusing to use their material wealth to care for the poor and build up Zion. **President Lorenzo Snow** (1814–1901) explained: "The Saints in Jackson county and other localities, refused to comply with the order of consecration, consequently they were allowed to be driven from their inheritances; and should not return until they were better prepared to keep the law of God, by being more perfectly taught in reference to their duties, and learn through experience the necessity of obedience" ("Discourse," *Deseret News,* Jan. 7, 1874, 772).

Over many months, some of the Church leaders in Missouri had been criticizing and finding fault with the Prophet Joseph Smith and Church leaders in Ohio (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 364). In a letter to William W. Phelps dated January 11, 1833, Joseph Smith lamented certain accusations made by Phelps and A. Sidney Gilbert: "Our hearts are greatly grieved at the spirit which is breathed both in your letter [and] that of [Brother Sidney Gilbert] the very spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestilence, and if it is not detected [and] driven from you it will ripen Zion for the threatened Judgments of God" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 367; spelling standardized).

Several days later Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith, appointed by "a Conference of Twelve High Priests," wrote a letter to Bishop Edward Partridge, his counselors, and the Saints in Missouri. They began their letter by quoting the Lord's commandment that the Saints "are to be upbraided for their evil hearts of unbelief; and [the] brethren in Zion for their rebellion against [Joseph Smith]" (D&C 84:76). They referred to a letter from Sidney Gilbert that contained "low, dark, [and] blind insinuations." They also condemned another letter that implied the Prophet was

"seeking after Monarchal power, and authority." Because the Missouri Saints had committed these transgressions and others, Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith, with "feelings of the greatest anxiety for the welfare of Zion," warned them that "the judgments of God … must fall upon [Zion] except she repent and purify herself before the Lord." (In *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* 373–75.)

Doctrine and Covenants 101:3–5. "Those who will not endure chastening … cannot be sanctified"

Despite the Saints' transgressions, the Lord said He would still "own them," promising they would be His when He comes again to "make up [His] jewels" (D&C 101:3; see also Malachi 3:17). The Lord's "jewels" refer to His faithful Saints, who are precious to Him and will be set apart as His treasure when He returns. To be prepared to become His jewels, the Saints needed to be "chastened and tried, even as Abraham" (D&C 101:4). Abraham's faith was severely tested when the Lord commanded him to sacrifice his son Isaac (see Genesis 22:1–13).

Similarly, in order to prove their faith and help them understand their need for repentance, the Lord allowed the Saints in Missouri to be afflicted and chastened. He explained, "All those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified" (D&C 101:5). To be sanctified is to become pure, holy, and free from sin. **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained God's purposes for chastening His children:

"Divine chastening has at least three purposes: (1) to persuade us to repent, (2) to refine and sanctify us, and (3) at times to redirect our course in life to what God knows is a better path. …

"… If we are open to it, needed correction will come in many forms and from many sources. It may come in the course of our prayers as God speaks to our mind and heart through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:2). It may come in the form of prayers that are answered no or differently than we had expected. Chastening may come as we study the scriptures and are reminded of deficiencies, disobedience, or simply matters neglected.

"Correction can come through others, especially those who are God-inspired to promote our happiness. Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, bishops, and others have been put into the Church today, just as anciently, 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:12)" ("As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 98–99).

Ponder a time when you recognized the sanctifying and refining influence of Heavenly Father's correction in your life.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:9–15, looking for the Lord's message of hope to the Missouri Saints.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:9. "My bowels are filled with compassion towards them"

Anciently, the bowels were viewed as the center of a person's emotions, especially that of compassion and love (see Genesis 43:30; Colossians 3:12; 1 John 3:17; 3 Nephi 17:6; see also D&C 101:9; 121:3–4, 45). "In the scriptures, compassion means literally 'to suffer with.' It also means to show sympathy, pity, and mercy for another" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Compassion," scriptures.lds.org). Although the Church members in Missouri had been chastened because of their transgressions, the Lord had compassion on them. He reassured them that He had not rejected them as His people and that "in the day of wrath," or during their chastening, He would "remember mercy" (D&C 101:9). Jesus Christ took upon Himself our "pains and afflictions and temptations," as well as our "infirmities [through His atoning sacrifice], that his bowels may be filled with mercy" and compassion toward us (Alma 7:11–12). As we come unto Him, repent, and strive with all our hearts to obey His gospel, the Savior will show compassion, extend mercy, and forgive our sins.

How might knowing that the Lord has compassion toward you even when you sin give you hope and help you to faithfully endure divine chastening?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:16–21, looking for what the Lord taught about the establishment of Zion and her stakes.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:16. "Be still and know that I am God"

The scriptures contain marvelous prophecies regarding the building up of Zion and the city of New Jerusalem as a place of refuge and safety (see Isaiah 35:10; Ether 13:5–8; D&C 42:9; 45:66–71). For this reason the early Saints were eager to gather to Jackson County, Missouri, to begin establishing Zion as the Lord had commanded. When the Saints were later driven from their lands and homes in Jackson County, they were devastated and uncertain about the future of Zion. Amid their grief and confusion, the Lord counseled them to "be still" and trust in Him (D&C 101:16).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) told of a time when he was comforted by the principles recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 101:16:

"Recently while wrestling in my mind with a problem I thought to be of serious consequence I went to my knees in prayer. There came into my mind a feeling of peace and the words of the Lord, 'Be still and know that I am God.' I turned to the scripture and read this reassuring statement spoken to the Prophet Joseph Smith 150 years ago: 'Let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God.' (D&C 101:16.)

"God is weaving His tapestry according to His own grand design. All flesh is in His hands. It is not our prerogative to counsel Him. It is our responsibility and our opportunity to be at peace in our minds and in our hearts, and to know that he is God, that this is his work, and that he will not permit it to fail.

"We have no need to fear. We have no need to worry. We have no need to speculate. Our imperative need is to be found doing our duty individually in the callings which have come to us. And because, for the most part, the Latter-day Saints are walking in faith and working with conviction, the Church is consistently growing ever stronger" ("He Slumbers Not, nor Sleeps," *Ensign,* May 1983, 6).

Ponder times in your life when you were comforted because you felt you were in God's hands.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:17–21. Zion and her stakes will be established

Despite the Saints' expulsion from Jackson County, Missouri, the Lord reaffirmed that "Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered" (D&C 101:17). Although the stakes of Zion have spread over the face of the earth, "the center place," Jackson County, continues to be designated by the Lord as the location for the city of New Jerusalem (see D&C 57:1–3; 101:17, 20–21).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "There is no occasion for uncertainty or anxiety about the building up of Zion—meaning the New Jerusalem—in the last days. The Lord once offered his people the chance to build that Zion from which the law shall go forth to all the world. They failed. Why? Because they were unprepared and unworthy, as is yet the case with those of us who now comprise the kingdom. When we as a people are prepared and worthy, the Lord will again command us and the work will go forward—on schedule, before the Second Coming, and at the direction of the President of the Church. Until then, none of us need take any personal steps toward gathering to Missouri or preparing for a landed-inheritance there. Let us, rather, learn the great concepts involved and make ourselves worthy for any work the Lord may lay upon us in our day and time. Some things must yet precede the building up of Jackson County" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 586).

Doctrine and Covenants 101:22–42

The Lord describes conditions during the Millennium and declares His covenant people to be "the salt of the earth"

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:22–34, looking for truths the Lord taught about His Second Coming and the Millennium.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:22–34. Nature of life during the Millennium

After being expelled from Jackson County, the Saints in Missouri were scattered throughout the surrounding region. The Lord commanded them to "gather together, and stand in holy places" (D&C 101:22). A holy place is not just a temple or chapel but can be any place where a person enjoys the Spirit of God. Today, the Lord's people of His Church gather in holy places such as branches, wards, and stakes; families and homes; and temples. One reason we gather to these holy places is to "prepare for the revelation which is to come" (D&C 101:23). This refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, when all people will see Him. This global

event will be witnessed not only by those living in mortality, but also by the righteous who have died, who will be resurrected at that time (see D&C 61:39; 63:49–50; 101:35).



"All they who call on my name, and worship me according to mine everlasting gospel, should gather together, and stand in holy places" (D&C 101:22).

The Savior's Second Coming will usher in the 1,000-year period known as the Millennium. The earth will be cleansed of its corruption and be transformed, or renewed, so that the "knowledge and glory [of the Lord] may dwell upon [it]" (see D&C 101:24–25; see also Articles of Faith 1:10). The Millennium will also be a time of great peace. "Enmity," or hatred and violence, among animal life and mortal men and women will cease (see Isaiah 11:6–9; D&C 101:26). The power of God and the righteousness of those who remain on earth will bind Satan so that he "shall not have power to tempt any [of God's children]" (see Revelation 20:2–3; 1 Nephi 22:26; D&C 101:28).

Sorrow because of the death of loved ones will also cease. Although mortality will continue on the earth during the Millennium, children will not die prematurely but will grow old and live to "the age of a tree" (D&C 101:30; see also D&C 63:50–51). Prophesying of the Millennium, the prophet Isaiah suggested that the age of a tree is about "an hundred years" (see Isaiah 65:20, 22). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) taught that at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, "a change … will come over all who remain on the earth; they will be quickened so that they will not be subject unto death until they are old. Men [and women] shall die when they are one hundred years of age, and the change shall be made suddenly to the immortal state. Graves will not be made during this thousand years" (*The Way to Perfection* [1970], 298–99). Thus, when people die during the Millennium, they will pass instantaneously, or "in the twinkling of an eye," from mortality to a glorious resurrected state (D&C 101:31).

Doctrine and Covenants 101:32–34. "The Lord … shall reveal all things"

Explaining how "the Lord … shall reveal all things" when He comes again (D&C 101:33), **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: "All things are to be revealed in the millennial day. The sealed part of the Book of Mormon will come forth; the brass plates will be translated; the writings of Adam and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and prophets without number will be revealed. We shall learn a thousand times more about the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus than we now know. We shall learn great mysteries of the kingdom that were not even known to those of old who walked and talked with the Eternal One. We shall learn the details of the creation and the origin of man." Elder McConkie concluded that in the millennial day, "nothing in or on or over the earth will be withheld" (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 676; see also 2 Nephi 30:15–18; D&C 121:26–28).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:35–38, looking for what the Lord taught about those who faithfully endure persecution for His sake.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:35–38. "They who suffer persecution for my name"

The Saints in Missouri experienced tremendous difficulties resulting from intense religious persecution. The Lord promised them, "All they who suffer persecution for my name, and endure in faith, though they are called to lay down their lives for my sake yet shall they partake of all this glory" (D&C 101:35; see also D&C 101:26–34).

President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency related an account of how two faithful Church leaders living in Mexico in the early 1900s faithfully endured persecution for the Savior's sake:

"Rafael Monroy was the president of the small San Marcos Mexico Branch, and Vicente Morales was his first counselor. On July 17, 1915, they were apprehended by the Zapatistas [a Mexican revolutionary group]. They were told they would be spared if they would give up their weapons and renounce their strange religion. Brother Monroy told his captors that he did not have any weapons and simply drew from his pocket his Bible and Book of Mormon. He said, 'Gentlemen, these are the only arms I ever carry; they are the arms of truth against error.'

"When no arms were found, the brethren were cruelly tortured to make them divulge where arms were hidden. But there were no arms. They were then taken under guard to the outskirts of the little town, where their captors stood them up by a large ash tree in front of a firing squad. The officer in charge offered them freedom if they would forsake their religion and join the Zapatistas, but Brother Monroy replied, 'My religion is dearer to me than my life, and I cannot forsake it.'

"They were then told that they were to be shot and asked if they had any request to make. Brother Rafael requested that he be permitted to pray before he was executed. There, in the presence of his executioners, he kneeled down and, in a voice that all could hear, prayed that God would bless and protect his loved ones and care for the little struggling branch that would be left without a leader. As he finished his prayer, he used the words of the Savior when He hung upon the cross and prayed for his executioners: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' [Luke 23:34]. With that the firing squad shot both Brother Monroy and Brother Morales" ("Discipleship," *Ensign,* Nov. 2006, 21–22).



Rafael Monroy with his daughter, wife, mother, and sisters. He was a Church leader in Mexico and was tortured and shot to death by a firing squad along with Vicente Morales for refusing to deny their belief in the Church.

This account illustrates that even when faithful, Latter-day Saints are not always protected from persecution or death. Not all persecution is as intense or violent as that experienced by the Saints in Missouri or by these Church leaders in Mexico. For most people religious persecution comes in a variety of forms, including being reviled or belittled for one's religious convictions.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that Latter-day Saints must be careful not to persecute or be intolerant of others whose beliefs may differ from their own:

"We should all follow the gospel teachings to love our neighbor and avoid contention. Followers of Christ should be examples of civility. We should love all people, be good listeners, and show concern for their sincere beliefs. Though we may disagree, we should not be disagreeable. Our stands and communications on controversial topics should not be contentious. We should be wise in explaining and pursuing our positions and in exercising our influence. In doing so, we ask that others not be offended by our sincere religious beliefs and the free exercise of our religion. We encourage all of us to practice the Savior's Golden Rule: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them' (Matthew 7:12).

"… We should be persons of goodwill toward all, rejecting persecution of any kind, including persecution based on race, ethnicity, religious belief or nonbelief, and differences in sexual orientation" ("Loving Others and Living with Differences" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 27).

Consider examples of people in the scriptures or of people you know who suffered persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ. What can you learn from these individuals about how to respond to and faithfully endure persecution?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:39–42, looking for a truth the Lord taught by comparing covenant members of the Church to salt.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:39–42. "The salt of the earth and the savor of men"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 101, the Savior likened members of His Church to "the salt of the earth" (D&C 101:39; see also Matthew 5:13; 3 Nephi 12:13). **Elder Carlos E. Asay** (1926–1999) of the Seventy explained the symbolism of salt: "According to the historians, 'Salt at one time had religious significance, and was a symbol of purity. … Among many peoples, salt is still used as a sign of honor, friendship, and hospitality. …' (*The World Book Encyclopedia,* 1978, 17:69)" ("Salt of the Earth: Savor of Men and Saviors of Men," *Ensign,* May 1980, 42).

Under the Mosaic law, salt was added to sacrificial offerings, showing that salt is also associated with making covenants (see Leviticus 2:13). As "the salt of the earth," Church members should exemplify purity and faithfulness to the covenants they have entered into. The Lord calls His covenant people to "be the savor of men" (D&C 101:40). *Savor* refers to flavor or seasoning; salt improves the flavor and quality of food. *Savor* also refers to salt's unique preserving and healing properties. As "the savor of men," covenant members of the Church are to be a righteous influence in the world and help preserve, or save, others by bringing them to Jesus Christ and His everlasting gospel (see D&C 103:9–10). However, if Church members lose their "savor," they lose their ability to influence others for good and to lead them to the Savior.

Elder Carlos E. Asay further taught:

"A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination. …

"Flavor and quality flee a man when he contaminates his mind with unclean thoughts, desecrates his mouth by speaking less than the truth, and misapplies his strength in performing evil acts. …

"I would offer these simple guidelines … as the means to preserve one's savor: If it is not *clean,* do not think it; if it is not *true,* do not speak it; if it is not *good,* do not do it (see Marcus Aurelius, "The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," in *The Harvard Classics,* Charles W. Eliot, ed., New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1909, p. 211)" ("Salt of the Earth: Savor of Men and Saviors of Men," 42–43).

It is important to remember that, unlike salt, covenant members of the Church can regain their "savor," or purity and righteous attributes, through God's gift of repentance made available through Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

Whom do you know who exemplifies what it means to be "the salt of the earth and the savor of men" (D&C 101:39)? Consider what you can do to preserve or regain your "savor" so that you can be a greater influence on and blessing to others.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:43–75

The Lord gives the parable of the nobleman and the olive trees and admonishes the Saints to continue the work of gathering

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:43–62, looking for what the Lord taught about the redemption of Zion through the parable of the nobleman and the olive trees.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:43–62. The parable of the nobleman and the olive trees

The parable of the nobleman and the olive trees is unique to the Doctrine and Covenants, though it shares similarities with parables taught by Isaiah and Jesus Christ (see Isaiah 5:1–7; Matthew 21:33–46). The Lord used the parable to explain why the Saints had been driven from the land of Zion and to reveal His will concerning Zion's redemption.

The Lord compared the land of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri, to a choice piece of land owned by a nobleman. The nobleman's instruction to his servants to plant 12 olive trees upon this land can represent the Lord's commandment to the Saints to establish settlements in Zion (see D&C 57:8, 11, 14). Setting watchmen around the olive trees may represent the calling of Church leaders and officers to guide the Saints in Zion. Anciently, watchmen on a wall or tower had the responsibility to protect cities, as well as vineyards and fields, by warning of impending danger from enemy attacks (see Ezekiel 33:1–6). The scriptures liken the Lord's prophets and leaders to watchmen (see Isaiah 62:6; Jeremiah 6:17; Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7). Through revelation these watchmen are able to see the enemy from afar and can warn the Saints of coming danger.

The interpretation of the tower in the parable is not clear. It may represent the temple that the Lord commanded the Saints to build in Jackson County (see D&C 57:2–3; 84:1–5; 97:10–12). More broadly, the tower may represent Zion, which the Saints could build up only by obeying the Lord's commandments (see D&C 101:11–12; 105:3–6). In the parable, the servants of the nobleman "began to build a tower," but afterward "they became very slothful, and they hearkened not unto the commandments of their lord" (D&C 101:46, 50). Consequently, their enemies scattered them and destroyed their work.

In the parable, the nobleman commanded a servant to gather "the strength of [his] house" and go to the land of his vineyard and redeem it (D&C 101:55). The servant represents the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 103:21–22). In obedience to the Lord's commandment, the Prophet organized the Camp of Israel (later referred to as Zion's Camp) to redeem Zion and restore the Saints to their lands and homes (see D&C 103:29–40).

The parable foreshadowed that some time would elapse between the Camp of Israel and Zion's eventual redemption. When the servant asked the nobleman when the vineyard would be redeemed, the nobleman responded, "When I will" (see D&C 101:59–60). The parable concludes by saying that "after many days all things were fulfilled" (D&C 101:62). In a later revelation that disbanded the Camp of Israel, the Lord explained why the Saints were to "wait for a little season" for the redemption of Zion (D&C 105:9; see D&C 105:1–19).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:63–75, looking for what the Lord taught the Saints about the work of gathering.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:63–66. "I must gather together my people"

After giving the parable of the nobleman and the olive trees, the Lord explained His will "concerning all the churches," meaning all of the congregations of Latter-day Saints (D&C 101:63). He instructed the Saints to continue "gathering together" so that He could "build them up unto [His] name upon holy places" (D&C 101:64). The Lord promised to "gather together [His] people, according to the parable of the wheat and the tares" (D&C 101:65). Tares are harmful weeds that look similar to wheat when they are young, but they can be distinguished from wheat once they mature. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, the wheat represents faithful members of the Church and the tares represent the wicked who are scattered among them (see Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43; D&C 86:1–7).

The Lord likened the gathering of His people to the gathering of wheat into "garners" (D&C 101:65). Anciently, wheat was gathered into garners, or granaries, to safely store and protect it. While speaking about Alma 26:5, in which Ammon refers to "sheaves," or bundles of grain, being "gathered into the garners," **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "The garners are the holy temples" ("Honorably Hold a Name and Standing," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 97). Members of the Church receive protective blessings and are prepared for celestial glory and eternal life as they gather to the Lord's holy temples to receive saving ordinances and enter into covenants for themselves and on behalf of their ancestors.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught: "What was the object of gathering the … people of God in any age of the world? … The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 416).

For more explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7 in this manual.

In what ways has gathering to the temple to worship, serve, and receive saving ordinances helped protect and prepare you for eternal life with your Heavenly Father?

Doctrine and Covenants 101:76–101

The Lord counsels the Saints to seek ways to return to their homes in Missouri

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:76–80, looking for what the Lord taught about the Constitution of the United States.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:76–80. God established the Constitution of the United States

The Lord instructed the Missouri Saints to "importune," or appeal to, the government "for redress, and redemption" (D&C 101:76), meaning they should continue to seek justice and help in returning to their lands in Jackson County. He also explained that the laws of the Constitution of the United States "should be maintained for the rights and protection of all [people], according to just and holy principles;

"That every man may act in doctrine and principle … , according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment" (D&C 101:77–78).

"For this purpose," the Lord said, "I established the Constitution of [the United States], by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose" (D&C 101:80).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) expressed his gratitude and respect for the Constitution of the United States: "I reverence the Constitution of the United States as a sacred document. To me its words are akin to the revelations of God, for God has placed his stamp of approval on the Constitution of this land. I testify that the God of heaven selected and sent some of his choicest spirits to lay the foundation of this government as a prologue to the restoration of the gospel and the second coming of our Savior" ("The Constitution—A Glorious Standard," *Ensign,* May 1976, 93).

Doctrine and Covenants 101:78. Religious freedom and the Constitution of the United States

The persecution of the early Saints for their beliefs showed the importance of protecting religious freedom in order for the restored gospel to be established and eventually taken to all the earth. In December 1833, during a season of intense persecution against the Saints in Missouri, the Lord testified of His divine hand in the establishment of the Constitution and the rights and freedoms of religious liberty that it protected. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** explained:

"Coming to America to escape religious persecution, the original colonists—retaining their various religious persuasions—immediately set up their own separate systems of worship and reached out to condemn and persecute all others. Witches were burned and heretics persecuted as in the Old World. The American colonists had simply transported the traditions of a false and decadent Christendom to new shores. But the Revolutionary War and the need for national survival brought forth the Constitution with this provision: 'Congress shall make no

law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' Thus, religious freedom was almost thrust upon them by a power beyond their control, and the union of church and state was forever banned in the United States.

"That the Lord's hand was in all this is axiomatic [clear]. 'I established the Constitution of this land,' he tells us, 'by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose.' Why? That laws might be established and 'maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles; that every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.' (D&C 101:77–80" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith,* 679).

Doctrine and Covenants 101:78. "Moral agency" and religious freedom

The Lord revealed that "moral agency"—the power to choose and act for ourselves—is vital to our accountability and to our ability to "act in doctrine and principle" (D&C 101:78).

"Agency is essential in Heavenly Father's plan of salvation, and religious freedom ensures we can use our agency to live and share what we believe. Everyone needs to have that freedom, no matter what they believe.

"Yet despite its importance, religious freedom is increasingly under assault around the world. That's why the Apostles have spoken about this topic dozens of times in the last decade. As prophets, seers, and revelators, they recognize the need to defend religious freedom. Each of us has a role to play" ("Religious Freedom," LDS.org).



Religious freedom ensures that we can use our agency to live and share what we believe (see D&C 101:77–78).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "As we walk in the path of spiritual liberty in these last days, we must understand that the faithful use of our agency depends upon our having religious freedom. We already know that Satan does not want this freedom to be ours. He attempted to destroy moral agency in heaven, and now on earth he is fiercely undermining, opposing, and spreading confusion about religious freedom—what it is and why it is essential to our spiritual life and our very salvation" ("Preserving Agency, Protecting Religious Freedom," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2015, 111–12).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:81–101, looking for what the Lord instructed the Saints to do to receive help in returning to their lands and homes in Jackson County, Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:81–95. "I will liken them unto the parable of the woman and the unjust judge"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 101, the Lord repeated the parable found in the New Testament of the woman who continued to appeal to a judge until he granted her request (see D&C 101:81–84; see also Luke 18:1–8). He likened this parable to the Saints in Missouri in order to encourage them to continue to ask government leaders for help. The Saints were to seek justice, beginning with appealing to a judge, and then, if necessary, to the governor of Missouri, and finally, to the president of the United States (see D&C 101:85–88). The Lord said that if their pleas for help went unanswered, He would "arise and come forth out of his hiding place, and in his fury vex the nation" (D&C 101:89).

The Saints in Missouri followed the Lord's instructions and appealed to the courts in Jackson County "for redress" (D&C 101:76), or recompense for their lost properties. However, local judges and juries, who sided with those who drove the Saints from Jackson County, made it impossible for the Saints to receive redress from the courts (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 468–69).

The Saints "petitioned Missouri governor Daniel Dunklin to help restore church members to their property in Jackson County, to protect them from further violence until they were able to protect themselves, and to commence a court of inquiry into the violence against the Mormons." Governor Dunklin was willing to use state militia, or civilian soldiers, to escort Church members back to their homes, but he "indicated that he did not have the authority to keep a military force in Jackson County to protect the Mormons from possible attacks in the future" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 407). At that time local militias enforced law and order rather than modern-day police departments. Though Governor Dunklin had agreed to help the Saints regain their properties, in the end he did not provide the protection he had promised (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 334).

In April 1834, Church leaders sent a letter to the president of the United States, Andrew Jackson, asking him to send federal troops to Jackson County to protect the Saints' religious and property rights. In response, Secretary of War Lewis Cass sent Church leaders in Missouri a letter "stating that the president did not have the

right to send troops into Missouri to aid in the enforcement of state laws" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 396, note 441).

Despite repeated efforts, the Missouri Saints failed to receive protection and recompense from government authorities for the injustices they had suffered. The Lord promised that if this was the case, He would come forth and "vex the nation" (D&C 101:89), meaning He would pour out His judgments upon it.

Ponder what you have learned from the hardships experienced by the Saints in Missouri and the counsel the Lord gave them as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 101. Write down some of the principles that you have learned so that you can gain strength from them when you experience difficulties.

CHAPTER 40

Doctrine and Covenants 102; 104

Introduction and Timeline

From the time the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith had held conferences with elders and high priests to decide important Church matters. Later revelations further clarified the role and function of priesthood leaders in administering the Church (see D&C 107:59–100; see also D&C 107, section heading). In accordance with revelation given in November 1831 (see D&C 107:78–79; see also D&C 107, section heading), on February 17, 1834, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the first high council, which was patterned after the order of ancient councils he had seen in vision. The minutes (or notes) of that meeting were revised by the Prophet and are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 102.

In April 1832, in obedience to the Lord's commandment, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the United Firm to manage the Church's business operations. By early 1834 the United Firm faced serious financial problems, and in a meeting held on April 10, 1834, United Firm members decided to dissolve the organization. However, two weeks later the Prophet received a revelation, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104, in which the Lord directed that the firm be reorganized and counseled Church leaders to pay their debts and take care of the poor.

March–April 1832

Nine priesthood leaders were instructed by revelation to establish the United Firm (also known as the United Order) to oversee the Church's business operations (see D&C 78; 82).

Fall 1833

The Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, were forced out of their homes.

February 17, 1834

The Prophet Joseph Smith organized the first high council in Kirtland, Ohio. **Doctrine and Covenants 102 contains the minutes, or notes, of the meeting as revised by the Prophet.**

April 10, 1834

Due to financial difficulties, members of the United Firm decided to dissolve the organization.

April 23, 1834

Doctrine and Covenants 104 was received.

May 5, 1834

The Prophet Joseph Smith left Kirtland, Ohio, with the Camp of Israel (later referred to as Zion's Camp) to travel to Missouri.

"The Lord's Church is governed through councils. …

"Under the keys of priesthood leadership at each level, leaders counsel together for the benefit of individuals and families" (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 4.1).

As you read Doctrine and Covenants 102, consider why the Lord governs His Church and kingdom through councils.

Doctrine and Covenants 102: Additional Historical Background

After the Church was organized in April 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith followed the Lord's instructions to hold quarterly conferences to conduct Church business (see D&C 20:61–62). In addition to these conferences, smaller meetings were held periodically (also referred to as conferences or councils), in which elders and high priests helped decide important Church matters, including how to discipline

members who had committed serious sins. Participants in these conferences, or council meetings, varied depending on the meetings' location and who was available to attend (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 435–36; see also Joseph F. Darowski and James Goldberg, "Restoring the Ancient Order," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 208–9, or history.lds.org).

At a February 12, 1834, conference held in Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained, "I have never set before any council … the order in which a Council ought to be conducted, which, perhaps, has deprived the Councils of some, or many blessings" (reported by Orson Hyde as the clerk, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 429; spelling standardized). The Prophet then explained how council meetings functioned anciently: "In ancient days councils were conducted with such strict propriety, that no one was allowed to whisper, be weary, leave the room, or get uneasy in the least, until the voice of the Lord, by revelation, or by the voice of the Council by the spirit was obtained." He also pointed out that this contrasted with the way some council members had been behaving in the councils of the restored Church. Orson Hyde, who took notes during the meeting, wrote, "In our Councils, generally, one would be uneasy, another asleep, one praying another not; one's mind on the business of the Council and another thinking on something else." After the Prophet Joseph Smith mentioned this behavior, he encouraged the brethren to be more mindful and prayerful, especially as they "prepared to sit in judgment upon the soul of [another]" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 429–30).



In ancient days the Lord's servants met in councils to be directed and obtain the will of the Lord.

Five days later, on February 17, 1834, the Prophet Joseph Smith met with priesthood leaders and Church members at his home in Kirtland and organized 12 high priests into a "standing council" (D&C 102:3), meaning that the council was not to be adjourned after handling pressing issues but would continue "standing" as a council for future needs. This council was referred to as the "'Presidents Church Council' in Kirtland, Ohio—later known as the 'high council of the Church of Christ,' or the Kirtland high council" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 435). As part of his instruction to this group, the Prophet said that "he would show the order of Councils in ancient days as shown to him by vision." His vision of a Church council in Jerusalem presided over by the Apostle Peter and two counselors was used as the model for the newly organized council in Kirtland. (In *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 437.)



Home of Joseph and Emma Smith from 1834–1838 in Kirtland, Ohio

The following day, the Prophet worked hard to revise the February 17 council meeting minutes, or notes, which outlined the high council's organization and procedures to follow when disciplining Church members accused of transgression. On February 19 he presented his revisions to the new council, which accepted them as "a form, and constitution of the high Council of the Church of Christ hereafter." After giving additional instruction and setting apart council members, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that the council "was organized according to the ancient order, and also according to the mind of the Lord." (In *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 439). The revised minutes of the February 17, 1834, high council meeting are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 102.

In 1835, verses 30–32 were added to the minutes recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 102 in preparation for the printing of the Doctrine and Covenants. These verses illustrate a difference between decisions made by temporary high

councils organized in remote locations and those made by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which was organized in February 1835.



Doctrine and Covenants 102

The Prophet Joseph Smith organizes the first high council by revelation

Read Doctrine and Covenants 102:1–11, looking for the reason the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the first high council of the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 102:1–10. "Organize the high council of the church of Christ"

The Lord appointed high councils to deal with many administrative matters in the Church. The minutes, or notes of a meeting, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 102 indicate that one of the purposes of organizing the high council of the Church in Kirtland was to "[settle] important difficulties … which could not be settled by the church or the bishop's council to the satisfaction of the parties" (D&C 102:2). "Important difficulties" likely referred to situations in which members had committed serious transgressions, and "the bishop's council" referred to a

disciplinary council held by the bishop and his counselors (see D&C 107:69–75). Members who did not agree with the results of a bishop's council could appeal their cases to "the high council of the church of Christ" at Kirtland (D&C 102:1).

The high council described in Doctrine and Covenants 102 was different in some ways from stake high councils today. Whereas stake high councils today are presided over by a stake presidency, the Kirtland high council was presided over by "the president of the Church … assisted by two other presidents," meaning the First Presidency (D&C 102:9–10). Furthermore, the Kirtland high council served as the presiding high council for the Church and oversaw Church matters in Kirtland, Ohio, and the surrounding areas. To help regulate the Church in Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized another high council in July 1834, which was presided over by David Whitmer, as president, and his two counselors, John Whitmer and William W. Phelps (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2016], 88). After Joseph Smith moved to Missouri in 1838, he presided over the Missouri high council, which replaced the one in Kirtland as the presiding high council of the Church (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 440). As Church membership increased, stakes were eventually organized with stake presidencies and high councils to administer the Church within specific stake boundaries.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that through the high council "the will of the Lord might be known on all important occasions in the building up of Zion, and establishing truth in the earth" (reported by Frederick G. Williams as the clerk, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 93; spelling standardized). It is through councils that the Lord governs His kingdom on the earth and directs the work of salvation.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"God called a grand council in the premortal world to present His glorious plan for our eternal welfare. The Lord's church is organized with councils at every level, beginning with the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and extending to stake, ward, quorum, auxiliary, and family councils.

"President Stephen L Richards [of the First Presidency] said, 'The genius of our Church government is government through councils. … I have had enough experience to know the value of councils. Hardly a day passes but that I see … God's wisdom, in creating councils … to govern his Kingdom. …

"'I have no hesitancy in giving you the assurance, if you will confer in council as you are expected to do, God will give you solutions to the problems that confront you' (in Conference Report, Oct. 1953, p. 86)" ("Strength in Counsel," *Ensign,* Nov. 1993, 76).

Why would working through councils be an effective way to accomplish the Lord's work?

Doctrine and Covenants 102:11. "Other presidents have power to preside in his stead"

According to the council minutes recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 102, the President of the Church could preside over the council with or without the assistance of counselors. If the President himself was absent, "both or either" of his counselors could preside in his place (D&C 102:11). **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) explained how this provision applies to the First Presidency: "When the President is ill or not able to function fully in all of the duties of his office, his two Counselors together comprise a Quorum of the First Presidency. They carry on with the day-to-day work of the Presidency. In exceptional circumstances, when only one may be able to function, he may act in the authority of the office of the Presidency as set forth in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 102, verses 10–11" ("God Is at the Helm," *Ensign,* May 1994, 54).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 102:12–34, looking for the procedures the high council was to follow when holding a disciplinary council.

Doctrine and Covenants 102:12–26. Church disciplinary councils

In the Church today, a stake president has authority over Church discipline in his stake. A bishop, with his counselors and in consultation with the stake president, has the authority to hold disciplinary councils for members of his ward. If it is determined that the excommunication of a Melchizedek Priesthood holder may be necessary, then the stake president, with his counselors and the members of the stake high council, holds a stake disciplinary council. The minutes recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 102 give directions for a high council when it acts as a disciplinary council (see D&C 102:12–26).



Counselors assist the stake president, who holds important responsibility in presiding over stake disciplinary councils. This is the first stake presidency called in India.

Elder M. Russell Ballard explained the purposes of Church disciplinary councils:

"In the scriptures, the Lord has given direction concerning Church disciplinary councils. (See D&C 102.) The word *council* brings to mind a helpful proceeding—one of love and concern, with the salvation and blessing of the transgressor being the foremost consideration.

"Members sometimes ask why Church disciplinary councils are held. The purpose is threefold: to save the soul of the transgressor, to protect the innocent, and to safeguard the Church's purity, integrity, and good name" ("A Chance to Start Over: Church Disciplinary Councils and the Restoration of Blessings," *Ensign,* Sept. 1990, 15).

An official statement from the Church gives further explanation about Church discipline:

"The purpose of any counseling or discipline in the Church is to help the individual to obtain the peace and hope provided by Christ's Atonement. It should not be confused with punishment.

"Church discipline is administered at a local level by those who know the circumstances and the individual best and who can be at his or her side throughout the repentance process.

"The purpose of Church discipline is not to punish but to facilitate full repentance and fellowship for a person who has made serious mistakes. …

"God loves all His children and wants them to feel the peace and restoration that come from the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. Discipline at any level, from personal repentance and self-discipline to formal discipline in a Church setting, is intended to make us better, to help us overcome weakness and sin and to lift us as we seek to become true followers of Jesus Christ" ("Church Discipline," mormonnewsroom.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 102:12–17. "Cast lots by numbers"

The scriptures contain examples of casting lots, which was "a way of selecting or eliminating several options of a choice, often done by choosing one slip of paper or piece of wood from among several" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Lots," scriptures.lds.org; see also Matthew 27:35; Acts 1:23–26; 1 Nephi 3:11). In Church stake disciplinary councils today, high councilors "cast lots" by randomly selecting an object (such as a slip of paper) with a number from 1 to 12 on it (see D&C 102:12). According to Doctrine and Covenants 102:17, "those councilors who draw even numbers … are to stand up in behalf of the accused, and prevent insult and injustice," meaning that the accused are to be fairly represented.

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that "it was not the order of heaven in ancient Councils to plead for and against the guilty as in our judicial Courts." Rather, when a high councilor speaks in a disciplinary council, he "should speak precisely according to evidence and according to the teaching of the spirit of the Lord." High councilors were not to "attempt to screen the guilty when his guilt was manifest." Instead, council members assigned to stand up in behalf of the accused were "to plead his cause, in order that his case might be fairly presented before the President [of the high council] that a decision might be rendered according to truth and righteousness" (reported by Orson Hyde as the clerk, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 437; spelling standardized). Thus, the objective of a disciplinary council is to seek after truth through the Spirit of the Lord and to let fairness and justice guide its proceedings. In this way Church disciplinary councils help "to save the soul of the transgressor, to protect the innocent, and to safeguard the Church's purity, integrity, and good name" (M. Russell Ballard, "A Chance to Start Over: Church Disciplinary Councils and the Restoration of Blessings," 15).

Doctrine and Covenants 102:19, 23. "Inquire and obtain the mind of the Lord by revelation"

Although the high councilors in a stake disciplinary council offer insight and the stake president and his counselors privately confer, it is left to the stake president, the president of the council, to decide the outcome of the matter (see D&C 102:19). As the stake president considers the details of the case and the Church's doctrine and policy, he may seek clarifying revelation from the Lord. It is important to remember that in the context of the first high council, the "president" referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 102:23 was the Prophet Joseph Smith, the President of the Church, who had the authority and priesthood keys to receive revelation to clarify Church doctrine. In the Church today, bishops and stake presidents hold priesthood keys that allow them to inquire of the Lord and obtain revelation when deciding the outcomes of ward or stake disciplinary councils.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: "In times of disciplinary councils, the three brethren of the bishopric, or the three brethren of the stake presidency, or the three brethren of the presidency of the Church, sit together, discuss matters together, pray together, in the process of reaching a decision. I wish to assure you, my brethren, that I think there is never a judgment rendered until after prayer has been had. Action against a member is too serious a matter to result from the judgment of men alone, and particularly of one man alone. There must be the guidance of the Spirit, earnestly sought for and then followed, if there is to be justice" ("In … Counsellors There Is Safety," *Ensign,* Nov. 1990, 50).

Based on your study of Doctrine and Covenants 102, how do disciplinary councils benefit and bless the Church and its members?

Doctrine and Covenants 104: Additional Historical Background

In March and April of 1832, the Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith and a small group of priesthood leaders in Ohio and Missouri to organize the United Firm (also referred to as the United Order). They covenanted to consecrate property to the Church and to work together to manage the Church's storehouses and printing business (see D&C 78:1–3; 82:11–12). In addition, United Firm members "supervised farms and residential real estate, an ashery, a tannery, a stone quarry, a sawmill, and a brick kiln" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2013], 498). The profits made from these businesses were to be used to finance the work of building Zion as well as to provide income to United Firm members (see D&C 82:17–19).

By April 1834 the United Firm was experiencing serious financial problems. Because of mob violence in Missouri in 1833, William W. Phelps's printing office in Jackson County had been destroyed and Sidney Gilbert was forced to close his storehouse. Consequently, neither the printing office nor the store could produce income for the firm, but the firm still had to repay the debts it had acquired to establish and supply these businesses. In Ohio, United Firm members increasingly became indebted to New York companies as they borrowed money to supply the

Kirtland storehouse and to purchase land and a new printing press in Kirtland. In addition, some of the firm's members "manifest[ed] a covetous spirit toward the firm's property for which they were responsible" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 20). Because of these difficulties, "members of the Kirtland branch of the United Firm met on 10 April 1834 and decided 'that the firm should be [dissolved] and each one' receive a stewardship, or property, to oversee and manage" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 21; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* ed. Dean C. Jessee and others [2008], 38). About two weeks later the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104, which contained further instructions from the Lord regarding the United Firm and its properties.

For more information concerning the United Firm, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 78 and 82 in chapters 29 and 30 in this manual.

Note: "In later editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, the United Firm was called the 'United Order,' and code names were inserted in place of the participants' names. In addition, language about the firm's purpose was changed so that it referred more vaguely to meeting the needs of the poor. This was done to protect the identity of those involved in the firm and to keep its purposes confidential. The names of the individuals were restored to the revelations in the 1980s, but the firm is still referred to as the United Order in the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants" (Matthew C. Godfrey, "Newel K. Whitney and the United Firm," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and James Goldberg [2016], 146, or history.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 104:1–77

The Lord gives instructions concerning the United Firm

Read Doctrine and Covenants 104:1–10, looking for the Lord's promises to members of the United Firm who kept their covenants and His warnings to United Firm members who broke their covenants.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:1–2. "Blessed with a multiplicity of blessings"

When the United Firm was established, its members covenanted to consecrate their property to the firm and to work in unity to build up Zion (see D&C 78:11–12; 82:11–12, 15). Later, the Lord gave them a "promise immutable and unchangeable," or absolute and binding, "that inasmuch as [they] were faithful [to their covenants] they should be blessed with a multiplicity of blessings" (D&C 104:2). **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles listed some of the many blessings that Church members can receive as they make and faithfully keep their covenants with the Lord:

"A covenant is an agreement between God and man, an accord whose terms are set by God (see Bible Dictionary, "Covenant," 651). In these divine agreements, God binds Himself to sustain, sanctify, and exalt us in return for our commitment to serve Him and keep His commandments. …

"… As we walk in obedience to the principles and commandments of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we enjoy a continual flow of blessings promised by God in His covenant with us. Those blessings provide the resources we need to act rather than simply be acted upon as we go through life. …

"In the covenant path we find a steady supply of gifts and help. … We are part of a covenant people, a community of Saints who encourage, sustain, and minister to one another. …

"… Our covenants … produce the faith necessary to persevere and to do all things that are expedient in the Lord. Our willingness to take upon us the name of Christ and keep His commandments requires a degree of faith, but as we honor our covenants, that faith expands. …

"… Our covenant commitment to Him permits our Heavenly Father to let His divine influence, 'the power of godliness' (D&C 84:20), flow into our lives. He can do that because by our participation in priesthood ordinances we exercise our agency and elect to receive it. …

"Divine covenants make strong Christians. I urge each one to qualify for and receive all the priesthood ordinances you can and then faithfully keep the promises you have made by covenant. In times of distress, let your covenants be paramount and let your obedience be exact. Then you can ask in faith, nothing wavering, according to your need, and God will answer. He will sustain you as you work and watch. In His own time and way He will stretch forth his hand to you, saying, 'Here am I' " ("The Power of Covenants," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 20–22).

Think about some of the blessings you have received as you faithfully tried to keep your covenants with the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:3–10. "Some of my servants … have broken the covenant through covetousness"

The Lord chastened some members of the United Firm who "[broke] the covenant through covetousness, and with feigned words" (D&C 104:4). "Feigned words" are words that are dishonest or that conceal a person's true intent, and to *covet* means "to envy someone or to have an excessive desire for something" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Covet," scriptures.lds.org). The Apostle Paul taught that covetousness is a form of "idolatry" (see Colossians 3:5). Setting our hearts upon the things of the world prevents us from being completely loyal and devoted to the Lord and His kingdom.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles warned against the dangers of covetousness: "Brothers and sisters, beware of covetousness. It is one of the great afflictions of these latter days. It creates greed and resentment. Often it leads to bondage, heartbreak, and crushing, grinding debt" ("Earthly Debts, Heavenly Debts," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 40).

The Lord warned members of the United Firm that if they violated their covenants and did not repent, they would be "cut off," or excommunicated from the Church, and "deliver[ed] … over unto the buffetings of Satan" (see D&C 104:8–10). **Elder**

Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote that "to be turned over to the *buffetings of Satan* is to be given into his hands; it is to be turned over to him with all the protective power of the priesthood, of righteousness, and of godliness removed, so that Lucifer is free to torment, persecute, and afflict such a person without let or hindrance. When the bars are down, the cuffs and curses of Satan, both in this world and in the world to come, bring indescribable anguish typified by burning fire and brimstone" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 108).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 104:11–18, looking for what each member of the United Firm was to be given and the Lord's purpose for doing so.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:11–14. "Appoint every man his stewardship"

A steward is someone who manages the property or affairs of someone else. Because the Lord created the earth and everything on it, "all things" belong to Him—the land, its resources, and His children who dwell on the earth (see D&C 104:13–14, 55–56). Since all things belong to the Lord, we are His stewards. Based on this principle, the Lord instructed that each member of the United Firm be given an individual stewardship, which would be allotted from the properties managed by the United Firm. In this way the Lord made each member of the firm accountable for the management and use of the resources He entrusted to him. Similarly, the Lord will hold each of us accountable for our use of the earth's resources and the degree to which we fulfill the responsibilities He gives us.

For more information regarding stewardships and accountability for stewardships, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 51:19 and 72:2–3 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:15–16. "It must needs be done in mine own way"

The Lord intends to "provide for [His] Saints, … but it must needs be done in [His] own way" rather than according to the ways of the world (D&C 104:15–16). The Lord revealed what His way is when He gave the Saints the law of His gospel, which included the law of consecration and the principles of stewardship and personal accountability (see D&C 42:18–42). By consecrating, or dedicating, their "time, talents, and material wealth to the establishment and building up of God's kingdom" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Consecrate, Law of Consecration," scriptures.lds.org), Latter-day Saints fulfill their sacred stewardship to help care for one another, particularly the poor and needy.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency taught about the Lord's way to care for the poor and needy: "There are many good people and organizations in the world that are trying to meet the pressing needs of the poor and needy everywhere. We are grateful for this, but the Lord's way of caring for the needy is different from the world's way. The Lord has said, 'It must needs be done in mine own way' [D&C 104:16]. He is not only interested in our immediate needs; He is also concerned about our eternal progression. For this reason, the Lord's way has always included self-reliance and service to our neighbor in addition to caring for the poor" ("Providing in the Lord's Way," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 54).



Through generous donations, Church members make many humanitarian projects possible, such as this clean water source in Kenya, Africa (see D&C 104:13–16).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin explained how "the poor [are] exalted" and "the rich are made low" (D&C 104:16) when Church members provide for others in the Lord's way: "The Lord's way consists of helping people help themselves. The poor are exalted because they work for the temporary assistance they receive, they are taught correct principles, and they are able to lift themselves from poverty to self-reliance. The rich are made low because they humble themselves to give generously of their means to those in need" ("Inspired Church Welfare," *Ensign,* May 1999, 77).

Doctrine and Covenants 104:17–18. "The earth is full, and there is enough and to spare"

Some have suggested that the earth's population will eventually exceed its resources. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104, the Lord emphasized that there are plenty of resources in the earth for all of God's children (see D&C 104:17). The problem is not limited resources. The problem is an unwillingness to share the earth's abundance with the poor and needy. In His "law" unto the Church, the Lord commanded the Saints to "remember the poor, and consecrate of [their resources] for their support" (D&C 42:30). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104:18, the Lord warned that if the Saints did not "impart" their "portion, according to the law of [His] gospel, unto the poor and the needy," they would "with the wicked, lift up [their] eyes in hell, being in torment." This has reference to Jesus Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus (see Luke 16:19–31). Like the rich man in the parable, those who will not share their abundance with the poor will suffer the pains of hell in the world to come.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson commended Church members for their generosity while inviting them to consider what more they can do to help the poor and needy:

"We control the disposition of our means and resources, but we account to God for this stewardship over earthly things. It is gratifying to witness your generosity as you contribute to fast offerings and humanitarian projects. Over the years, the suffering of millions has been alleviated, and countless others have been enabled to help themselves through the generosity of the Saints. Nevertheless, as we pursue the cause of Zion, each of us should prayerfully consider whether we are doing what we should and all that we should in the Lord's eyes with respect to the poor and the needy.

"We might ask ourselves, living as many of us do in societies that worship possessions and pleasures, whether we are remaining aloof from covetousness and the lust to acquire more and more of this world's goods. Materialism is just one more manifestation of the idolatry and pride that characterize Babylon. Perhaps we can learn to be content with what is sufficient for our needs" ("Come to Zion," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 39).

While the phrase "the poor and the needy" (D&C 104:18) can refer specifically to those in financial need, it can also include those in need of spiritual, emotional, mental, and social assistance. Similarly, "the abundance" of the earth can include a person's time, talents, skills, spiritual gifts, and knowledge, in addition to material possessions.

Think about your efforts to help the poor and needy. What can you do to use what the Lord has given you to help those in need?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 104:19–46, looking for the stewardships the Lord assigned to members of the United Firm and the promise He gave to each of them.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:19–46. "I will multiply blessings upon them"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104, the Lord gave specific instructions about the stewardships assigned to members of the United Firm living in Kirtland, Ohio. The revelation does not mention assigning properties to members of the firm living in Missouri, likely because the Saints had recently been expelled from Jackson County. The Lord directed that the firm's properties in Kirtland be divided and assigned to individual members, who became responsible for managing them, so "that every man may give an account unto [Him] of the stewardship which is appointed unto him" (see D&C 104:11–13). The Lord then made the same promise to each firm member mentioned in the revelation: If they were faithful in their stewardships, the Lord would "multiply blessings upon them" (see D&C 104:23, 25, 31, 33, 35, 38, 42, 46). Similarly, if we are faithful in the stewardships the Lord gives us, He will "multiply" our blessings.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 104:47–53, looking for the Lord's instructions regarding the branches of the United Firm in Ohio and Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:47–53. "You shall no longer be bound as a united order"

Although members of the United Firm in Ohio had decided on April 10, 1834, to disband the firm, the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104 instructed them to reorganize the firm and to separate the Ohio and Missouri branches so they could function independently (see D&C 104:47–50). The Lord explained, "This I have commanded to be done for your salvation" (D&C 104:51), likely referring to the firm members' financial salvation. However, rather than being reorganized, "the United Firm effectively ceased to exist soon after this revelation was dictated," perhaps because "leaders may have decided to transfer much of the responsibility for the church's temporal endeavors to other administrative bodies, such as the Kirtland high council" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 21–22).



Bishop Newel K. Whitney was given stewardship over several properties and business operations, such as this ashery in Kirtland, Ohio (see D&C 104:39–42).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 104:54–77, looking for the Lord's reminder to the members of the United Firm about the properties assigned to them as stewardships.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:54–66. "Print my words"

The Lord reminded members of the United Firm that the individual properties assigned to them were His and that they were His stewards. He expected each of them to manage his stewardship wisely so that funds would be created for the printing of the scriptures and other revelations He would give (see D&C 104:58, 63). While the phrase "the fulness of my scriptures" (D&C 104:58) refers specifically to Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Bible, the earliest copy of the revelation recorded in section 104 suggests that this phrase was also intended to include the Book of Mormon and the revelations contained in the Doctrine and

Covenants (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 29).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught, "The central purpose of all scripture is to fill our souls with faith in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ" ("The Blessing of Scripture," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2010, 34). Therefore, publishing the scriptures and making them available to be read and studied would help bring God's children to a knowledge of the restored gospel, "[build] up [the Lord's] church and kingdom on the earth, and … prepare [His] people" for His Second Coming (D&C 104:59).

To finance the work of printing the scriptures and building Zion, the Lord instructed that two treasuries, or accounts, be established. The first, known as the "sacred treasury of the Lord," was to fund the printing operations of the Church (see D&C 104:63–66). The "avails," or profits, from the sale of Church publications were to be kept in this treasury (see D&C 104:65). The second treasury was to contain the profits made from individual stewardships. Members of the firm could draw from the funds in this treasury when necessary to help them carry out their stewardships (see D&C 104:72–73).

Doctrine and Covenants 104:78–86

The Saints receive counsel regarding debt

Read Doctrine and Covenants 104:78–86, looking for what the Lord taught concerning the United Firm's debts.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:78–86. "Concerning your debts"

Less than a week before the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104, Bishop Newel K. Whitney, a member of the United Firm, prepared a document detailing the many debts owed by the United Firm (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 10–12). Members of the firm had borrowed money through Bishop Whitney's store to pay for the Church's mercantile and publishing operations in Ohio and Missouri. The Lord did not command that the United Firm be reorganized because He wanted the firm to avoid paying its debts; in fact, He instructed firm members that "it is my will that you shall pay all your debts" (D&C 104:78). Given the enormous financial burdens of the Church in the spring of 1834, this was a challenging task. The Lord promised, however, that if they would be "diligent and humble, and exercise the prayer of faith," He would "soften the hearts" of their creditors until He sent "means" for them to pay their debts (D&C 104:80).

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 104, the Lord referred to the firm's debts as "bondage." By paying their debts, members of the firm would be "delivered" from their financial "bondage" (see D&C 104:80, 83–84). Likewise, latter-day prophets have admonished Church members to pay what they owe and avoid unnecessary and excessive debt. **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** taught:

"***Honor your financial obligations.*** From time to time, we hear stories of greed and selfishness that strike us with great sorrow. We hear of fraud, defaulting on loan commitments, financial deceptions, and bankruptcies. …

"We are a people of integrity. We believe in honoring our debts and being honest in our dealings with our fellow men" ("Earthly Debts, Heavenly Debts," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 42).

President Gordon B. Hinckley declared:

"So many of our people are living on the very edge of their incomes. In fact, some are living on borrowings. …

"I urge you … to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.

"This is a part of the temporal gospel in which we believe" ("To the Boys and to the Men," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 53–54).

In addition to counseling us to pay our debts, what else does the Lord ask us to do today that might be considered challenging? What roles do humility, faith, and prayer play in helping us accomplish what the Lord asks of us?

CHAPTER 41

Doctrine and Covenants 103; 105

Introduction and Timeline

On February 24, 1834, Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight met with the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Kirtland high council to explain the plight of the Saints in Missouri and to seek counsel and help. On the same day, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, in which the Lord promised that the Saints would be "[restored] to the land of Zion" if they did not "pollute their inheritances" (D&C 103:13–14) and directed Church leaders to gather resources and recruits to help the Saints in Missouri.

In obedience to the Lord's command, the Prophet Joseph Smith and just over 200 volunteers formed the Camp of Israel (later known as Zion's Camp) in order to go to the aid of the Saints who had been forced out of their homes in Jackson County, Missouri. On June 22, 1834, while camped four miles north of Fishing River, Missouri, Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 105, in which the Lord explained that the Saints must "wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion" (D&C 105:9). The Lord also gave instructions concerning what would need to occur in order for Zion to be redeemed, or reclaimed by the Saints, at a future time.

November–December 1833

The Saints were forced to leave Jackson County, Missouri.

February 24, 1834

Doctrine and Covenants 103 was received.

March–May 1834

Church leaders recruited men and gathered money in preparation for the march to Missouri.

May 1834

Members of Zion's Camp began their march from Ohio and Michigan to Missouri.

June 15, 1834

The Prophet Joseph Smith learned that Governor Daniel Dunklin would not provide a militia to help the Saints return to their homes in Jackson County, Missouri.

June 22, 1834

Doctrine and Covenants 105 was received.

Late June 1834

Members of Zion's Camp and other Church members were afflicted with cholera.

Early July 1834

Zion's Camp members were discharged.

Think about some of the challenges you face and the sacrifices you have had to make in order to be faithful to God's commandments. As you read Doctrine and Covenants 103, look for truths that can help you faithfully endure your challenges.

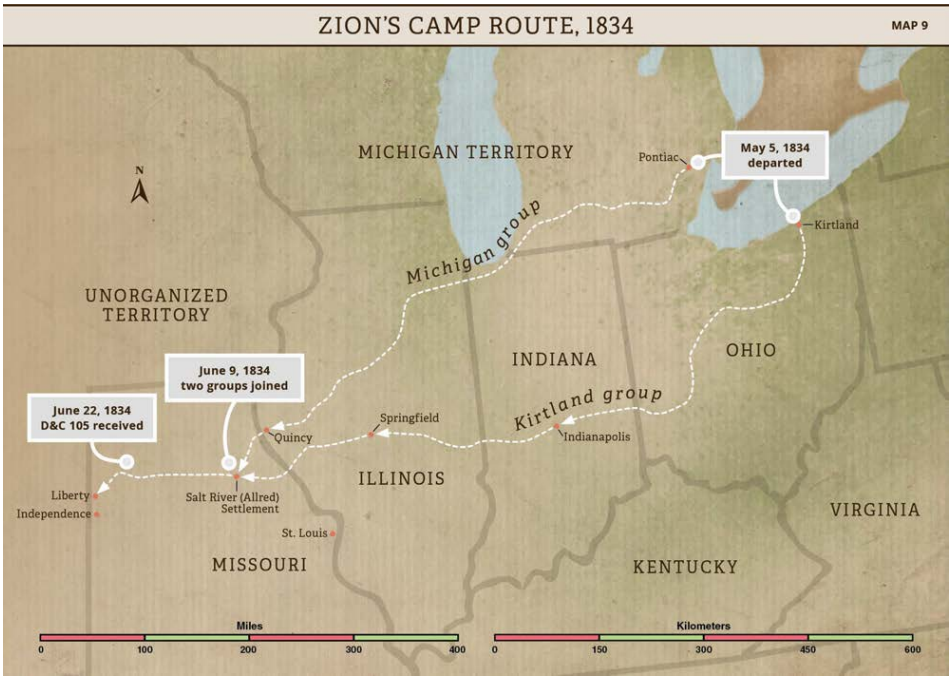
Doctrine and Covenants 103: Additional Historical Background

When the Saints living in Jackson County, Missouri, were driven from their homes in late 1833, many of them found refuge across the Missouri River in Clay County, Missouri. The Prophet Joseph Smith learned of these Saints' circumstances through letters he received from them. In early January 1834, Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight volunteered to travel from Missouri to Kirtland, Ohio, to talk to Joseph Smith in person and give him details about the Saints' condition in Missouri.

On February 24, 1834, the Prophet Joseph Smith, the newly created Kirtland high council, and others met to hear from Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight, and the

group discussed how the Saints might be returned to their homes in Jackson County. The Prophet stated that he was determined to go to Missouri and help redeem Zion, and approximately 30–40 persons who were present in the meeting also committed to go. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* ed. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others [2014], 453–54.)

Sometime that same day, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103. It was seen in part as the continued fulfillment of the prophecy given six months earlier, in which the Lord indicated that the Prophet would lead "the strength of mine house … unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard" (see D&C 101:55–56). In obedience to the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, Church leaders traveled for several weeks among many congregations of the Saints, gathering funds and supplies and recruiting volunteers to assist in an expedition that was originally known as the Camp of Israel and later called Zion's Camp. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833 –March 1834,* 453–54, 457–59.)



Doctrine and Covenants 103:1–20

The Lord promises that Zion will be redeemed

Read Doctrine and Covenants 103:1–10, looking for what the Lord commanded the Saints to do and the blessing they would receive if they obeyed His counsel.

Doctrine and Covenants 103:1–3. "How to act in the discharge of your duties concerning … your brethren"

In late July 1833, Church leaders in Missouri were forced to sign an agreement stating that half of the Saints would leave Jackson County by January 1, 1834, and the rest by April 1, 1834 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 187). However, the Prophet Joseph Smith advised the Saints not to sell their lands in Jackson County and that they seek protection and redress from government authorities (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 332–33). During the final weeks of 1833, Church members faced hostile persecution, leading them to abandon their homes and to seek refuge in Clay County, Missouri, and in other locations. Hundreds of Church members struggled as refugees during the winter months of 1833–1834, living in shelters that they hastily constructed along the northern bank of the Missouri River (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 346–47, note 142). In February 1834 the Lord gave Church leaders in Kirtland, Ohio, "a revelation and commandment, that [they] might know how to act in the discharge of [their] duties concerning the salvation and redemption of [their] brethren, who [had] been scattered on the land of Zion" (D&C 103:1).

Similarly, Church leaders today have admonished the Saints to reach out to and assist refugees around the world and in our own communities. **Elder Patrick Kearon** of the Seventy compared the plight of refugees today to that of the early Latter-day Saints:



Many of the Saints who were forced to leave their homes in Jackson County, Missouri, in late 1833 found refuge near this location in Clay County, Missouri.

"As members of the Church, as a people, we don't have to look back far in our history to reflect on times when we were refugees, violently driven from homes and farms over and over again. …

"The Lord has instructed us that the stakes of Zion are to be 'a defense' and 'a refuge from the storm' [D&C 115:6; see also Isaiah 4:5–6]. We have found refuge. Let us come out from our safe places and share with them, from our abundance, *hope* for a brighter future, *faith* in God and in our fellowman, and *love* that sees beyond cultural and ideological differences to the glorious truth that we are all children of our Heavenly Father" ("Refuge from the Storm," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2016, 111, 113–14).

Sister Linda K. Burton, who served as Relief Society General President, also spoke of the plight of refugees and provided counsel on how to help those in need:

"There are more than 60 million refugees, including forcibly displaced people, worldwide. Half of those are children. 'These individuals have undergone tremendous difficulties and are starting over in … new countr[ies] and culture[s]. While there are [sometimes] organizations that help them with a place to live and basic necessities, what they need is a friend and ally who can help them [adjust] to their new home, a person who can help them learn the language, understand the

systems, and feel connected' ['40 Ways to Help Refugees in Your Community,' Sept. 9, 2015, mormonchannel.org]. …

"A First Presidency letter sent to the Church on October 27, 2015, expressed great concern and compassion for the millions of people who have fled their homes seeking relief from civil conflict and other hardships. The First Presidency invited individuals, families, and Church units to participate in Christlike service in local refugee relief projects and to contribute to the Church humanitarian fund, where practical. …

"As we consider the 'pressing calls' of those who need our help, let's ask ourselves, 'What if *their* story were *my* story?' May we then seek inspiration, act on impressions we receive, and reach out in unity to help those in need as we are able and inspired to do so" ("I Was a Stranger," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2016, 13–15).

Doctrine and Covenants 103:4–10. "They shall … begin to prevail against mine enemies"

The Lord explained that the Saints who were forced to leave Jackson County, Missouri, suffered "because they did not hearken altogether unto the precepts and commandments which [He] gave unto them" (D&C 103:4; see also D&C 101:2, 6–9). The Lord had earlier noted that "there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them" (D&C 101:6). As followers of Jesus Christ, the Saints were commanded to be "a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men" (D&C 103:9). Because some of the Saints had not heeded the Lord's commandments, they were "chastened … with a sore and grievous chastisement" (D&C 103:4). Nevertheless, He promised divine help and protection if they would repent and immediately "hearken … unto [His] counsel" (D&C 103:5).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught the following to Church leaders who were serving missions in Great Britain :

"The work in which we are unitedly engaged is one of no ordinary kind. The enemies we have to contend against are subtle and well skilled in maneuvering; it behooves us to be on the alert to concentrate our energies, and that the best feelings should exist in our midst; and then, by the help of the Almighty, we shall go on from victory to victory, and from conquest to conquest; our evil passions will be subdued, our prejudices depart; we shall find no room in our bosoms for hatred; vice will hide its deformed head, and we shall stand approved in the sight of heaven, and be acknowledged the sons of God.

"Let us realize that we are not to live to ourselves, but to God; by so doing the greatest blessings will rest upon us both in time and in eternity" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 276).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) affirmed that our ability to prevail against those who oppose the Lord and His work depends upon our obedience to the Lord's commandments and standards: "While [the world's] standards generally may totter, we of the Church are without excuse if we drift in the same manner. We have standards—sure, tested, and effective. To the extent that we observe them, we shall go forward. To the extent that we neglect them, we shall hinder our own

progress and bring embarrassment to the work of the Lord. These standards have come from Him. Some of them may appear a little out-of-date in our society, but this does not detract from their validity nor diminish the virtue of their application. The subtle reasoning of men, no matter how clever, no matter how plausible it may sound, cannot abridge the declared wisdom of God" ("Pursue the Steady Course," *Ensign,* Jan. 2005, 4–5).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 103:11–20, looking for how Zion's redemption will be achieved.

Doctrine and Covenants 103:11–20. "The redemption of Zion"

In June of 1831 the Lord declared to the Saints that the land of Missouri would be consecrated as "the land of their inheritance" (see D&C 52:2–5, 42). Revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith indicated that the city of Independence in Jackson County, Missouri, was to be the center place of the city of Zion, or the New Jerusalem, where the Saints would gather from every nation, where a temple would be built, and where the Saints would dwell in safety and peace in their land of inheritance (see D&C 45:66–69; 57:3; 84:2–4). Yet, by the end of 1833, Church members living in Jackson County had been forced to leave their homes and lands and "[had] been scattered" (see D&C 103:11).

Following the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County, the Prophet received revelations indicating that Zion would eventually be redeemed, meaning that the modern-day land of promise would be reclaimed, or recovered, after the Saints had been sanctified (see D&C 101:16–20; 103:11–15; 105:1–10). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, the Lord likened the redemption of Zion to the children of Israel being led to the land of their inheritance. He said, "I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like Moses led the children of Israel" (D&C 103:16; see also Exodus 3:7–10). He told the Saints that they were "the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham" and needed to be "led out of bondage by power" (D&C 103:17). He assured them that not only would His angel go before them, like it was with the ancient Israelites, but His "presence" would be there as well (see D&C 103:19–20). The Lord had withheld His presence from the children of Israel led by Moses because they were "a stiffnecked people" (see Exodus 33:2–3).

The Lord explained in an earlier revelation that not only was the Prophet Joseph Smith like a latter-day Moses, but that each President of the Church would "be like unto Moses" as well (D&C 107:91; see also D&C 28:2).

Doctrine and Covenants 103:21–40

The Lord instructs the Saints to return to Zion and commands the Prophet Joseph Smith to organize the Camp of Israel

Read Doctrine and Covenants 103:21–40, looking for what the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Kirtland Saints to do to help redeem Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 103:21–28. The Lord commands the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to Zion

In December 1833 the Lord revealed a parable regarding the redemption of the land of Zion. In that parable "a certain nobleman" had his servants plant 12 olive trees on a "very choice piece of land" (D&C 101:44). He commanded his servants to "set watchmen round about them, and build a tower, that one may overlook the land" and protect it from the enemy (D&C 101:45). However, the servants did not complete the tower, and the enemy "came by night, and … destroyed their works, and broke down the olive-trees" (see D&C 101:46–51). The nobleman, the Lord of the vineyard, then said to one of his servants, "Go and gather together the residue of my servants, and take all the strength of mine house, which are my warriors, … and go ye straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard" (D&C 101:55–56).

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, the Lord identified the Prophet Joseph Smith as the servant in the parable who would "redeem," or reclaim, the vineyard (see D&C 103:21). The Lord instructed the Prophet to deliver the Saints who had been scattered from their lands by leading a group comprised of "the strength of my house" to Missouri (D&C 103:22). Because this assignment was potentially dangerous, the Lord said that the members of this group should be willing to sacrifice their lives if necessary in order to fulfill His commandment (see D&C 103:27–28).

President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency explained that sacrifice is required of all disciples of Jesus Christ, whether or not they are asked to sacrifice their lives:

"True followers of the Savior should be prepared to lay down their lives, and some have been privileged to do so. …

"For most of us, however, what is required is not to *die* for the Church but to *live* for it. For many, living a Christlike life every day may be even more difficult than laying down one's life" ("Discipleship," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2006, 21–22).

Doctrine and Covenants 103:29–40. "Five hundred of the strength of my house"

During a meeting held in Kirtland, Ohio, on February 24, 1834, upon hearing Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight's report of the suffering of the Church members in Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith and approximately 30–40 other men who were present in the meeting committed to go to the land of Zion to help the persecuted Saints (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 458) In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, the Lord called the Prophet Joseph Smith and seven other brethren to recruit volunteers for an expedition to Missouri. They were to enlist at least one hundred men, but preferably "five hundred of the strength of my house" (D&C 103:30; see also D&C 103:34).

Within days of receiving the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, the Prophet Joseph Smith and seven other Church leaders left the Kirtland, Ohio, area for several weeks to visit congregations of the Saints, gather contributions, and recruit volunteers who were willing to come to the aid of the displaced Saints in

Missouri. They worked quickly because they planned to depart on May 1, 1834. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 458–59; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2016], xix).

Doctrine and Covenants 105: Additional Historical Background

In February 1834 the Prophet Joseph Smith declared his intention to lead an expedition of men to Missouri to help Church members regain their homes and lands in Jackson County. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, the Lord instructed the Prophet and seven other men to travel to outlying branches of the Church to recruit volunteers willing to help redeem Zion (see D&C 103:22–40). Although the Lord had asked them to try to recruit 500 men for the journey, the most they were able to recruit was a little more than 200 men, accompanied by approximately 12 women and 10 children (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* xx).

On several occasions, as hostilities toward the Saints escalated in Missouri, Church leaders there petitioned the governor, Daniel Dunklin, for protection and asked that the state provide a military escort so that the Saints could return to their lands and homes. In December 1833, William W. Phelps sent a letter to Church leaders in Ohio, explaining that "the Governor is willing to restore us, but as the constitution gives him no power to guard us, when back, we are not willing to go" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834,* 384).

Members of the expedition organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith made preparations to go to Missouri to assist the state militia in helping the displaced Saints return to their homes. The men in the expedition would then remain as a protective force in Jackson County. In early May 1834 the Prophet Joseph Smith departed with around 100 men from northeastern Ohio. This group was referred to as the Camp of Israel and later became known as Zion's Camp (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* xx). The group traveled approximately 900 miles through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to Missouri. They were joined by additional men who had been recruited by Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight in the Michigan Territory and others who joined them on the way west (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* xx).

As Zion's Camp traveled through northern Missouri, tension grew in Jackson County and in surrounding counties as word spread that a Mormon army was approaching. The Prophet Joseph Smith sent Parley P. Pratt and Orson Hyde to the Missouri state capitol in Jefferson City to request the military assistance that Governor Daniel Dunklin had promised in order to help the Saints reclaim their lands in Jackson County. However, Governor Dunklin was reluctant to get involved in the matter. This meant that the Saints would not receive the protection they needed in order to regain their homes. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 62.)



Zion's Camp stopped in this area between the two branches of Fishing River in Clay County, Missouri, on June 19, 1834. A violent storm occurred on that night, protecting the Saints from attack by a mob.

After receiving news that they would not receive assistance from Governor Dunklin, the members of Zion's Camp proceeded toward the displaced Saints who were sheltered in Clay County, Missouri, and then camped approximately 10 miles northeast of Liberty, Missouri, between two forks of the Fishing River. On June 19, five armed men approached the camp and threatened that approximately 400 men were planning to attack the camp that night. However, the members of Zion's Camp were protected when a thunderstorm dropped large hailstones and caused the Fishing River to rise nearly 40 feet, preventing the mob from attacking. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 63.) Members of Zion's camp viewed the storm as evidence that God was protecting them. One member of the camp, Nathan Baldwin, stated, "The Lord had previously said He would fight the battles of His saints … and it seemed as though the mandate had gone forth from His presence, to ply the artillery of Heaven in defense of His servants" (in Matthew C. Godfrey, "The Acceptable Offering of Zion's Camp," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], or history.lds.org).

In an effort to calm the Missouri citizens, the Prophet Joseph Smith and some others in the camp signed a statement on June 21, 1834, indicating that they did not intend "to commence hostilities against any man or body of men" but sought for a peaceful way for the Saints to return to Jackson County (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 69–70; spelling standardized). The following day, on June 22, 1834, the Prophet held a council to discuss how the camp should proceed. During the meeting, he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 105, which revealed that the Church was no longer required to redeem the land of Zion at that time. As members of the camp learned that they would not be required to fight, some accepted it as the Lord's will, but some were upset and murmured and some even apostatized from the Church (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 71–72).

Heber C. Kimball, a member of Zion's Camp who later served in the First Presidency, recorded that before the members of Zion's Camp entered Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith had warned them of a scourge: "Brother Joseph got up in a wagon and said he would deliver a prophecy. After giving the brethren much good advice, he exhorted them to faithfulness and humility, and said the Lord had told him that there would be scourge come upon the camp in consequence of the fractious and unruly spirits that appeared among them, and they would die like sheep with the rot; still if they would repent and humble themselves before the Lord, the scourge in great measure might be turned away; 'but, as the Lord lives, this camp will suffer for giving way to their unruly temper'; which afterwards

actually did take place to the sorrow of the brethren" (Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball* [1945], 47–48).

Two days after the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 105 was received, the camp experienced the beginnings of an outbreak of cholera, causing vomiting and severe diarrhea. As a result, 68 people, including the Prophet Joseph Smith, suffered from the sickness, and 13 members of the camp and 2 other Latter-day Saints who were living in Clay County died (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 72, note 334).



On June 24, 1834, Zion's Camp stayed on the banks of Rush Creek just a few miles east of Liberty, Missouri. Here the group was struck by an outbreak of cholera that killed 13 from Zion's Camp and 2 local Church members. Some of the victims were buried near here on property owned by Church member George Burkett.

Doctrine and Covenants 105:1–19

The redemption of Zion is deferred "for a little season"

Read Doctrine and Covenants 105:1–8, looking for what prevented the Saints from redeeming Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 105:1–8. "They have not learned to be obedient"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 105, the Lord outlined some of the reasons why Zion was not to be redeemed at that time. The Saints' transgressions prevented them from achieving the unity that is required for Zion to be established (see D&C 105:3–5). For example, Church members who lived outside of Missouri withheld the requested funds for purchasing land in Missouri and in Kirtland, Ohio, for the temple and to help with the Zion's Camp expedition. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 5–6.) On April 7, 1834, in a letter written before the camp's departure, the Prophet Joseph Smith, along with two members of the United Firm, expressed displeasure with the Saints' lack of response, saying, "If this Church which is [attempting] to be the church of Christ will not help us when they can do it without sacrifice with those blessings which God has bestowed upon them, … God shall take away their talent and give it to those who have no talent and shall prevent them from ever obtaining a place of refuge or an inheritance upon the Land of Zion" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 8; spelling and punctuation standardized).

Doctrine and Covenants 105:4–5. "The principles of the law of the celestial kingdom"

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord told the Saints that "Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom" (D&C 105:5). The city of Zion is to be "the City of Holiness" (Moses 7:19), "the city of our God" (D&C 97:19), a place of purity where the Lord may dwell among His Saints. It is a representation of the celestial kingdom here on the earth. "The principles of the law of the celestial kingdom" (D&C 105:5) are found in the gospel of Jesus Christ (see D&C 76:50–60). By living the principles of the gospel, we become "of one heart and one mind, and [dwell] in righteousness; and there [are] no poor among [us]," which are distinguishing characteristics of Zion (Moses 7:18).



***Zion's Camp,* by Judith A. Mehr. A storm occurred on June 19, 1834, when Zion's Camp stopped for the night on land between the forks of Fishing River in Clay County, Missouri, which prevented a mob from attacking the Saints.**

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described how we as Saints can become united:

"As we consider the unity required for Zion to flourish, we should ask ourselves if we have overcome jarrings, contentions, envyings, and strifes (see D&C 101:6). Are we individually and as a people free from strife and contention and united 'according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom'? (D&C 105:4). Forgiveness of one another is essential to this unity. Jesus said, 'I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men' (D&C 64:10).

"We will become of one heart and one mind as we individually place the Savior at the center of our lives and follow those He has commissioned to lead us" ("Come to Zion," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 38).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 105:9–19, looking for ways in which the march of Zion's Camp fulfilled its purposes for the faithful.

Doctrine and Covenants 105:9–13. "Wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion"

The Lord explained that the Saints would have to "wait for a little season" before Zion would be redeemed (D&C 105:9, 13; see also D&C 100:13; 103:4). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about what Church members need to do during that "little season" before Zion is redeemed:

"A little season—how long will it last? Will it be two hundred years? or three hundred? Though the day of the Second Coming is fixed, the day for the redemption of Zion depends upon us. After we as a people live the law of the celestial kingdom; after we gain the needed experience and learn our duties; after we become by faith and obedience as were our fellow saints in the days of Enoch; after we are worthy to be translated, if the purposes of the Lord should call for such a course in this day—then Zion will be redeemed, and not before.

" 'This cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high. For behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful and continue in humility before me' [D&C 105:11–12]. As of this time the ordinances of the house of the Lord had not been revealed, and the endowment of power from on high received through them was needed in the heavenly work that lay ahead. 'Therefore it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season, for the redemption of Zion' [D&C 105:13]. And so we wait, wondering the while how long the 'little season' is destined to last. As to its length, we cannot say. This much only do we know: the 'little season' is the appointed period of preparation for the Latter-day Saints. In it we must attain the same spiritual stature enjoyed by those who built the original Zion. Then and then only will we build our latter-day City of Holiness" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 616).

Doctrine and Covenants 105:16–19. "It is expedient in me that they should be brought thus far for a trial of their faith"

While the primary purpose of the march of Zion's Camp to Missouri seemed to go unfulfilled, the Lord explained that He had accepted the participants' sacrifices as an "offering" and that they should view their experience as "a trial of their faith" (D&C 105:19). **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"According to its ostensible purpose, the expedition [of Zion's Camp] was a failure. But most of the men who were to lead the Church for the next half-century, including those who would take the Saints across the plains and colonize the

Intermountain West, came to know the Prophet Joseph and received their formative leadership training in the march of Zion's Camp. As Elder Orson F. Whitney said of Zion's Camp:

"'The redemption of Zion is more than the purchase or recovery of lands, the building of cities, or even the founding of nations. It is the conquest of the heart, the subjugation of the soul, the sanctifying of the flesh, the purifying and ennobling of the passions.' (*The Life of Heber C. Kimball,* 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, 1945, p. 65)." ("Spirituality," *Ensign,* Nov. 1985, 62).

In February 1835, when the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the Quorum of the Seventy, eight of the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and all of the members of the Seventy had served in Zion's Camp. "As recalled by Joseph Young, one of the original members of the Seventy, the Prophet explained to a group of these brethren: 'God did not want you to fight. He could not organize His kingdom with twelve men to open the Gospel door to the nations of the earth, and with seventy men under their direction to follow in their tracks, unless He took them from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham'" (in *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 283).

President Brigham Young and many other men who would become leaders in the Church received valuable training and experience at the Prophet Joseph Smith's side during the march of Zion's Camp. **President Wilford Woodruff** (1807–1898) testified of the blessings he received as a participant in Zion's Camp:

"I was in Zion's Camp with the Prophet of God. I saw the dealings of God with him. I saw the power of God with him. I saw that he was a Prophet. …

"When the members of Zion's Camp were called, many of us had never beheld each other's faces; we were strangers to each other and many had never seen the prophet. … We accomplished a great deal, though apostates and unbelievers many times asked the question, 'What have you done?' We gained an experience that we never could have gained in any other way. We had the privilege of beholding the face of the prophet, and we had the privilege of traveling a thousand miles with him, and seeing the workings of the Spirit of God with him, and the revelations of Jesus Christ unto him and the fulfilment of those revelations.

"The experience [we] obtained in travelling in Zion's Camp was of more worth than gold" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2011], 135, 138).

What blessings have you received through being faithful during trying times?

Doctrine and Covenants 105:20–41

The Lord teaches the Saints what they must do before Zion is redeemed

Read Doctrine and Covenants 105:20–41, looking for the counsel the Lord gave the Saints regarding how they were to treat their neighbors in Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 105:23–25, 38–40. "Carefully gather together, … consistently with the feelings of the people"

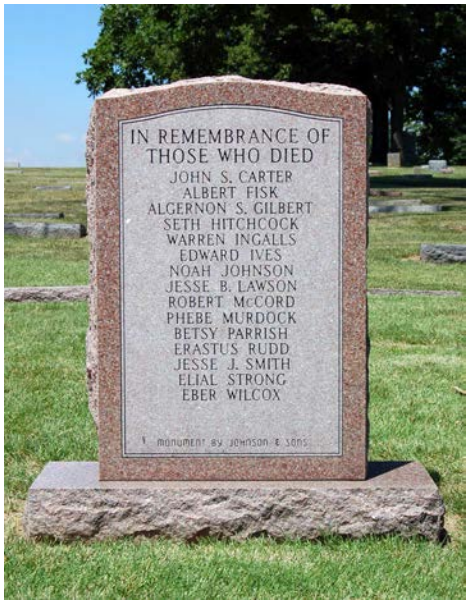
After Zion's Camp was disbanded, the Lord commanded the Saints to continue gathering to other regions in Missouri, even though hostile circumstances persisted. The Lord counseled them not to "boast of faith nor of mighty works" to their neighbors or to suggest that judgments would come upon those who opposed them, as some Saints had previously done (D&C 105:24). Instead, they were to "lift up an ensign of peace" (D&C 105:39).

Similarly, in our day Church leaders have counseled us to show love and respect toward all people regardless of their beliefs or actions. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** taught:

"We must … practice tolerance and respect toward others. … We should be alert to honor the good we should see in all people and in many opinions and practices that differ from our own. …

"That approach to differences will yield tolerance and also respect toward us.

"Our tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs does not cause us to abandon our commitment to the truths we understand and the covenants we have made. … We must stand up for truth, even while we practice tolerance and respect for beliefs and ideas different from our own and for the people who hold them" ("Balancing Truth and Tolerance," *Ensign,* Feb. 2013, 27–28).



In 1958 the remains of some of the Zion's Camp cholera victims were discovered by a farmer; they were later reburied here in the Mound Grove Cemetery in Independence, Missouri, in 1976.

Why is it important for us as Latter-day Saints to be sensitive to individuals and groups with beliefs that differ from our own?

Ponder the Lord's teachings in Doctrine and Covenants 105:38–41. Consider what you can do to establish peace with those around you.

CHAPTER 42

Doctrine and Covenants 106–8

Introduction and Timeline

On November 25, 1834, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 106. In this revelation the Lord called Warren A. Cowdery, an older brother of Oliver Cowdery and a recent convert to the Church, to preside over the growing number of Saints in Freedom, New York, and the surrounding area. The Lord also promised Warren great blessings for his faithful service.

The Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 as the newly called members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were preparing to serve missions in the eastern United States. The revelation was recorded in 1835, but portions of it were received in 1831. This revelation contains the Lord's instructions concerning the priesthood and Church governance.

On December 26, 1835, Lyman Sherman acted on a spiritual impression to ask the Prophet Joseph Smith for direction regarding his duty. In response, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 108, in which the Lord forgave Lyman, promised him blessings according to his faithfulness, and gave him counsel.

June 3–6, 1831

The first individuals were ordained to the High Priesthood at a Church conference held in Kirtland, Ohio.

November 11, 1831

A portion of Doctrine and Covenants 107 was received.

May–July 1834

The Prophet Joseph Smith led Zion's Camp to Missouri to help the persecuted Saints.

November 25, 1834

Doctrine and Covenants 106 was received.

February 14, 1835

Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were called.

February 28, 1835

Lyman Sherman was called as a President of the Seventy.

March–early May 1835

Other portions of Doctrine and Covenants 107 were dictated.

February 28–March 1, 1835

More than 50 men were designated to serve as Seventies.

December 26, 1835

Doctrine and Covenants 108 was received.

Consider some of the differences between the way The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is organized and the way other organizations are structured. How do you think the organization of the Church, which has been established by and operates according to the priesthood of God, blesses Church members? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 106–8, look for doctrine and principles regarding the priesthood and priesthood organization in the Church.

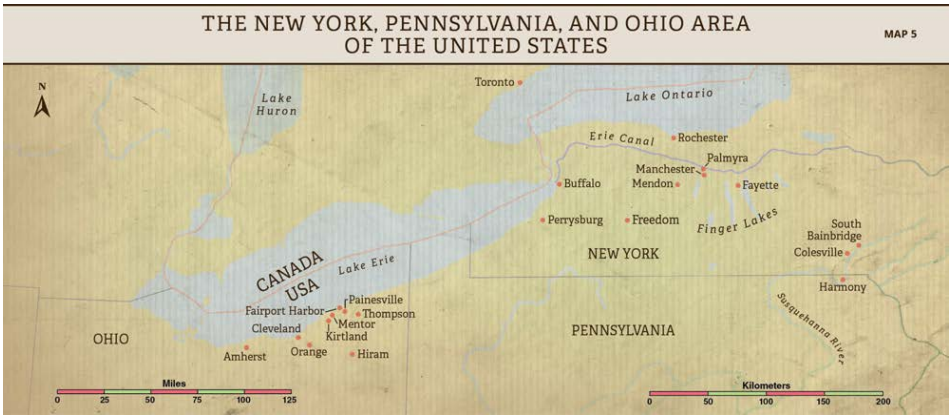
Doctrine and Covenants 106: Additional Historical Background

Warren Cowdery lived in Freedom, New York, with his wife, Patience, and their eight children. Though Warren had heard about the Book of Mormon through his younger brother Oliver Cowdery around 1830, he did not get baptized at that time. In March 1834, when the Prophet Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt were traveling in western New York recruiting volunteers for Zion's Camp, they stayed at Warren and Patience's home. While there they preached to several large crowds and baptized

Warren and Patience's neighbor Heman Hyde. (See Lisa Olsen Tait, "Warren Cowdery," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 219, or history.lds.org.) The following month, when Elder Pratt visited the area again, he noted, "A large church had been gathered during my absence, consisting of some forty members or more, principally through the labors of my brother Orson" (*Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 113).

Sometime between May and September of 1834, Warren and Patience Cowdery were baptized (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2016], 180). In a letter to his brother Oliver, Warren wrote of the opposition the Saints in Freedom endured from their non-believing neighbors. He acknowledged that he had received "some manifestations of divine approbation" of the Lord as he continued attending the branch in Freedom. Yet, he wrote, "I have a thousand times wished I could have that evidence that you have had" (in Tait, "Warren Cowdery," 220, or history.lds.org).

"Warren also expressed a desire for 'a preacher of our order' to come into the Freedom area, someone who would 'do us good, by strengthening and building us up in the most holy faith'" (Tait, "Warren Cowdery," 220, or history.lds.org). In a letter to his brother Oliver in October 1834, he expressed his willingness to be "useful in the vineyard of the Lord" and asked Oliver to "enquire what is the will of the Lord concerning me" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 180). The following month, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 106, in which the Lord expressed His will for Warren Cowdery to be a preacher to strengthen the members and build up the Church in that area.



Doctrine and Covenants 106

The Lord calls Warren A. Cowdery as "a presiding high priest" and promises him blessings for his service

Read Doctrine and Covenants 106, looking for what the Lord called Warren Cowdery to do and the counsel and promises the Lord gave him.

Doctrine and Covenants 106:1. "A presiding high priest"

The Lord called Warren A. Cowdery to serve as "a presiding high priest over [the Lord's] church, in the land of Freedom and the regions round about" (D&C 106:1). This means he was appointed to be the presiding priesthood leader in that particular geographical area.

Doctrine and Covenants 106:4–8. "The children of light"

Both the Savior and the Apostle Paul compared the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to the unexpected arrival of a thief (see Matthew 24:43; 1 Thessalonians 5:2–5). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 106, the Lord counseled, "Gird up your loins," meaning to prepare to do the Lord's work, "that you may be the children of light, and that day [the Lord's Second Coming] shall not overtake you as a thief" (D&C 106:5). "Children of light" live in such a way that they are prepared for the Savior's Second Coming at all times.

Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Presidency of the Seventy taught:

"To become children of light means to reject the power of the adversary and to choose daily to follow the Light of Christ.

"The phrase 'children of light' describes a people in whom the light of the gospel shines brightly. It describes a people who seek the light and are drawn to that which is virtuous, clean, and pure. There is an expectation that children of light are alert and watchful—not sleeping, in a spiritual sense, when they should be awake (see 2 Nephi 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:5–8). Children of light do not sit passively in darkness; they have the courage to stand up and stand out. When the adversary comes looming, children of light know when to fight back, when to say no, and when to simply walk away. …

"You don't have to wait until you are perfect before you can be a light to the world. Becoming children of light is a process, much like the process of conversion. …

"As children of light, we have the obligation of making this world a holier and happier place for our having lived in it" ("Becoming Children of Light," *Ensign,* Aug. 2014, 67, 69).

Warren Cowdery took his first steps in becoming one of the children of light when he "bowed to [the Lord's] scepter" (D&C 106:6). A *scepter* is a rod or staff that symbolizes a ruler's authority and power. By being baptized, Warren submitted to the authority and will of the King of heaven and covenanted to "[separate] himself from the crafts of men," or the unrighteousness of the world (see D&C 106:6). With his calling to be "a presiding high priest over [the Lord's] church, in the land of

Freedom[, New York,] and the regions round about" (D&C 106:1), Warren received instruction to "[seek] diligently the kingdom of heaven," to "humble himself," and to be "a faithful witness and a light unto the church" (D&C 106:3, 7–8). If he did so, the Lord promised to "lift him up" and "give him grace and assurance" (D&C 106:7–8). The Lord will similarly bless us as we humble ourselves before Him and "continue to be a faithful witness and a light unto the church," and we also will receive the crown He has "prepared … in the mansions of [His] Father" (D&C 106:8).

Warren Cowdery accepted the Lord's counsel given in this revelation and served as the "presiding high priest" (D&C 106:1) in Freedom, New York, for at least a year. After moving to Ohio, Warren worked in the Church's publishing office in Kirland, where he served as a clerk for the Prophet Joseph Smith, helped record the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, and kept other records (see Tait, "Warren Cowdery," 222, or history.lds.org).



The Prophet Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt preached the restored gospel in Freedom Township, New York, and called Warren Cowdery to preside over a branch of approximately 70 people.

When have you felt the Lord's support, grace, and assurance as you have humbly served Him?

Doctrine and Covenants 107: Additional Historical Background

As He did with many truths of the restored gospel, the Lord revealed the pattern of priesthood organization and Church governance "line upon line" (D&C 98:12). Originally titled "On Priesthood," the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 adds to and clarifies earlier revelations on priesthood offices, responsibilities, and organization (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 308–9; see also D&C 20; 84).

Most of the portion of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107:60–100 was dictated by the Prophet Joseph Smith on November 11, 1831 (see D&C 107, section heading). This revelation was addressed to "the church of Christ in the land of Zion" (D&C 107:59), and it provided clarification regarding "the High Priesthood" (D&C 107:64). The first high priests in this dispensation were ordained at a Church conference held in June 1831 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others [2013], 317).

The beginning portion of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 was dictated sometime between March and early May of 1835 as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles prepared for their first missions as Apostles. As part of the continuing unfolding of priesthood organization, the first members of

the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in this dispensation were called on February 14, 1835. The following month, "[the Prophet Joseph Smith] and the Twelve Apostles decided that because of 'the many pressing requests from the eastern churches,' the apostles would conduct a series of conferences in the eastern United States … 'for the purpose of regulating all things necessary' for the welfare of the branches of the church in those areas" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 308; spelling standardized). The Prophet Joseph Smith likely delivered it in the presence of those who were preparing to depart May 3, 1835, on their first mission as a quorum. Doctrine and Covenants 107 contains this "new material from the instruction to the Twelve, which [was] combined with an updated version of the November 1831 revelation on priesthood councils into a single section" (Joseph F. Darowski and James Goldberg, "Restoring the Ancient Order," in McBride and Goldberg, *Revelations in Context,* 212, or history.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–20

The Lord teaches about the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood

Read Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–20, looking for what the Lord revealed about the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–6. "There are, in the church, two priesthoods"

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 refers to the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood, which includes the Levitical Priesthood, as "two priesthoods" and "two divisions or grand heads" (D&C 107:1, 6). It is later clarified in this revelation that the Aaronic Priesthood is "an appendage to," or a part of, the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 107:14). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained the relationship between the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood:

"Although there are two Priesthoods, yet the Melchizedek Priesthood comprehends the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood, and is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to the Priesthood. …

"… All other Priesthoods are only parts, ramifications, powers and blessings belonging to the same, and are held, controlled and directed by it" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 108).

On another occasion, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that "all priesthood is Melchizedek; but there are different portions or degrees of it" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 109). Thus, the power, authority, and offices of the Aaronic Priesthood (see D&C 107:14–15, 17) are not separate and distinct from the Melchizedek Priesthood. They make up a part of the whole priesthood of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:3–4. "The Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God"

Melchizedek was the great high priest and king of Salem, or Jerusalem (see Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:25–40 [in the Bible appendix]; Hebrews 7:1–3, 15–17; Alma 13:17–19). Before the days of Melchizedek, "[the priesthood] was called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God*" (D&C 107:3), indicating that Jesus Christ is the true source of all priesthood authority and power on earth. However, "out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name," the name was changed and "called … after Melchizedek" (D&C 107:4).



***Melchizedek Blesses Abram,* by Walter Rane. "Why the first [priesthood] is called the Melchizedek Priesthood is because Melchizedek was such a great high priest" (D&C 107:2).**

The fact that "the Holy Priesthood" was called "after the Order of the Son of God" (D&C 107:3) suggests that priesthood holders are to walk in holiness and use the authority and power of the priesthood as Jesus Christ would. The Prophet Joseph Smith's inspired translation of Hebrews 7:3 teaches that "all those who are ordained unto this priesthood are made like unto the Son of God" (Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 7:3 [in the Bible appendix]). **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles acknowledged this: "Priesthood is the authority and the power which God has granted to men on earth to act for Him. When priesthood authority is exercised properly, priesthood bearers do what He [Jesus Christ] would do if He were present" ("The Power of the Priesthood," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2010, 7).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:5. "All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood"

An *appendage* is something that is attached to or part of a greater whole. The phrase "this priesthood" in Doctrine and Covenants 107:5 refers to the Melchizedek Priesthood. **President Joseph F. Smith** (1838–1918) taught that "there is no office growing out of this priesthood that is or can be greater than the priesthood itself. It is from the priesthood that the office derives its authority and power. No office gives authority to the priesthood. No office adds to the power of the priesthood. But all offices in the Church derive their power, their virtue, their authority *from* the priesthood" (cited by Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 166).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that callings given to women in the Church are also appendages to the priesthood:

"Since the scriptures state that 'all other authorities [and] offices in the church are appendages to this [Melchizedek] priesthood' (D&C 107:5), all that is done under the direction of those priesthood keys is done with priesthood authority.

"How does this apply to women? In an address to the Relief Society, President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said this: 'While the sisters have not been given the Priesthood, it has not been conferred upon them, that does not mean that the Lord has not given unto them authority. … A person may have authority given to him, or a sister to her, to do certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely necessary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the House of the Lord. They have authority given unto them to do some great and wonderful things, sacred unto the Lord, and binding just as thoroughly as are the blessings that are given by the men who hold the Priesthood' [Joseph Fielding Smith, 'Relief Society—an Aid to the Priesthood,' *Relief Society Magazine,* Jan. 1959, 4)]. …

"We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood. Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties" ("The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2014, 50–51).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:8–10. "The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency"

The "right of presidency" (D&C 107:8) is the right to preside over and direct the work of the Lord. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) taught:

"While all men hold the priesthood who are ordained to any office, yet there are special, or directing, authorities, bestowed upon those who are called to preside. These authorities are called keys.

"[Priesthood] keys are the right of presidency; they are the power and authority to govern and direct all of the Lord's affairs on earth. Those who hold them have power to govern and control the manner in which all others may serve in the priesthood" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 153).

The "Presidency of the High Priesthood," meaning the First Presidency of the Church, "have a right to officiate in all the offices in the church" (D&C 107:9). This Presidency holds all the keys of the kingdom and, therefore, presides and "has power and authority over all the offices [and officers] in the church in all ages of the world" (D&C 107:8; see also D&C 81:2). Under the direction of the First Presidency, high priests called to presiding offices, such as bishop or stake president, have the right to "officiate," or preside locally, in their wards and stakes (see D&C 107:10, 17).



The scriptures refer to the First Presidency as "the Presidency of the High Priesthood" (see D&C 107:8–10).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:13–15, 20. "The Priesthood of Aaron"

The Bible Dictionary explains that "as a result of the failure of the Israelites to observe the gospel law administered by Moses under the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Lord gave an additional law of performances and ordinances and 'confirmed a priesthood also upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations' (D&C 84:18) to administer it. This priesthood was of lesser power and authority than the priesthood of Melchizedek" ("Aaronic Priesthood"). The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 uses the terms *Aaronic* and *Levitical* to describe this lesser priesthood (see D&C 107:1, 6), but "there are some specific differences in the offices existing within the Levitical Priesthood." Aaron and his sons were from the tribe of Levi, and "the lesser priesthood was conferred only upon men of the tribe of Levi." Furthermore, "within the tribe, only Aaron and his sons could hold the office of priest," and the office of high priest could only be filled by the firstborn male descendants of Aaron. In ancient Israel, the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood "was used to administer the outward ordinances, particularly as characterized by the ceremonies of the law of Moses" (Bible Dictionary, "Aaronic Priesthood"). In the Church today, "the outward ordinances" of the Aaronic Priesthood include the ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, for the remission of sins (see D&C 107:20; see also 84:26–27).

The statement "the bishopric is the presidency of this priesthood" (D&C 107:15) refers to the responsibility of bishops and their counselors to preside over those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood. "The Presiding Bishopric is the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood throughout the Church. The Presiding Bishop and his two counselors also serve under the direction of the First Presidency to administer the temporal affairs of the Church" ("Presiding Bishopric,"



The Presiding Bishopric is the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood throughout the Church (see D&C 107:13–15, 20).

LDS.org; see also Guide to the Scriptures, "Presiding Bishop," scriptures.lds.org). Local bishops serve as the president of the Aaronic Priesthood in their respective wards.

For an explanation of the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 13:1 and Doctrine and Covenants 84:26–30 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:15–17. "A literal descendant of Aaron"

For an explanation of Doctrine and Covenants 107:15–17, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 68:14–21 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:18–19. The Melchizedek Priesthood holds "the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church"

Through the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, "all the spiritual blessings of the church" are made available to God's children (D&C 107:18). These spiritual blessings include the saving ordinances of the gospel administered through the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood: confirmation and the gift of the Holy Ghost, ordination of men to the Melchizedek Priesthood, the temple endowment, and the sealing ordinance, which binds families for eternity.

In addition to these blessings, the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 describes other spiritual blessings that come through the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The phrase "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (D&C 107:19) refers to "spiritual truths known only by revelation" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Mysteries of God," scriptures.lds.org; see also D&C 84:19).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught:

"[The Melchizedek Priesthood] is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven.

"… It is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which He will make known His purposes to the end of time" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 108–9).

As individuals receive the saving ordinances of the gospel and faithfully keep the associated covenants, they will eventually be blessed "to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (D&C 107:19). The "church of the Firstborn" has reference to the faithful sons and daughters of God who receive their exaltation in the celestial kingdom (see D&C 76:94–95; 93:21–22). To "commune" with them is to have fellowship with exalted Saints in the celestial kingdom of God. The ultimate blessing that comes through the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood is the enjoyment of living in the presence of the Father and the Son (see D&C 84:19–22).

What are some of the blessings you have received through the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood?

Doctrine and Covenants 107:21–38

The Lord outlines the duties and responsibilities of the presiding quorums of the Church

Read Doctrine and Covenants 107:21–38, looking for what the Lord taught about the presiding quorums of the Church and how these quorums should make decisions.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:22. "Three Presiding High Priests"

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) explained that the instructions in Doctrine and Covenants 107:22 regarding the "three Presiding High Priests" refer to the appointment and sustaining of members of the First Presidency:

"The Lord specified four requisites in the establishment of the First Presidency. …

"First, it was requisite that there be three presiding high priests.

"Second, they were to be chosen by the body (which [is] the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles).

"Third, they must be appointed and ordained by the same body—the Quorum of the Twelve.

"Fourth, they must be upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayers of the Church" ("May the Kingdom of God Go Forth," *Ensign,* Jan. 1973, 23).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, 33. "Special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world"

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 refers to the newly organized Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as "traveling councilors" and "a Traveling Presiding High Council" (D&C 107:23, 33). These titles distinguished their role and responsibility from that of the standing high councils organized in Ohio and Missouri. The Twelve Apostles were to travel throughout the world, proclaiming the gospel as "special witnesses of the name of Christ" and "regulat[ing] all the affairs of [the Church] in all nations" (D&C 107:23, 33).



The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23)

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught what it means for Apostles to be special witnesses of the name of Christ: "The role of an Apostle today is the same as it was anciently (see Acts 1:22; 4:33). Our commission is to go into all the world and proclaim 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (see Mark 16:15; 1 Corinthians 2:2). An Apostle is a missionary and a special witness of the name of Christ. The 'name of Christ' refers to the totality of the Savior's mission, death, and resurrection—His authority, His doctrine, and His unique qualifications as the Son of God to be our Redeemer and our Savior. As special witnesses of the name of Christ, we bear testimony of the reality, divinity, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His infinite and eternal Atonement, and His gospel" ("Special Witnesses of the Name of Christ," *The Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel,* vol. 12, no. 2 [2011], 1).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:21–26. "They form a quorum, equal in authority"

Some have misunderstood the wording of Doctrine and Covenants 107:21–26 and assumed that there are three distinct but equal governing quorums in the Church: the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Quorums of the Seventy. However, the Lord made clear that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles acts "under the direction of the Presidency of the Church" (D&C 107:33) and that the Quorums of the Seventy "act … under the direction of the Twelve" (D&C 107:34).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), after quoting from Doctrine and Covenants 107:24, 26, taught: "The question arises, How can they [the three quorums] be equal in authority? Speaking to this question, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) taught: 'I want here to correct an impression that has grown up to some extent among the people, and that is, that the Twelve Apostles possess equal authority with the First Presidency in the Church. This is correct when there is no other Presidency but the Twelve Apostles; but so long as there are three presiding Elders who possess the presiding authority in the Church, the authority

of the Twelve Apostles is not equal to theirs. If it were so, there would be two equal authorities and two equal quorums in the Priesthood, running parallel, and that could not be, because there must be a head' (*Elders' Journal,* Nov. 1, 1906, 43).

"Likewise, the Seventy, who serve under the direction of the Twelve, would become equal in authority only in the event that the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve were somehow destroyed" ("The Quorum of the First Presidency," *Ensign,* Dec. 2005, 47).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:25, 34, 93–97. The Seventy

The Gospel of Luke records that the Savior "appointed other seventy" in addition to the Twelve Apostles to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and prepare the way before Him (see Luke 10:1–16). As part of the latter-day Restoration of the gospel, men were first called to the office of Seventy in February and March of 1835 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* 255), "according to the vision showing the order of the Seventy" that the Prophet Joseph Smith had received (see D&C 107:93). Members of the Seventy today are "called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses [of Jesus Christ] unto the Gentiles and in all the world" (D&C 107:25).

"The Seventy serve in the name of the Lord under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Seventy," scriptures.lds.org). They "act in the name of the Lord … in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations" (D&C 107:34; see also D&C 107:97). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained: "The Seventies are to constitute traveling quorums, to go into all the earth, whithersoever the Twelve Apostles shall call them" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 142). The Presidents of the Quorums of the Seventy receive priesthood keys to preside over the quorums. The other members of the Seventy do not receive priesthood keys, but they do receive delegated authority to accomplish the work assigned to them.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:27–32. "Every decision made … must be by … unanimous voice"

The presiding quorums of the Church are to make "every decision … by unanimous voice" and "in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart, meekness and long suffering, and in faith, and virtue, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity" (D&C 107:27, 30). When they do this, they have the promise that "they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord" (D&C 107:31), meaning they will be inspired to know the Lord's will. **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the process of reaching a unified agreement: "Can you imagine how the Spirit needs to move upon 15 men to bring about unanimity? These 15 men have varied educational and professional backgrounds, with differing opinions about many things. Trust me! These 15 men—prophets, seers, and revelators—know what the will of the Lord is when unanimity is reached! They are committed to see that the Lord's will truly will be done" ("Sustaining the Prophets," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 75).

Elder David A. Bednar also shared his testimony of the unity achieved through the power of the Holy Ghost: "Serving with these representatives of the Lord, I

have come to know their greatest desire is to discern and do the will of our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son. As we counsel together, inspiration has been received and decisions have been made that reflect a degree of light and truth far beyond human intelligence, reasoning, and experience. As we work together in unity on perplexing problems, our collective understanding of an issue has been enlarged in marvelous ways by the power of the Holy Ghost" ("Chosen to Bear Testimony of My Name," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2015, 129).

How does knowing that the presiding quorums of the Church receive "the knowledge of the Lord" (D&C 107:31) as they make decisions in unity and righteousness influence your willingness to sustain them?

Doctrine and Covenants 107:39–57

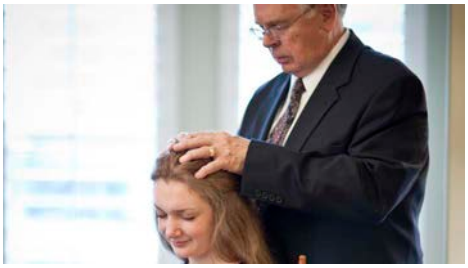
The Lord reveals the patriarchal nature of the Melchizedek Priesthood

Read Doctrine and Covenants 107:39–57, looking for what the Lord taught about "evangelical ministers" (D&C 107:39), or patriarchs, and how the Melchizedek priesthood was conferred anciently.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:39. "It is the duty of the Twelve … to ordain evangelical ministers … by revelation"

One of the duties of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is to appoint "evangelical ministers … by revelation" (D&C 107:39). These evangelical ministers are also referred to in scripture as "evangelists" (see Ephesians 4:11). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "An evangelist is a Patriarch. … Wherever the Church of Christ is established in the earth, there should be a Patriarch for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints, as it was with Jacob in giving his patriarchal blessing unto his sons" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 140).

The office of patriarch is an ordained office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. In the Church today, patriarchs are called and ordained by stake presidents, acting under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to give patriarchal blessings to Church members. A patriarchal blessing contains the Lord's counsel to the person receiving the blessing and declares that person's lineage in the house of Israel.



Patriarch is an ordained office in the Melchizedek Priesthood (see D&C 107:39).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:40–56. "The order of this priesthood"

"The order of this priesthood" has reference to the patriarchal order of the priesthood, which was "handed down from father to son" (D&C 107:40).

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: "The priesthood which prevailed from Adam to Moses was the Patriarchal Order, yet it was only a part of the Melchizedek Priesthood. All of the ancient patriarchs were high priests" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 3:104).

Adam was the first patriarch and was responsible for blessing his posterity and helping them live righteously. Before his death, Adam assembled "the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing" (D&C 107:53). At this meeting "the Lord appeared unto them, and … administered comfort unto Adam" and blessed him, and Adam "predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation" (D&C 107:54–56). Sometime before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, a similar meeting will be held in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman (see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–14 and Doctrine and Covenants 116 in this manual).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that Adam blessed his posterity because "he wanted to bring them into the presence of God" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 105).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught that Adam brought his posterity into God's presence by administering the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood:

"How did Adam bring his descendants into the presence of the Lord?

"The answer: Adam and his descendants entered into the priesthood order of God. Today we would say they went to the House of the Lord and received their blessings.

"The order of priesthood spoken of in the scriptures is sometimes referred to as the patriarchal order because it came down from father to son.

"But this order is otherwise described in modern revelation as an order of family government where a man and woman enter into a covenant with God—just as did Adam and Eve—to be sealed for eternity, to have posterity, and to do the will and work of God throughout their mortality.

"If a couple are true to their covenants, they are entitled to the blessing of the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. These covenants today can only be entered into by going to the House of the Lord.

"Adam followed this order and brought his posterity into the presence of God. He is the great example for us to follow" ("What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple," *Ensign,* Aug. 1985, 9).

Doctrine and Covenants 107:58–98

The Lord outlines the duties of priesthood quorums and quorum presidents

Read Doctrine and Covenants 107:58–98, looking for the duties of priesthood quorums and quorum presidents.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:71–75. The office of bishop

The Lord outlined two main responsibilities of a bishop—to administer the "temporal" affairs of the Church and "to be a judge in Israel" (see D&C 107:71–72). A bishop's duties to oversee the temporal affairs of a ward include receiving the funds of the Church in the form of tithing, fast offerings, and other donations and seeking out the poor and needy and caring for them (see D&C 72:10–12).

As a judge in Israel, a bishop also has the responsibility to determine his ward members' individual worthiness. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** explained ways in which a bishop serves as a judge in Israel: "The bishop is the judge and the shepherd who has the power of discernment and the right to revelation and inspiration for the guidance of the flock. He is responsible for holding worthiness interviews in order to authorize attendance at the temple, callings to ward positions, ordinations to priesthood offices, and the callings of missionaries. He administers formal and informal discipline for violation of the laws of the Church, and he counsels and helps members avoid the necessity for discipline" ("Bishop, Help!" *Ensign,* May 1997, 22).

For more information about the duties of a bishop, see also the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 72:9–19 in this manual.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 107:99–100, looking for what the Lord expects of those who serve in the Church.

Doctrine and Covenants 107:99–100. "Let every man learn his duty, and to act … in all diligence"

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 107 concludes with a charge to each priesthood leader and priesthood holder to "learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99). Only by fulfilling their priesthood duties, which include helping others gain salvation, can priesthood holders be approved and "be counted worthy to stand" of the Lord (D&C 107:100).

Speaking to priesthood holders, **President Thomas S. Monson** taught:

"The priesthood is not so much a gift as it is a commission to serve, a privilege to lift, and an opportunity to bless the lives of others.

"With these opportunities come responsibilities and duties. I love and cherish the noble word *duty* and all that it implies. …

"We have been taught the specific duties of the priesthood which we hold, whether it be the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood. I urge you to contemplate those duties and then do all within your power to fulfill them. In order to do so, each must be worthy. Let us have ready hands, clean hands, and willing hands, that we may participate in providing what our Heavenly Father would have others receive from Him. If we are not worthy, it is possible to lose the power of the priesthood; and if we lose it, we have lost the essence of exaltation. Let us be worthy to serve. …

"Brethren, the world is in need of our help. Are we doing all we should? Do we remember the words of President John Taylor: 'If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty'? [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (2001), 164]. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. The blessings of eternity await you" ("Willing and Worthy to Serve," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 66–67, 69).

Ponder how your life has been blessed by someone who diligently learned and fulfilled his or her duty. What can you do to better learn your duty and faithfully fulfill it?

Doctrine and Covenants 108: Additional Historical Background

Lyman Sherman was a personal friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He and his wife, Delcena, along with other family members, joined the Church in January 1832 in New York. The following year, Lyman moved his family to Kirtland, Ohio. Lyman was a faithful member of the Church who served in Zion's Camp and was called as one of the seven Presidents of the Quorum of the Seventy. In January 1839, Lyman was called to fill a vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, but he died before receiving the Prophet Joseph Smith's letter about his new calling. (See Lisa Olsen Tait, "'Wrought Upon' to Seek a Revelation," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 225–27, or history.lds.org.)

In a journal entry for December 26, 1835, the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded: "Lyman Sherman … requested to have the word of the Lord through me, [saying,] 'I have been wrought upon to make known to you my feelings and desires and was promised that I should have a revelation which should make known my duty' " (*The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* ed. Dean C. Jessee and others [2008], 137; capitalization and punctuation standardized). In response, the Prophet called upon the Lord and received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 108.

Doctrine and Covenants 108

The Lord's counsel to Lyman Sherman

Read Doctrine and Covenants 108, looking for the Lord's blessing and counsel to Lyman Sherman.

Doctrine and Covenants 108:4–6. "Wait patiently until the solemn assembly"

For an explanation of the solemn assembly referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 108:4, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–76 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 108:7. "Strengthen your brethren in all your conversation"

In Doctrine and Covenants 108:7, the word *conversation* refers to a person's conduct or behavior as well as what he or she says and teaches. Thus, the Lord admonished Lyman Sherman to "strengthen [his] brethren" by his example, as well as "in all [his] prayers [and] in all [his] exhortations," or teachings (D&C 108:7).

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught that Church members have the responsibility to help strengthen others:

"In your associations one with another, build and strengthen one another. …

"It is a responsibility divinely laid upon us to bear one another's burdens, to strengthen one another, to encourage one another, to lift one another, to look for the good in one another, and to emphasize that good" (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 45).

Ponder a time when you have been strengthened by another person's words or actions. Think about ways in which you can strengthen those around you.

CHAPTER 43

Doctrine and Covenants 109–10

Introduction and Timeline

The cornerstones of the Kirtland Temple were laid on July 23, 1833. During the next three years, Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, made great sacrifices to build the temple in obedience to the Lord's commandment (see D&C 88:119; 95:8–9). While preparing for the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith, assisted by Oliver Cowdery, wrote a prayer, "given to him by revelation" (D&C 109, section heading), which he offered at the dedicatory service held on Sunday, March 27, 1836. This prayer is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 109 and contains pleas to the Lord to "accept the dedication of [the temple] unto [Him]," (D&C 109:78), to bless "all people who shall enter [it]" (D&C 109:13), and to "remember all [His] church, … that the kingdom, which [He has] set up without hands, may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth" (D&C 109:72).

On April 3, 1836, Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. The prophets Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appeared and restored important priesthood keys. An account of these appearances is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 110.

Early June 1833

Church members began constructing the temple in Kirtland, Ohio.

March 27, 1836

The Prophet Joseph Smith read the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, later recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 109.

March 30, 1836

Jesus Christ appeared to some of those gathered in a solemn assembly meeting in the Kirtland Temple.

April 3, 1836

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw and heard Jesus Christ and received priesthood keys from Moses, Elias, and Elijah in the Kirtland Temple, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 110.

What are some challenges or choices you are currently facing with which you would welcome God's influence and power? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 109–10, look for principles that will help you receive God's power in your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 109: Additional Historical Background

Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, worked for about two and a half years to fulfill the Lord's commandment to build "a house of God" (D&C 88:119). On March 26, 1836, "[the Prophet Joseph Smith], Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and [the Prophet's] two scribes, Warren A. Cowdery and Warren Parrish, met in the president's room on the attic floor of the temple to prepare for the dedication. Oliver Cowdery noted in his diary that at this meeting he 'assisted in writing a prayer for the dedication of the house'" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* ed. Brent M. Rogers and others [2017], 189). The written prayer "was given to [the Prophet Joseph Smith] by revelation" (D&C 109, section heading).

The following morning—Sunday, March 27—"a crowd of approximately one thousand people filled the [temple] to capacity." This left hundreds of people still outside, including many who had made sacrifices to help build the temple. At the Prophet's suggestion, "some of those unable to enter held a meeting in the adjacent schoolhouse while others returned home to await a second dedicatory event." The dedication began with an opening prayer and hymn, after which "[Sidney] Rigdon addressed the congregation for two and a half hours on a variety of topics. [He] then presented [Joseph Smith's] name to the congregation" for sustaining as "Prophet and Seer" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 189; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* ed. Dean C. Jessee and others [2008], 200, 203). After a 20-minute break, the Prophet Joseph Smith briefly spoke to the congregation and called for a sustaining vote of Church leaders. The Prophet then read aloud the dedicatory prayer. The meeting concluded with the congregation giving the Hosanna Shout, which they did by loudly proclaiming, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna to God and the Lamb, Amen, Amen and Amen!" three times (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 209; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* 203–11.) The Kirtland Temple dedication has served as a pattern for the dedication of other temples.



Doctrine and Covenants 109:1–28

The Prophet Joseph Smith asks the Lord to accept the Kirtland Temple and to bless those who worship there

Read Doctrine and Covenants 109:1–13, looking for some of the purposes for building the Kirtland Temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:1–5. "Thy servants have done according to thy commandment"

In a revelation received in June 1833, the Lord chastised Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, for not having begun constructing the temple there (see D&C 95). There were only 150 Church members living in the Ohio area at the time, and none of them were qualified to manage such a project. The estimated cost of $40,000 for construction likely exceeded and stretched the resources of the Saints over the next three years. (See Lisa Olsen Tait and Brent Rogers, "A House for Our God," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 169, or history.lds.org.) However, the Lord promised these Saints that if they kept His commandments, they would "have power to build [the temple]" (D&C 95:11). Church members spent nearly three years toiling and sacrificing to build the Lord's house. In the Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer, offered on March 27, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith acknowledged the sacrifices of the Saints who had generously donated their time and "substance" to build the temple, despite their "great tribulation" and "poverty" (D&C 109:5). Sister Eliza R. Snow, who lived in Kirtland when the temple was built, described the Saints' faith and sacrifice:

"The Saints were few in number, and most of them very poor; and, had it not been for the assurance that God had spoken, and had commanded that a house should be built to His name, … an attempt towards building that Temple, under the then existing circumstances, would have been, by all concerned, pronounced preposterous. …

"With very little capital except brain, bone and sinew, combined with unwavering trust in God, men, women, and even children worked with their might; … all living abstemiously [sparingly] as possible, so that every cent might be [used for] the grand object, while their energies were stimulated by the prospect of participating in the blessing of a house built by the direction of the Most High and accepted by Him" (in *Eliza R. Snow, an Immortal* [1957], 54, 57).



The Saints generously donated their time and "substance" to build the Kirtland Temple despite their "great tribulation" and "poverty" (D&C 109:5).

"In summer and fall 1835, men and women worked side by side to complete the temple. Men generally did masonry work, drove cattle, and hauled rock, while women generally spun, knit, and wove clothes for workers. … Women also worked on the veils, or curtains, that hung in the House of the Lord" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 188). "Children even helped by gathering broken dishes and glassware, which were [ground up and] added to the stucco [used to plaster the temple] to help it glisten in the sun" (Tait and Rogers, "A House for Our God," 171, or history.lds.org). To help finance the construction of the temple, many members donated whatever of their means they could. Thus, by their combined faith and sacrifice, the Saints built a temple where the Savior could "manifest himself to his people" (D&C 109:5).

President Thomas S. Monson explained why Latter-day Saints have always been willing to sacrifice to build temples and worship the Lord in these holy buildings:

"Some degree of sacrifice has ever been associated with temple building and with temple attendance. Countless are those who have labored and struggled in order to obtain for themselves and for their families the blessings which are found in the temples of God.

"Why are so many willing to give so much in order to receive the blessings of the temple? Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings" ("The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 92).



***Windows of Heaven*, by David Lindsley. Church members spent nearly three years toiling and sacrificing to build the Lord's house in Kirtland, Ohio.**

Bishop H. David Burton, who served as Presiding Bishop of the Church, suggested ways Latter-day Saints today can make sacrifices so that temple work can go forward: "The season of opportunity that awaits us today, in temple service, is different from that of the past. We are not expected to pound nails, carve stone, mill lumber, pour concrete, or physically participate in the construction of temples. We are, however, extended a marvelous opportunity to faithfully pay our tithes so temple construction and the work of the Lord may go forward. We are also challenged to be worthy to offer ourselves in the service of providing sacred saving ordinances for those who have preceded us. Very simply stated, the great opportunity of Latter-day Saint families is to see that the lights of our temples burn early and late in the day. Perhaps we could create the need for them to burn all night as they do presently on weekends in several temples" ("A Season of Opportunity," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 11).

Doctrine and Covenants 109:5. A place for the Lord "to manifest himself to his people"

Anciently, temples were places of revelation where the Lord showed Himself to His people (see Exodus 19:10–17; 25:8, 22; 1 Kings 6:11–13). Similarly, the Lord had promised Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, that if they would "build a house unto [Him] in the name of the Lord, and … not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, [His] glory [would] rest upon it; … and [His] presence [would] be there" (D&C 97:15–16). This promise was particularly fulfilled from January to May 1836, when many significant spiritual manifestations occurred during meetings held in the Kirtland Temple. On March 30, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith noted that "the Saviour made his appearance to some, while angels ministered unto others" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 221; spelling standardized).

The Kirtland Temple was built "that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people" (D&C 109:5). The word *manifest* means to reveal or make known. **Elder John A. Widtsoe** (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified: "It is a great promise that to the temples God will come, and that in them man shall see God. What does this promised communion mean? Does it mean that once in a while God may come into the temples, and that once in a while the pure in heart may see God there; or does it mean the larger thing, that the pure in heart who go into the temples, may, there, by the Spirit of God, always have a wonderfully rich communion with God? I think that is what it means to me and to

you and to most of us. We have gone into these holy houses, with our minds freed from the ordinary earthly cares, and have literally felt the presence of God. In this way, the temples are always places where God manifests himself to man and increases his intelligence. A temple is a place of revelation" (in "Temple Worship," *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine,* vol. 12 [April 1921], 56).

See also the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–17 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:6–11. "Call your solemn assembly"

For an explanation of the solemn assembly referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 109:6–11, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–76 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:12–13. "All people who shall enter … may feel thy power"

When the Kirtland Temple was dedicated, it became "sanctified and consecrated to be holy," a place where the Lord's "holy presence may be continually" (D&C 109:12). In the dedicatory prayer, the Prophet Joseph Smith pleaded with the Lord that all those who entered the temple would feel His power . This requested blessing continues to be fulfilled today whenever individuals worthily participate in temple worship. **President Howard W. Hunter** (1907–1995) taught:

"We again emphasize the personal blessings of temple worship and the sanctity and safety that are provided within those hallowed walls. It is the house of the Lord, a place of revelation and of peace. As we attend the temple, we learn more richly and deeply the purpose of life and the significance of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us make the temple, with temple worship and temple covenants and temple marriage, our ultimate earthly goal and the supreme mortal experience. …

"All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple. This is because the temple ordinances are absolutely crucial; we cannot return to God's presence without them. I encourage everyone to worthily attend the temple or to work toward the day when you can enter that holy house to receive your ordinances and covenants" ("Follow the Son of God," *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 87–88).

In what ways have you felt the Lord's influence and power as you have worshipped and served in the temple?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 109:14–28, looking for additional blessings promised to those who worship in the temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:15. "A fulness of the Holy Ghost"

During the Kirtland Temple dedication, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed to the Father that all those who worshipped in the temple would "grow up in [Him], and receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 109:15). **Elder D. Todd Christofferson**

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "In all the ordinances, especially those of the temple, we are endowed with power from on high. This 'power of godliness' comes in the person and by the influence of the Holy Ghost" ("The Power of Covenants," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 22). As Latter-day Saints receive the ordinances of the temple and faithfully keep their covenants, they obtain the fulness of blessings that come through the power of the Holy Ghost, including personal sanctification and godliness. **Elder Christofferson** further explained, "The 'fulness of the Holy Ghost' [D&C 109:15] includes what Jesus described as 'the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son' (D&C 88:4–5)" ("The Power of Covenants," 23, note 5).

Doctrine and Covenants 109:20–21. "No unclean thing shall be permitted to come into thy house"

The Old Testament Psalmist declared:

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:3–4).

The same standard is maintained in the latter days with God's "house" (D&C 109:20). **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:

"Inscribed on each temple are the words 'Holiness to the Lord.' That statement designates both the temple and its purposes as holy. Those who enter the temple are also to bear the attributes of holiness. …

"… Our Redeemer requires that His temples be protected from desecration. No unclean thing may enter His hallowed house [see D&C 109:20; see also Isaiah 52:11; Alma 11:37; 3 Nephi 27:19]. Yet anyone is welcome who prepares well" ("Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings," *Ensign,* May 2001, 32–33).



Approximately 1,000 people passed through the doors of the Kirtland Temple to participate in the dedication on March 27, 1836.

In the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed that the Lord would be merciful to His people, so that when they "transgress, … they may speedily repent and return unto [Him], and find favor in [His] sight, and be restored to the blessings" of the temple (D&C 109:21). **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered the following invitation: "If you have made covenants, keep them. If you haven't made them, make them. If you have made them and broken them, repent and repair them. It is *never* too late so long as the Master of the vineyard says there is time. Please listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit telling you right now, this very moment, that you should accept the atoning gift of the Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy the fellowship of His labor" ("The Laborers in the Vineyard," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 33).

Doctrine and Covenants 109:22–23. The Lord's servants receive power in the temple to preach the gospel

One of the blessings requested by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer was that those who participated in temple worship would be "armed with [God's] power" as they spread the truth of the gospel "unto the ends of the earth" (D&C 109:22–23). **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "In the house of the Lord, faithful Church members can be endowed 'with power from on high' [D&C 95:8], power that will enable us to resist temptation, honor covenants, obey the Lord's commandments, and bear fervent, fearless testimony of the gospel to family, friends, and neighbors" ("Cultivating Divine Attributes," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 27).

While anyone can receive power and protection through temple ordinances and temple worship, the requested blessings recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 109:22–23 are meant specifically for those who "go forth" from the temple to

declare the "exceedingly great and glorious tidings" of the restored gospel. **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that called missionaries "can be armed with power [see D&C 109:22] through the covenants and ordinances of the holy temple. Going to the temple and having the spirit of the temple go through you precedes effective service as a full-time missionary" ("Called to the Work," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2017, 70).



Landscape with Kirtland Temple, **by Al Rounds. The Kirtland Temple, Kirtland, Ohio**

Doctrine and Covenants 109:24–28. What blessings come as we "honorably hold a name and standing" in the temple?

When followers of Jesus Christ enter into a covenant to take upon them His name, they are identified as His (see D&C 18:21–24). The Prophet Joseph Smith's inspired prayer for the dedication of the Kirtland Temple indicates that the process of taking upon oneself the name of Jesus Christ is associated with temple worship (see D&C 109:22, 26). **Elder David A. Bednar** taught:

"In modern revelations the Lord refers to temples as houses 'built unto my name' (D&C 105:33; see also D&C 109:2–5; 124:39). In the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith petitioned the Father 'that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them' (D&C 109:22). He also asked for a blessing 'over thy people upon whom thy name shall be put in this house' (v. 26). And as the Lord appeared in and accepted the Kirtland Temple as His house, He declared, 'For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house' (D&C 110:7).

"These scriptures help us understand that the process of taking upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ that is commenced in the waters of baptism is continued and enlarged in the house of the Lord. As we stand in the waters of baptism, we look to the temple. As we partake of the sacrament, we look to the temple. We pledge to

always remember the Savior and to keep His commandments as preparation to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and receive the highest blessings available through the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, in the ordinances of the holy temple we more completely and fully take upon us the name of Jesus Christ" ("Honorably Hold a Name and Standing," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 98).

Regarding the blessings requested by the Prophet Joseph Smith that are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 109:24–28, **Elder Bednar** explained:

"Please consider these verses in light of the current raging of the adversary and … our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and the blessing of protection promised to those who honorably hold a name and standing in the holy temple. Significantly, these covenant blessings are to all generations and for all eternity. I invite you to study repeatedly and ponder prayerfully the implications of these scriptures in your life and for your family.

"We should not be surprised by Satan's efforts to thwart or discredit temple worship and work. The devil despises the purity in and the power of the Lord's house. And the protection available to each of us in and through temple ordinances and covenants stands as a great obstacle to the evil designs of Lucifer. …

"We do now and will yet face great challenges to the work of the Lord. But like the pioneers who found the place which God for them prepared, so we will fresh courage take, knowing our God will never us forsake (see 'Come, Come, Ye Saints,' *Hymns,* no. 30). Today temples dot the earth as sacred places of ordinances and covenants, of edification, and of refuge from the storm" ("Honorably Hold a Name and Standing," 99–100).

When have you felt power and protection from participating in temple ordinances and keeping temple covenants?

Doctrine and Covenants 109:29–80

The Prophet Joseph Smith asks the Lord to "have mercy upon [His] people" and others and to "accept the dedication of this house"

Read Doctrine and Covenants 109:29–46, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith requested of the Lord after the Kirtland Temple was completed.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:35–39. "As upon those on the day of Pentecost"

"As part of the law of Moses, the Feast of Pentecost or Firstfruits was held fifty days after the Feast of the Passover (Lev. 23:16). Pentecost was to celebrate the harvest, and in the Old Testament it is called the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks. It is this feast that was being celebrated when the Apostles in Jerusalem were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues (Acts 2; D&C 109:36–37)" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Pentecost," scriptures.lds.org).

At the Kirtland Temple dedication, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed that the Lord would "let it be fulfilled upon [the Saints there], as upon those on the day of Pentecost" (D&C 109:36). On that New Testament day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was manifested to the Savior's disciples by the appearance of "cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues" (Acts 2:3–4). The house where they were gathered was filled with "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" (Acts 2:2). That sacred experience helped prepare the early disciples to "be witnesses unto [Jesus Christ] … unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Prophet Joseph Smith later recorded that powerful manifestations of God's love and power were evident during the Kirtland Temple dedication and in many other meetings held in the temple during that period of time: "It was a Pentecost and [an endowment] indeed, long to be remembered for the sound shall go forth from this place into all the world, and the occurrences of this day shall be handed down upon the pages of sacred history to all generations, as the day of Pentecost, so shall this day be numbered and celebrated as a year of Jubilee and time of rejoicing to the Saints of the Most High God" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 221; spelling and capitalization standardized).



The Kirtland Temple was dedicated on March 27, 1836.

Other Church members recorded some of the spiritual manifestations that occurred during meetings at the temple. One participant wrote, "Angels of God came into the room, cloven tongues rested upon some of the servants of the Lord like unto fire, [and] they spake with tongues and prophesied," and another wrote that "one saw a pillar or cloud rest down upon the house bright as when the sun shines on a cloud like as gold, two others saw three personages … in the room with bright keys

in their hands." Oliver Cowdery recorded: "The spirit was poured out—I saw the glory of God, like a great cloud, come down and rest upon the house, and fill the same like a mighty rushing wind." (In *The Joseph Smith Papers: Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 190–91.)

Read Doctrine and Covenants 109:47–80, looking for whom the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed and what we can do to help others during times of difficulty.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:55–67. "May all the scattered remnants of Israel … come to a knowledge of the truth"

One of the purposes of the Kirtland Temple was to prepare the Lord's servants to proclaim the message of the gospel to all the earth, including to "all the scattered remnants of [the house of] Israel" (D&C 109:67). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844), along with his counselors in the First Presidency, declared:

"The work of the Lord in these last days, is one of vast magnitude and almost beyond the comprehension of mortals. Its glories are past description, and its grandeur unsurpassable. It is the theme which has animated the bosom of prophets and righteous men from the creation of the world down through every succeeding generation to the present time; and it is truly the dispensation of the fullness of times, when all things which are in Christ Jesus, whether in heaven or on the earth, shall be gathered together in Him, and when all things shall be restored, as spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began; for in it will take place the glorious fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers, while the manifestations of the power of the Most High will be great, glorious, and sublime. …

"… The work which has to be accomplished in the last days is one of vast importance, and will call into action the energy, skill, talent, and ability of the Saints, so that it may roll forth with that glory and majesty described by the prophet [see Daniel 2:34–35, 44–45]; and will consequently require the concentration of the Saints, to accomplish works of such magnitude and grandeur.

"The work of the gathering spoken of in the Scriptures will be necessary to bring about the glories of the last dispensation (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 512–13).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** also taught: "We are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory, … when the Saints of God will be gathered in one from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, when the Jews will be gathered together into one, the wicked will also be gathered together to be destroyed, as spoken of by the prophets; the Spirit of God will also dwell with His people, and be withdrawn from the rest of the nations, and all things whether in heaven or on earth will be in one, even in Christ" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 513–14).

Doctrine and Covenants 109:72–76. "That thy church may come forth out of the wilderness of darkness, and shine forth"

In the Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer, the Prophet Joseph Smith used Bible imagery to prophesy of the Church's latter-day purpose (for example, compare D&C 109:72 with Daniel 2:44–45; D&C 109:74 with Isaiah 40:4–5; D&C 109:75 with 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

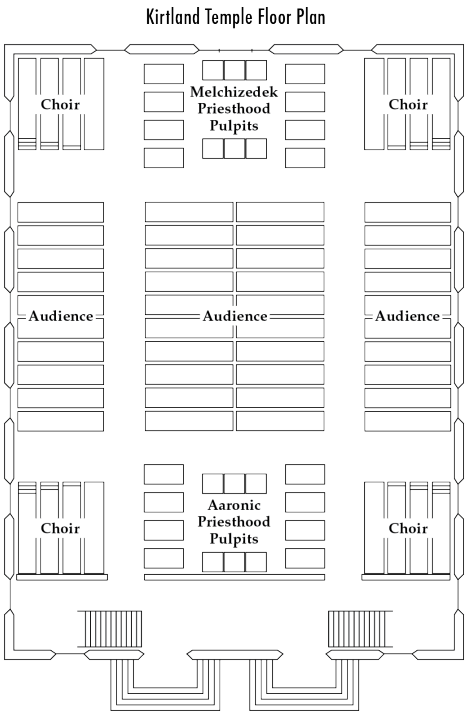
Referring to the imagery in Doctrine and Covenants 109:72–73, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) taught:

"We are witnessing the answer to that remarkable pleading. Increasingly the Church is being recognized at home and abroad for what it truly is. There are still those, not a few, who criticize and rebel, who apostatize and lift their voices against this work. We have always had them. They speak their piece as they walk across the stage of life, and then they are soon forgotten. I suppose we always will have them as long as we are trying to do the work of the Lord. The honest in heart will detect that which is true and that which is false. We go forward, marching as an army with banners emblazoned with the everlasting truth. We are a cause that is militant for truth and goodness. We are a body of Christian soldiers 'marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before' ('Onward, Christian Soldiers,' *Hymns,* no. 246).

"Everywhere we go we see great vitality in this work. There is enthusiasm wherever it is organized. It is the work of the Redeemer. It is the gospel of good news. It is something to be happy and excited about" ("Remember … Thy Church, O Lord," *Ensign,* May 1996, 83).

Doctrine and Covenants 110: Additional Historical Background

On Easter Sunday, April 3, 1836, one week after the Kirtland Temple was dedicated, approximately 1,000 people gathered in the temple to worship. During the morning meeting they were instructed by Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten, who were the senior members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. That afternoon the Prophet Joseph Smith assisted members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the administration of the sacrament to the congregation (see *The Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* 219). Later in the meeting, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery went to the elevated pulpits on the west end of the lower court of the temple and lowered the "veils," or canvas curtains, that surrounded the pulpits (see *The Joseph Smith Papers: Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 225). After they prayed, the Prophet and Oliver had a vision of the glorified Jesus Christ, who spoke to them. That visitation was followed by the appearance of Moses, Elias, and Elijah, who committed priesthood keys to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. An account of that sacred experience was recorded in the Prophet's journal and was later published as Doctrine and Covenants 110.



An outline of the main floor of the Kirtland Temple showing the sets of raised pulpits at each end of the room

Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–10

The Savior appears in glory and accepts the Kirtland Temple as His house

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–10, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded concerning Jesus Christ's appearance and teachings in the Kirtland Temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–5. The Savior appears to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

The appearance of heavenly beings—especially of Jesus Christ Himself—witnessed by participants in the Restoration reaffirms the truthfulness of the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A revelation recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants explains how these heavenly visitations were made possible: "No man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God"

(D&C 67:11). Thus, a mortal person must be transfigured—or temporarily lifted to a higher spiritual level—in order to endure the presence of a glorified being (see Moses 1:11). The Prophet Joseph Smith also explained that during a vision that he and Oliver Cowdery had of the Savior, the "eyes of [their] understanding were opened"—meaning that through the aid of the Holy Ghost, unseen spiritual things became visible (see D&C 110:1).



Jesus Christ Appears to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowder, **by Walter Rane. The Savior appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and accepted the Kirtland Temple as His house on April 3, 1836 (see D&C 110:1–7).**

The appearance of the resurrected Savior to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple fulfilled the promise He had given that "inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, … my presence shall be there, for I will come into it" (D&C 97:15–16).

Doctrine and Covenants 110:6–7. "I have accepted this house"

During the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith pled with the Lord "to accept of this house, … which thou didst command us to build" (D&C 109:4; see also D&C 109:78). One week later Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and said: "Let the hearts of all my people rejoice. … For behold, I have accepted this house" (Doctrine and Covenants 110:6–7).

Doctrine and Covenants 110:9–10. "The hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice"

When Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Olivery Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, He declared the far-reaching impact that the endowment of power and the bestowal of priesthood keys would have in the lives of "thousands

and tens of thousands" (see D&C 110:9, 16). **President Boyd K. Packer** (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "[In 1836] the Lord prophesied that the 'fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands.' (D&C 110:10.) That, under the circumstances then existing, was at best improbable. The Church members were but a handful of Saints living and scattered in the rural areas of a new land. But despite the persecution and struggles and trials of those early days, there are congregations now spread literally across the world, and tens of thousands of missionaries bear witness at every door where they are welcome" (*The Holy Temple* [1980], 135).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained how the Kirtland Temple differed from temples built afterward:

"The Kirtland Temple holds a peculiar place in the annals of temple building. It is not like other temples. It was built primarily for the restoration of keys of authority. In the receiving of these keys the fulness of the gospel ordinances is revealed. …

"In the Kirtland Temple there was no provision made for the salvation of the dead. It had no baptismal font, for it was only a preparatory temple. It had no provision for the endowment ordinances which were later revealed. It was a temple, however, and fully answered the purpose of its creation.

"The Kirtland Temple filled its mission shortly after the time of its dedication" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 2:242).

Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16

Moses, Elias, and Elijah commit priesthood keys to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16, looking for what the priesthood keys committed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple enable the Lord's servants to do.

Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16. Priesthood keys are committed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

Following the vision of Jesus Christ in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were visited by three ancient prophets—Moses, Elias, and Elijah—who committed specific priesthood keys to them. **President Russell M. Nelson** explained that these keys were committed to Joseph and Oliver as part of "the restoration of all things" (D&C 27:6) in the dispensation of the fulness of times:

"Priesthood authority has existed in many dispensations, such as those of Adam, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, the meridian of time, the Jaredites, the Nephites, and others. All previous dispensations were limited in time, as each ended in apostasy. They were also limited to small segments of planet Earth. In contrast, our dispensation—the dispensation of the fulness of times—will not be limited in time or place. Globally, it will host a whole, complete, and perfect union, welding together dispensations, keys, powers, and glories from the days of Adam even to the present time [see D&C 128:18].

"The Aaronic Priesthood was restored May 15, 1829, by John the Baptist; the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored shortly thereafter by Peter, James, and John [see Joseph Smith—History 1:72; D&C 27:8, 12]. Other heavenly messengers conveyed specific keys of the priesthood. Moroni held the keys of the Book of Mormon [see D&C 27:5]. Moses brought keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes [see D&C 110:11]. Elias conveyed keys of the restoration of all things [see D&C 27:6], including the Abrahamic covenant [see D&C 110:12]. And Elijah conferred keys of the sealing authority [see D&C 27:9; 110:13–16].

"You know something about keys. In your pocket there might be a key to your home or car. Priesthood keys, on the other hand, are intangible and invisible. They 'switch on' the authority of the priesthood. Some keys even convey power to bind in heaven as well as on earth [see Matthew 16:19; 18:18; D&C 124:93; 127:7; 128:8, 10; 132:46].

"Joseph Smith conferred priesthood keys upon all of the Twelve. Those keys have been transferred to successive leaders. Today [the President of the Church] holds authority for every restored key held by 'all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation' [D&C 112:31; see also D&C 128:18]" ("Personal Priesthood Responsibility," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2003, 45–46).

Doctrine and Covenants 110:11. Moses and the gathering of Israel

The prophet Moses committed the keys of the gathering of Israel to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (see D&C 110:11). The Prophet had been told earlier that he was "appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church" and "to preside over the whole Church, and to be like unto Moses" (D&C 28:2; 107:91). He was to "lead [the Church members] like as Moses led the children of Israel" (D&C 103:16). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** explained: "Moses held the keys of the gathering of Israel. He led Israel out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. It was his appointment in this dispensation to come and restore those keys for the modern gathering" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 2:48). Not long after Moses committed the keys of the gathering of Israel to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet began exercising these keys as he sent missionaries out into the world to assist in the gathering. These missionaries included Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, and others, who traveled to England in 1837 and baptized nearly 2,000 people.

Doctrine and Covenants 110:12. Elias and "the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham"

During their visions in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were also visited by Elias, who committed priesthood keys associated with "the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham" (D&C 110:12). The title Elias can designate one who is a forerunner—sent to prepare the way—and one who is sent to be a restorer (see Guide to the Scriptures, "Elias," scriptures.lds.org).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) explained the mission of the Elias who appeared in the Kirtland Temple: "The man Elias brings back 'the gospel of Abraham,' the great Abrahamic covenant whereby the faithful receive promises of eternal increase, promises that through celestial marriage their eternal posterity shall be as numerous as the sands upon the seashore or as the stars in heaven for multitude. Elias gives the promise—received of old by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that in modern men and in their seed all generations shall be blessed. And we are now offering the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to all who will receive them" ("The Keys of the Kingdom," *Ensign,* May 1983, 22).



Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 (see D&C 110:11–13). (Artwork by Gary E. Smith.)

Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–15. Elijah and the sealing power

The Old Testament prophecy that the prophet Elijah would return to the earth to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (see Malachi 4:5–6) was fulfilled by his appearance in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836. **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency taught:

"In the great vision in the Kirtland Temple, Elijah the prophet appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and committed the keys of temple work and the sealing power into Joseph Smith's hands [see D&C 110:13–14, 16]. This fulfilled Malachi's prophecy that Elijah would be sent 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse' [see D&C 110:14–15].

"So what does this mean? To turn our hearts to our fathers is to search out the names of our deceased ancestors and to perform the saving ordinances in the temple for them. This will forge a continuous chain between us and our forefathers eventually all the way back to Father Adam and Mother Eve. …

"The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us that the celestial family organization will be 'one that is *complete,*' that is, 'an organization linked from father and mother and children of one generation, to the father and mother and children of the next generation, thus expanding and spreading out down to the end of time' (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 2:175)" ("The Phenomenon That Is You," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2003, 55).

President Russell M. Nelson explained:

"Elijah came to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to the fathers.

"With that, natural affection between generations began to be enriched. This restoration was accompanied by what is sometimes called the Spirit of Elijah—a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family" ("A New Harvest Time," *Ensign,* May 1998, 34).

As our hearts turn to our ancestors, we desire to find necessary information to perform saving ordinances on their behalf and to be sealed to them. By doing so, we become saviors on Mount Zion, as the **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained:

"What is the object of [the coming of Elijah]? or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion [see Obadiah 1:21].

"But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 472–73).

We can choose to become instruments in the Lord's hands in performing the work of salvation for our ancestors and for others who have died. **Elder Richard G. Scott** (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invited each of us to consider what we can do to participate in the work of redeeming the dead:

"I testify that the Spirit of Elijah is touching the hearts of many of Father's children throughout the world, causing the work for the dead to accelerate at an unprecedented pace.

"But what about you? Have you prayed about your own ancestors' work? Set aside those things in your life that don't really matter. Decide to do something that will have eternal consequences. Perhaps you have been prompted to look for ancestors but feel you are not a genealogist. Can you see that you don't have to be anymore? It all begins with love and a sincere desire to help those beyond the veil who can't help themselves. Check around. There will be someone in your area who can help you have success.

"This work is a spiritual work, a monumental effort of cooperation on both sides of the veil, where help is given in both directions. Anywhere you are in the world, with prayer, faith, determination, diligence, and some sacrifice, you can make a powerful contribution. Begin now. I promise you that the Lord will help you find a way. And it will make you feel wonderful" ("The Joy of Redeeming the Dead," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2012, 95).

How have you been blessed by the priesthood keys and powers that Moses, Elias, and Elijah committed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple?

Ponder what you have learned about the importance of the temple from Doctrine and Covenants 109–10. Set a goal to prepare yourself to worship and serve worthily in the house of the Lord.

CHAPTER 44

Doctrine and Covenants 111–14

Introduction and Timeline

In the summer of 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders traveled to Salem, Massachusetts, to search for means to help pay the Church's debts. On August 6, 1836, while these brethren were in Salem, the Lord gave the Prophet the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 111. In it He assured the Prophet that there was "much treasure in [Salem] … for the benefit of Zion" (D&C 111:2) and addressed concerns about the Church's debts and Zion's future.

In 1837, Thomas B. Marsh, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was concerned about rebellion and dissension among members of that quorum in Kirtland, Ohio. He also had questions about missionary work. He sought counsel from the Prophet Joseph Smith, and on July 23, 1837, the Lord gave the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112, in which He instructed Thomas B. Marsh regarding the work of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Thomas's calling as its President.

In March 1838, after relocating to Far West, Missouri, from Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated inspired answers to questions about certain passages of Isaiah. These questions and answers are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 113 and clarify Isaiah's prophecies about the latter-day Restoration and the redemption of Zion.

On April 11, 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 114. In this revelation the Lord directed David W. Patten to prepare for a future mission and warned rebellious Church leaders that they would lose "their bishopric," or calling, if they were not faithful (D&C 114:2).

August 5, 1836

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions arrived in Salem, Massachusetts.

August 6, 1836

Doctrine and Covenants 111 was received.

Spring and summer 1837

Various Church members and leaders in Kirtland, Ohio, spoke out against the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Summer 1837

Apostles Thomas B. Marsh, David W. Patten, and William Smith traveled from Far West, Missouri, to Kirtland, Ohio, to address rebellion and dissension in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

July 23, 1837

Doctrine and Covenants 112 was received.

January 12, 1838

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon fled Kirtland, Ohio, and began traveling to Far West, Missouri, to escape mob violence.

March 1838

Doctrine and Covenants 113 was received.

April 11, 1838

Doctrine and Covenants 114 was received.

October 25, 1838

Six months after the Lord addressed him in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 114, Elder David W. Patten was fatally shot during the battle of Crooked River.

Think of circumstances in which you need the Lord's guidance. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 111–14, look for truths that can help you qualify to receive this guidance.

Doctrine and Covenants 111: Additional Historical Background

On July 25, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery left Kirtland, Ohio, and traveled to New York City and Boston

before arriving in Salem, Massachusetts, on August 5, 1836. They stayed in Salem for three weeks before returning to Kirtland in mid-September. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* ed. Brent M. Rogers and others [2017], 271–72.) While no documents from that time period explain why these Church leaders went to Salem, later accounts give some insight into possible reasons for their trip.

In the summer of 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were deeply concerned about the Church's finances. In the preceding years the Church had accumulated heavy debts as Church leaders had obeyed the Lord's commandments to build the Kirtland Temple, to purchase lands in Ohio and Missouri, and to fund Zion's Camp. The Church also needed funds to buy land for Church members in Missouri who had been forced from their homes. In 1834 the Lord had instructed the Prophet and other Church leaders to "pay all [their] debts" (D&C 104:78). However, they had been unable to do so because they had lost income-producing businesses, such as Sidney Gilbert's store and William W. Phelps's printing office in Independence, Missouri.

Fifty-three years after the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions visited Salem, Massachusetts, Ebenezer Robinson, a former Church member, wrote an account regarding this visit. He claimed that a Church member named Brother Burgess came to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836 and "stated that a large amount of money had been secreted in the cellar of a certain house in Salem, Massachusetts, which had belonged to a widow, and he thought he was the only person now living, who had knowledge of it, or the location of the house" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 274).

It is possible that the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders heard Brother Burgess's claim and decided to travel to Salem, Massachusetts, to search for the hidden money so they could pay some of the Church's debts. According to Robinson's account, Brother Burgess met the brethren in Salem but could not identify the house where the money was hidden because he no longer recognized the city, and he left Salem soon thereafter (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 274). The Prophet Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, and Hyrum Smith leased a house in Salem and spent the next several weeks preaching the gospel, visiting local historical sites, and trying to obtain a treasure that could help pay their debts. On August 6, 1836, one day after arriving in Salem, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 111. It was not published in the Doctrine and Covenants during the Prophet's lifetime. It was first included in the 1876 edition (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 277).



Doctrine and Covenants 111

The Lord comforts the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders regarding their journey to Salem and reassures them about the Church's debts and Zion's future

Read Doctrine and Covenants 111, looking for what the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith about his journey to Salem, Massachusetts.

Doctrine and Covenants 111:1. "I … am not displeased … , notwithstanding your follies"

It appears that one of the purposes for the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions to travel to Salem, Massachusetts, was to try to improve the Church's financial situation. They may have viewed Brother Burgess's claim about money hidden in a house as a possible fulfillment of the Lord's promise to "send means unto [them] for [their] deliverance" (D&C 104:80) from their debts.

The Lord understood His servants' motives for traveling to Salem and declared "I, the Lord your God, am not displeased with your coming this journey [to Salem], notwithstanding [despite] your follies" (D&C 111:1). A *folly* is a mistake or error in judgment. It may have been a "folly" for these brethren to rely on Brother Burgess's claim and their own efforts to solve the Church's financial difficulties. However, throughout the rest of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 111 the Lord mercifully promised them ongoing help and guidance.

The Lord's acknowledgement of these Church leaders' mistakes helps clarify the distinction between making mistakes and committing sin. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles acknowledged that we all make mistakes and taught that our mistakes can help us progress:

"Mistakes are inevitable in the process of growth in mortality. To avoid all possibility of error is to avoid all possibility of growth. In the parable of the talents, the Savior told of a servant who was so anxious to minimize the risk of loss through a mistaken investment that he hid up his talent and did nothing with it. That servant was condemned by his master (see Matt. 25:24–30).

"If we are willing to be corrected for our mistakes … innocent mistakes can be a source of growth and progress" ("Sins and Mistakes," *Ensign,* October 1996, 67).

Even though the Prophet and his companions had made mistakes, the Lord taught them what to do in order to turn their journey into a fruitful endeavor. Similarly, as we sincerely strive to obey Him, the Lord can help us accomplish much good despite our mistakes.

How might it help you to know that if you sincerely strive to obey the Lord, He can help you accomplish much good despite your mistakes?

Doctrine and Covenants 111:2–4. "I have much treasure in this city for you"

The Lord explained that He had "much treasure in [Salem, Massachusetts]" and that there were "many people in [Salem], whom [He would] gather out in due time for the benefit of Zion" (D&C 111:2). The Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions did not record having any missionary success during their stay in Salem, but their visit bore fruit five years after this promise was given. "At a Philadelphia[, Pennsylvania,] Church conference in July 1841, Hyrum Smith and William Law of the First Presidency left instructions for Elders Erastus Snow and Benjamin Winchester about Salem. These instructions included a copy of [the revelation now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 111] and expressed the First Presidency's belief that 'the due time of the Lord had come' for the revelation to be

fulfilled and the people of Salem to be gathered into His kingdom" (Elizabeth Kuehn, "More Treasures Than One," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 230, or history.lds.org; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 275).

Elders Snow and Winchester arrived in Salem, Massachusetts, on September 3, 1841. They preached tirelessly but initially had no success. A week later, Elder Winchester went to Philadelphia and Elder Snow remained in Salem. After preaching for several months, Elder Snow baptized the first converts in Salem, in November 1841. On March 5, 1842, he organized a branch in Salem consisting of 53 members. By February 1843 the Salem branch had more than doubled to 110 members. While some of these converts remained in Salem to help the Church grow in that area, many of them eventually moved to Nauvoo, Illinois, and then migrated with the Saints to the Salt Lake Valley. (See Kuehn, "More Treasures Than One," 232, or history.lds.org; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 275.)

In addition to promising the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions that there were "many people in [Salem], whom [He would] gather out … for the benefit of Zion" (D&C 111:2), the Lord promised, "I will give this city into your hands, that you shall have power over it" (D&C 111:4). The Lord then quoted the Hebrew idiom "They shall not discover your secret parts" (D&C 111:4; see also Isaiah 3:17), meaning that Church members would not be publicly humiliated or looked down upon. He also indicated that the wealth of Salem "pertaining to gold and silver [would] be [theirs]" (D&C 111:4), suggesting that the temporal riches found in Salem would also benefit Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 111:5. "Concern not yourselves about your debts"

On April 23, 1834, the Lord told Church leaders to "pay all [their] debts," and promised, "Inasmuch as you are diligent and humble, and exercise the prayer of faith, behold, I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, until I shall send means unto you for your deliverance" (D&C 104:78, 80). Two years later the Church had gone into greater debt to purchase land for and build the Kirtland Temple, to purchase lands in Ohio and Missouri, and to fund Zion's Camp. The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders grew increasingly worried about how they would pay the Church's debts. In the revelation the Prophet Joseph Smith received on August 6, 1836, at Salem, Massachusetts, the Lord again comforted Church leaders: "Concern not yourselves about your debts, for I will give you power to pay them" (D&C 111:5). The Lord fulfilled His promise in His time, and eventually the Church was able to pay all of its debts (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* [2011], 159–60).

Doctrine and Covenants 111:7–8. "The place where it is my will that you should tarry … shall be signalized unto you by … my Spirit"

The Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions to "tarry in [Salem, Massachusetts], and in the regions round about" (D&C 111:7). He promised these Church leaders that they would know where to "tarry," or stay, "by the peace and power of [His] Spirit" (D&C 111:8). We too can receive the Lord's direction through the promptings of the Spirit.



The Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in August 1836 while staying near here on Union Street in Salem, Massachusetts.

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared an experience that illustrates this principle. He explained that before he was called as a General Authority, a retail company that had employed him for several years merged with a larger company.

"Within a matter of months I found myself in a very difficult situation. The new owners wanted me to violate a trust that I felt I just could not do. After long discussions, they continued to insist and I continued to refuse. Seeing there was no way to break the deadlock, I agreed to leave the company. The timing for me was devastating. I had a wife who was seriously ill and required a lot of medical attention, a daughter away to college, and a son on a mission. I spent the next year just getting enough consulting work to pay my expenses.

"After struggling for about one year, a company called me from California and invited me to come out and talk to them about working for them. I went out and negotiated a very good contract; I was delighted with the opportunity. I told them that I had to return home and discuss it with my family before I could give an answer. I returned home and after a careful discussion, I convinced my family that it was the right thing to do. In the process of calling the firm to accept the offer, a voice just as strong and powerful as I have ever heard came to me and said, 'Say no to the offer.' I could not ignore the voice, so I turned the offer down, but I was distressed. I could not comprehend why I had been told to do such a thing. I went upstairs to my bedroom, sat on the bed, opened the scriptures, and they fell open to the Doctrine and Covenants, section 111. This was the only section given in the state of Massachusetts, where my home was at that particular time. These words literally jumped out of the page and met my eye:

"'Concern not yourselves about your debts, … I will give you power to pay them. …

"'Tarry in this place, and in the regions round about' (D&C 111:5, 7).

"A great peace came to my soul. Within just a few days I was offered a fine position in Boston. A few months later I had the great privilege of hosting a conference in which President Harold B. Lee, then First Counselor in the First Presidency, was the featured speaker. The conference was a glorious success as we feasted on the words of President Lee. The following July, President Joseph Fielding Smith passed away and President Lee became the prophet. Three months later I was asked to come to Salt Lake, where I received a call to leave my profession and join the General Authorities.

"I have often wondered what would have happened if I had not heeded the Holy Spirit in its counseling me not to leave Boston" ("That Spirit Which Leadeth to Do Good," *Ensign,* May 1997, 69–70).

When has the Lord guided you by "the peace and power of [His] Spirit" (D&C 111:8)?

Doctrine and Covenants 111:9–10. "Inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders of this city"

In obedience to the Lord's command to "inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders of this city" (D&C 111:9), during their stay in Salem, Massachusetts, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions traveled throughout Salem and its surrounding areas visiting museums, historical sites, and libraries (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 278, note 248). They learned more about the city's founding by the Puritan pilgrims in the early 1600s and about the American Revolutionary War and the establishment of the United States (see Manuscript History of the Church, vol. B-1, page 749, josephsmithpapers.org).

Some of the brethren spent time learning about the Salem witch trials (see Oliver Cowdery, "Prospectus," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate,* Oct. 1836, 388–91). In addition, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions visited the remains of the Charlestown Ursuline Convent, which had been destroyed by an anti-Catholic mob motivated by religious intolerance. Referring to this experience, the Prophet wrote: "When will man cease to war with man, and wrest from him his sacred right, of worshiping his God according as his conscience dictates? Holy Father, hasten the day" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. B-1, page 749, josephsmithpapers.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 111:11. "I will order all things for your good, as fast as ye are able to receive them"

In His wisdom, mercy, and foreknowledge, the Lord had granted the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions opportunities to learn from their "follies" (D&C 111:1) and to benefit from their present experiences while laying the foundation for the people of Salem, Massachusetts, to receive future blessings. The Lord can "order," or arrange, "all things for [our] good" as we remain faithful to Him. Blessings and opportunities for growth may not always come in ways we expect, but they will come in proper proportion and at the right time, "as fast as [we] are able to receive them" (D&C 111:11).

When have you seen the Lord "order all things for [your] good" (D&C 111:11) as you have tried to remain faithful to Him?

Doctrine and Covenants 112: Additional Historical Background

In October 1836, as part of their plans to develop the city of Kirtland, Ohio, and to alleviate Church debt, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders bought property in and around Kirtland and prepared to open a bank in Kirtland, to be named the Kirtland Safety Society Bank (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 285).

After failing to receive a bank charter, or the authority to enact banking transactions, from the State of Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders reorganized the Kirtland Safety Society as a joint-stock company on January 2, 1837. This meant that Church members could become part owners in the Kirtland Safety Society by buying stock, or shares in the company, thus helping fund the company's operations. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 286–89.) In the January 1837 edition of the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate,* the Prophet called upon Church members to buy stock in the new institution (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 325).

The Kirtland Safety Society faced opposition almost immediately after it opened. Local newspapers ran stories claiming the Safety Society's banknotes were worthless and warned readers not to accept them. Individuals in and around Kirtland also "actively campaigned against the Kirtland Safety Society" by spreading rumors that the Safety Society had stopped doing business and would not allow customers to trade in their banknotes for regular currency (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 287–88). Several lawsuits were also filed against the Safety Society's leaders for performing bank-like operations without a bank charter. In addition, the Safety Society encountered problems with underfunding by its stockholders. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 291–93.) Adding to these challenges, a national economic crisis, later known as the Panic of 1837, began in the spring of 1837 and forced hundreds of banks to close throughout the United States (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 363).



The Kirtland Safety Society Bank opened in January 1837, but a national economic crisis and opposition against the Church led to it being closed just months later.

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his family had made significant investments in the Kirtland Safety Society and may have had the most to lose if it did not continue. However, as the Safety Society faced ongoing challenges, Joseph and other members of the Smith family, based on his recommendation, chose not to redeem their shares as others had. Instead, they turned their stock over to Oliver Granger and Jared Carter to ensure that all debts were fully settled. (See Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting for Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations*

[2009], 528.) By July of that year, the Prophet Joseph Smith had transferred the operation of the Kirtland Safety Society to others (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 418). Near the end of the summer of 1837, the Kirtland Safety Society ended (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 366).

The Church also faced other challenges during this time. Eliza R. Snow, who later served as the second General President of the Relief Society, noted that many Church members in Kirtland became prideful and lost the Spirit of the Lord. She wrote: "A great change had been going on in Kirtland, in the midst of the Saints. A spirit of speculation [a desire to become rich] had crept into the hearts of some of the Twelve, and nearly, if not every quorum was more or less infected" (*Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* [1884], 20). Throughout 1837, economic distress and opposition against the Church steadily increased. Several Church leaders and members spoke out publicly against the Prophet Joseph Smith, blaming him for the Kirtland Safety Society's troubles and even calling him a fallen prophet. Only two members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in Kirtland—Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball—continued to support the Prophet during this period. (See Ronald K. Esplin, "'Exalt Not Yourselves': The Revelations and Thomas B. Marsh, an Object Lesson for Our Day," in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Doctrine and Covenants,* ed. Craig K. Manscill [2004], 281.)

Thomas B. Marsh, who was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and living in Missouri at the time, heard about the difficulties Church members were having in Kirtland, Ohio, and learned that some of his fellow Quorum members were among those rebelling against the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was deeply concerned. He was also upset when he learned that fellow Apostle Parley P. Pratt planned on leaving for a foreign mission without seeking the Quorum President's counsel. President Marsh believed it was his duty as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to oversee missions abroad. (See Esplin, "Exalt Not Yourselves," 281–82.)

On May 10, 1837, President Marsh and Elder David W. Patten sent a letter to Parley P. Pratt, advising him not to leave on his mission without meeting with them first. In the letter, President Marsh also called each member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to a meeting to be held on July 24, 1837, in Kirtland, Ohio, to work out their difficulties and to plan a mission to Great Britain, which the Quorum had talked about serving since the previous February. (See "Letterbook 2," pages 62–63, josephsmithpapers.org.) President Marsh, Elder Patten, and Elder William Smith traveled from Far West, Missouri, to Kirtland, Ohio, in the summer of 1837 to attend the July 24 meeting with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Before they arrived in Kirtland, however, the Prophet Joseph Smith called Elder Heber C. Kimball on a mission to England, and Elder Orson Hyde expressed his desire to go as well. The two Apostles left Kirtland on June 13, 1837, for their missions to England. When President Marsh arrived in Kirtland on July 8, 1837, he was upset to learn that Elders Kimball and Hyde had been called on missions without his approval. (See Esplin, "Exalt Not Yourselves," 281–83; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 410–11.)

Even though President Marsh was upset about the mission calls, he worked diligently to restore harmony among the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who were in Kirtland. Although he was partly successful in doing so during the first few weeks after his arrival, he "was still troubled—troubled that members of his quorum had rebelled and also troubled that missionary work abroad was proceeding without him. Concerned about his own status and wondering if the Lord could still accept the Twelve, he went to [the Prophet Joseph Smith] on July 23 … to discuss his concerns" (Esplin, "Exalt Not Yourselves," 283). In response, the Prophet received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112.



Doctrine and Covenants 112

The Lord instructs Thomas B. Marsh concerning the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his role as its President

Read Doctrine and Covenants 112:1–10, looking for what the Lord told Thomas B. Marsh.

Doctrine and Covenants 112:1–2. "There have been some few things in thine heart … with which I, the Lord, was not well pleased"

Although the Lord commended Thomas B. Marsh for praying and working to help his fellow members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, He also acknowledged, "There have been some few things in thine heart and with thee with which I, the Lord, was not well pleased" (D&C 112:2). While we do not know exactly why the Lord was not "well pleased," it may be that Thomas B. Marsh was still upset that the Prophet Joseph Smith had called Elders Kimball and Hyde to serve in England without consulting him.

Doctrine and Covenants 112:3–10. The Lord promises blessings to Thomas B. Marsh if he remains humble

Even though President Thomas B. Marsh, as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, may have been upset that he was not the first missionary sent abroad in this dispensation or that he was not the one to direct that work, the Lord told him to "be of good cheer" because he would yet have the opportunity to "send forth [His] word unto the ends of the earth" and to preach "among many nations" (D&C 112:4, 7). President Marsh's future opportunities, just like the opportunities the Lord has planned for any of His children, were based upon his faithfulness. He did not remain faithful and, therefore, did not qualify to receive these promised opportunities. Ironically, the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles departed for another mission to England in 1839, one year after Thomas B. Marsh apostatized from the Church.

In addition to telling Thomas B. Marsh about his future opportunities, the Lord also gave him specific counsel. The Lord's counsel for him to "contend … morning by morning; and day after day let thy warning voice go forth" (D&C 112:5) suggests that as a missionary he was to "contend," or to be bold in declaring his message. The Lord also counseled President Marsh to continue to live in Missouri and to continue publishing Church materials (see D&C 112:6). While there is no specific record of it, as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Thomas B. Marsh may have wondered if he should move there to help maintain unity and order within the Quorum.

The Lord also told Thomas B. Marsh that he needed to be humble in order to be led by God and receive answers to his prayers (see D&C 112:10). **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) used this counsel when he taught what we can do to humble ourselves so that we too can qualify for the Lord's guidance:

"There is no place for arrogance in our lives. There is no place for conceit. There is no place for egotism. We have a great work to do. We have things to accomplish. We need direction in the pursuit of our education. We need help in choosing an eternal companion.

"The Lord has said, 'Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers' (D&C 112:10).

"What a tremendous promise is given in this statement. If we are without conceit and pride and arrogance, if we are humble and obedient, then the Lord will lead us by the hand and answer our prayers. What greater thing could we ask for? There is nothing to compare with this. …

"I believe the meek and the humble are those who are teachable. They are willing to learn. They are willing to listen to the whisperings of the still, small voice for guidance in their lives. They place the wisdom of the Lord above their own wisdom" ("A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Ensign,* Jan. 2001, 10).

What are some ways in which you could humble yourself to better qualify for the Lord's guidance?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 112:11–15, looking for what the Lord told Thomas B. Marsh about his role as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Doctrine and Covenants 112:11–14. Thomas B. Marsh's role as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

When Thomas B. Marsh approached the Prophet Joseph Smith and asked for a revelation from God, he was worried about the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and wanted to know how he could help them as the President of that Quorum. The Lord counseled him to "be not partial towards them in love above many others, but let thy love be for them as for thyself. … And pray for thy brethren of the Twelve" (D&C 112:11–12). The Lord also told him to "admonish them sharply for my name's sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins" (D&C 112:12). The Lord promised President Marsh, "If they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them" (D&C 112:13).

The Lord's counsel to Thomas B. Marsh concerning his role as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112:11–13, can apply to anyone called to lead, teach, or watch over others. Those called to lead or watch over others should (1) love those they are called to lead; (2) pray for them; (3) counsel, advise, and warn them about sin and its consequences; and (4) recognize that each person has agency and must choose for himself or herself whether to follow the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 112:15. "Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph"

During the tumultuous times of 1837, some members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles living in Kirtland, Ohio, were guilty of exalting themselves, or believing they were better or more intelligent than others, and of rebelling against the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 112:15). For example, because many Church members experienced economic difficulties in 1837, several members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and other Church members publicly criticized the Prophet Joseph Smith for his handling of the Church's business dealings. President Brigham Young recalled that some felt that the Prophet should not involve himself in temporal affairs (see *Discourses of Brigham Young,* sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 461).

President Young also wrote about an experience that took place during this time, in which he stood in support of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "On a certain occasion several of the Twelve, the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, and others of the Authorities of the Church, held a council in the upper room of the Temple. The question before them was to ascertain how the Prophet Joseph could be deposed, and David Whitmer appointed President of the Church. Father John Smith, brother Heber C. Kimball and others were present, who were opposed to such measures. I rose up, and in a plain and forcible manner told them that Joseph was a Prophet, and I knew it, and that they might rail and slander him as much as they pleased, they could not destroy the appointment of the Prophet of God, they could only destroy their own authority, cut the thread that bound them to the Prophet and to God and sink themselves to hell" (in *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801–1844,* ed. Elden Jay Watson [1968], 15–16; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 79).

On May 29, 1837, "apostles Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and Orson Pratt made formal charges against members of the church presidency, including [Joseph Smith], whom Pratt and Lyman Johnson accused of lying, extortion, and disrespect" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 365). In June other Apostles, including Parley P. Praatt and John F. Boynton, came out against the Prophet.

The Lord's rebuke recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112 was a reminder to the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and to all Church members that Joseph Smith was still God's chosen Prophet and that he held the keys of this dispensation and would have them until the Lord comes (see D&C 112:15).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 112:16–34, looking for how the Lord intended the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to work together "to open the door" of salvation to the nations of the earth (D&C 112:21).

Doctrine and Covenants 112:23–26. "And upon my house shall it begin"

Doctrine and Covenants 112:23 echoes Isaiah's ancient prophecy describing apostasy among the inhabitants of the earth (see Isaiah 60:2). Doctrine and Covenants 112:24–26 indicates the order in which God's judgments will occur. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "The Lord has clearly indicated that His purifying and sifting judgment would begin *first* at the house of God and then proceed outward to the world. (See 1 Pet. 4:17; D&C 112:25.)" ("Be of Good Cheer," *Ensign,* Nov. 1982, 68). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112, the Lord warned Church members living in Kirtland, Ohio, that if they did not repent of their wickedness, they would be the first to receive His punishments (see D&C 112:25–26).

Doctrine and Covenants 112:30–33. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles hold the keys of "the dispensation of the fulness of times"

When the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112, the Church was still relatively young and some matters of Church

government had not previously been defined. In this revelation the Lord explained the relationship between the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the priesthood keys they hold. The First Presidency is the highest governing quorum of the Church, and as such its members are "counselors and … leaders" to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (D&C 112:30). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) declared: "I … hold the keys of the last kingdom, in which is the dispensation of the fullness of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy Prophets since the world began, under the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 511).

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that ever since these priesthood keys were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "there has been an unbroken line of authority. The priesthood keys given to the Apostles have always been held by members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve" ("The Twelve," *Ensign* and *Liahona,* May 2008, 84).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave the following explanation about the priesthood keys members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles hold:

"The keys of the kingdom of God—the right and power of eternal presidency by which the earthly kingdom is governed—these keys, having first been revealed from heaven, are given by the spirit of revelation to each man who is both ordained an Apostle and set apart as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

"But since keys are the right of presidency, they can only be exercised in their fulness by one man on earth at a time. He is always the senior Apostle, the presiding Apostle, the presiding high priest, the presiding elder. He alone can give direction to all others, direction from which none is exempt.

"Thus, the keys, though vested in all of the Twelve, are used by any one of them to a limited degree only, unless and until one of them attains that seniority which makes him the Lord's anointed on earth" ("The Keys of the Kingdom," *Ensign,* May 1983, 22–23).

Doctrine and Covenants 112:34. "Be faithful until I come"

For a time, Thomas B. Marsh followed the counsel he received in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 112. He worked to strengthen the Church and sustain the Prophet Joseph Smith, and in July 1837 he left on a mission to Canada along with the Prophet and several others. However, after he returned to Far West, Missouri, he "fell prey to a spirit of apostasy, as had many others" (Kay Darowski, "The Faith and Fall of Thomas Marsh," in McBride and Goldberg, *Revelations in Context,* 57, or history.lds.org). He became concerned about conflicts between disobedient and aggressive Church members in Missouri and their neighbors. In addition, in September 1838, his wife, Elizabeth, became involved in a dispute. She and Lucinda Harris, both members of the Church, had agreed to regularly exchange milk so they would each have enough milk to make cheese, but Sister Marsh was accused of violating her agreement by keeping "the strippings," which is the creamier part of the milk. The matter was brought before Church leaders more than once and was eventually brought before the First Presidency. Each time, Church leaders decided that Sister Marsh was at fault. Thomas B. Marsh disagreed

with these decisions and was angry. (See Darowski, "The Faith and Fall of Thomas Marsh," 57–58, or history.lds.org; see also George A. Smith, "Discourse," *Deseret News,* Apr. 16, 1856, 44.)

While the situation regarding the milk strippings was not the reason Thomas B. Marsh left the Church, it added to his other frustrations, and he became increasingly critical of Church leaders. In October 1838 he signed an affidavit, a sworn statement, that Church members in Missouri were planning violence against their neighbors, which contributed to the extermination order that led to 15,000 Church members being driven out of Missouri (see Darowski, "The Faith and Fall of Thomas Marsh," 58, or history.lds.org; see also George A. Smith, "Discourse," 44). He later recalled, "I became jealous of the Prophet … and overlooked everything that was right, and spent all my time in looking for the evil, and then when the devil began to lead me it was easy for the carnal mind to rise up, which is anger, jealousy and wrath" ("Remarks," *Deseret News,* Sept. 16, 1857, 220). Thomas B. Marsh spent almost 20 years away from the Church. He ultimately reconciled with the Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah, in September 1857.

What are some things you can do that will help you remain faithful and follow God's prophet?

Doctrine and Covenants 113: Additional Historical Background

By July 1837, dissent among Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, had diminished. In late September 1837 the Prophet Joseph Smith and several others traveled to Missouri to conduct Church business there. When they returned to Kirtland in December 1837, they found that some Church members were once again speaking out against the Prophet. By January 1838, "divisions in Kirtland became more pronounced … as dissidents, excommunicated church members, and others made threats against the lives of [Joseph Smith] and other church leaders." On January 12, 1838, the Prophet received a revelation that directed the members of the First Presidency and all their "faithfull friends" to leave Kirtland and go to Missouri as soon as possible. The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon left Kirtland that night. Their families joined them in Norton, Ohio, later, and by January 16 they had left for Missouri. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 441–42.)



***The Prophet Isaiah Foretells Christ's Birth,* by Harry Anderson. The Prophet Joseph Smith provided inspired answers to questions about the writings of the prophet Isaiah.**

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his family arrived in Far West, Missouri, on March 14, 1838 (see Manuscript History of the Church, vol. B-1, page 784, josephsmithpapers.org). Soon after his arrival in Missouri, the Prophet began keeping a record book that included questions about passages in Isaiah and the Lord's answers to those questions. The historical record offers little detail about those who may have asked the questions and why, although Elias Higbee, a Church member and judge living in Far West, Missouri, in 1838, is named as having asked questions about Isaiah 52:1–2 (see D&C 113:7). (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* ed. Mark Ashurst-McGee and others [2017], 50–51.) Although no details are given regarding the circumstances in which these questions were asked, the questions and the Lord's answers to these questions are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 113.

Doctrine and Covenants 113

The Lord answers questions about passages in Isaiah

Read Doctrine and Covenants 113, looking for what the Lord revealed to help us understand certain passages in Isaiah.

Doctrine and Covenants 113:1–6. "The Stem of Jesse," "the rod," and "the root of Jesse"

On September 21, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and told him "that God had a work for [him] to do" (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). The angel also told him about the golden plates and the Urim and Thummim and then began quoting prophecies recorded in the Old Testament (see Joseph Smith—History 1:34–41). While reciting those prophecies, Moroni quoted Isaiah 11, "saying that it was about to be fulfilled" (see Joseph Smith—History 1:40). Nearly 15 years later, in March 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith addressed questions about Isaiah 11, and the inspired answers he received explain some elements of this prophecy.

Doctrine and Covenants 113:1–2 states that "the Stem of Jesse" is Jesus Christ. The word *stem* in Isaiah 11:1 is translated from a Hebrew word that refers to the trunk or stump of a tree—either a tree that has been cut down or a tree that has been planted. Doctrine and Covenants 113:3–6 indicates that "the rod spoken of" in Isaiah 11:1 "is a servant in the hands of Christ," and "the root of Jesse" in Isaiah 11:10 "is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie shared one interpretation of "the rod" and "the root of Jesse" referred to in Isaiah 11:10 and in Doctrine and Covenants 113:3–6: "Are we amiss in saying that the prophet here mentioned is Joseph Smith, to whom the priesthood came, who received the keys of the kingdom, and who raised the ensign for the gathering of the Lord's people in our dispensation? And is he not also the 'servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power'? (D&C 113:4–6.)" (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 339–40).

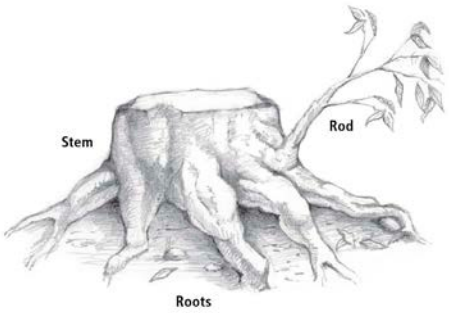


Illustration of analogy in Doctrine and Covenants 113:1–6

What did the Prophet Joseph Smith accomplish as "a servant in the hands of Christ" (D&C 113:4)?

Doctrine and Covenants 113:7–10. "Put on thy strength, O Zion"

Doctrine and Covenants 113:7–10 contains questions that Elias Higbee asked about Isaiah 52 and the answers to those questions. Doctrine and Covenants 113:8 indicates that "the command … which saith: Put on thy strength, O Zion" (D&C 113:7; see Isaiah 52:1) is addressed "to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel." Doctrine and Covenants 113:10 explains that the injunction to Zion to "loos[e] herself from the bands of her neck" (D&C 113:9; see Isaiah 52:2) is a plea for "the scattered remnants" of the house of Israel "to return to the Lord" and receive the fulness of the gospel. The phrase "the bands of her neck" refers to "the curses of God upon [Zion]" (D&C 113:10), which will be loosened, or undone, when God's people are gathered and return to Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 114: Additional Historical Background

David W. Patten was one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when it was first organized in 1835. He was known for his physical strength, his dedicated missionary service, his ability to heal the sick, and his courage in defending his fellow Church members (see Lycurgus A. Wilson, *Life of David W. Patten: The First Apostolic Martyr* [1900], 15–29). In the spring of 1838, David W. Patten, along with Thomas B. Marsh and Brigham Young, was appointed to lead and strengthen the Church in Missouri at a time when several prominent leaders had apostatized (see Wilson, *Life of David W. Patten,* 52–53). On April 11, 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation regarding David W. Patten. This revelation, which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 114, instructed Elder Patten to arrange his personal affairs so that he could serve a mission the following spring.

Approximately six months later, David W. Patten led a group of Mormon militia to rescue three Church members who were being held hostage by a group of Missourians who threatened to murder them and burn out the rest of the Mormons in the area. During the battle that ensued, Elder Patten was gravely wounded, and he died several hours later (see Wilson, *Life of David W. Patten,* 64–69). According to David W. Patten's biographer, President Wilford Woodruff reported that Elder Patten once told the Prophet Joseph Smith "that he had asked the Lord to let him die the death of a martyr, at which the Prophet, greatly moved, expressed extreme sorrow, 'for,' said he to David 'when a man of your faith asks the Lord for anything, he generally gets it' " (in Wilson, *Life of David W. Patten,* 53). On the day of David W. Patten's funeral, the Prophet testified, "There lies a man that has done just as he said he would—he has 'laid down his life for his friends' " (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. B-1, page 10 [addenda]). As a witness to David W. Patten's faithfulness, the Lord later revealed: "My servant David Patten … is with me at this time. … David Patten I have taken unto myself; behold, his priesthood no man taketh from him" (D&C 124:19, 130).



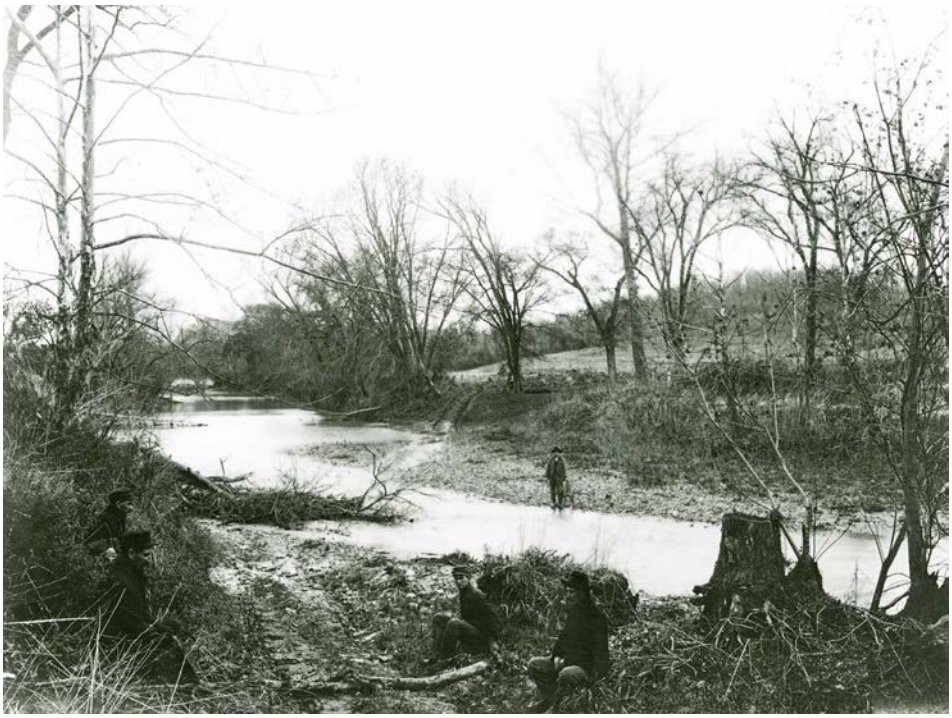
Doctrine and Covenants 114

The Lord directs David W. Patten to prepare for a mission and warns Church members who "deny [His] name"

Read Doctrine and Covenants 114, looking for the Lord's counsel to David W. Patten.

Doctrine and Covenants 114:1. "That he may perform a mission unto me next spring"

Elder David W. Patten, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, obeyed the Lord's counsel recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 114 and put his affairs in order in preparation for serving a mission the following spring (see D&C 114:1). His death, which occurred not long after the Prophet Joseph Smith received this revelation, demonstrates the wisdom of the Lord's counsel to Elder Patten to "settle up all his business as soon as he possibly can" (D&C 114:1). Elder Patten's decision to obey the Lord later became a blessing after receiving a wound in battle that would soon take his life. He was able to depart this life confident that he had kept the faith and that his life was in order.



The battle of Crooked River took place on October 25, 1838, near this location in Ray County, Missouri.

The Lord will also guide us to prepare for whatever He has planned for us if we will trust Him enough to obey His counsel and promptings. **Elder Loren C. Dunn** (1930–2001) of the Seventy encouraged the youth of the Church to exercise faith in God by following the counsel of His prophets: "The Lord, who knows all things (see Abr. 2:8), looks into the future and has his prophets prepare us for events yet to come. Our prophet today … is, by his counsel, preparing us for our personal future" ("The Case of the Chevrolet," *New Era,* Apr. 1983, 4).

Doctrine and Covenants 114:2. "Others shall be planted in their stead and receive their bishopric"

At the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 114 was given, some members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and other Church leaders had apostatized from the Church. The Lord said that those who were not faithful would be replaced by others, who would "receive their bishopric" (D&C 114:2). The word *bishopric* refers to a person's office, or divinely appointed authority and responsibilities given to those who are called to oversee or administer the Church. Three months after the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 114 was received, four brethren were called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles "to fill the places of those who [had] fallen" (D&C 118:6).

What promptings have you received that may prepare you for your future? Make a plan to act on those promptings, and pray for strength to follow that plan.

CHAPTER 45

Doctrine and Covenants 115–20

Introduction and Timeline

On April 26, 1838, shortly after moving to Far West, Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 115. In it the Lord revealed the name of the Church, counseled Church members to "arise and shine forth" (D&C 115:5), and instructed the Saints to build a temple in Far West.

On May 19, 1838, while exploring land north of Far West, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 116. In it the Lord identified Spring Hill, Missouri, as Adam-ondi-Ahman.

On July 8, 1838, in Far West, the Prophet received the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 117–20. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 117, the Lord commanded Newel K. Whitney and William Marks to "settle up their business speedily" in Kirtland, Ohio, and move to Far West (D&C 117:1). Oliver Granger was also called to settle the First Presidency's financial affairs in Kirtland. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 118, the Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith to fill vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and commanded members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to serve missions overseas. In the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 119–20, the Lord addressed the Church's significant financial difficulties by giving instructions regarding the law of tithing and the distribution of tithing funds.

Summer 1836

Church members purchased land and began to settle in an area of northern Missouri that they called Far West.

December 1836

The Missouri state legislature created Caldwell County exclusively for Church members' settlements.

March 14, 1838

Joseph Smith and his family arrived in Far West, Missouri.

April 26, 1838

Doctrine and Covenants 115 was received.

Mid-May 1838

Joseph Smith led an expedition to areas north of Far West, Missouri, to find additional settlement sites for the Saints.

May 19, 1838

Doctrine and Covenants 116 was received.

July 8, 1838

Doctrine and Covenants 117–20 were received.

April 26, 1839

Seven members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles fulfilled prophecy by laying the chief cornerstone of the Far West Temple.

Fall 1839

Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles left on missions to Great Britain.

Think of someone you know who does not currently experience the blessings of the gospel. What are some ways you can help this person? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 115–20, look for doctrine and principles that can help you be a righteous influence on others.

Doctrine and Covenants 115: Additional Historical Background

When Church members were forced to leave Jackson County, Missouri, in late 1833, most of them traveled north and sought refuge in Clay County, Missouri. The citizens of Clay County were friendly toward these Saints at first, but they considered the Saints' settlements in their county to be temporary. While in Clay

County, Church members asked the state and federal governments to help them reclaim their lands in Jackson County but were unsuccessful. In the summer of 1836, Clay County residents passed a resolution demanding that Church members leave the county. Because Church leaders had already purchased land in the northern part of Ray County, Missouri, and planned on moving there, they agreed to the resolution. In the summer and fall of 1836, Church members began moving to areas in northern Ray County, including to an area they named Far West. In December 1836 the Missouri legislature approved the creation of two new small counties, Caldwell County and Daviess County, out of the uninhabited areas of Ray County. Caldwell County was to be exclusively for Church members. (See Alexander L. Baugh, "From High Hopes to Despair: The Missouri Period, 1831–39," *Ensign,* July 2001, 48.)

In early 1837, not long after Caldwell County was created, Church leaders John Whitmer and William W. Phelps drew up plans to develop the city of Far West and selected a future temple site. In April 1837 the Missouri high council debated whether Brother Whitmer and Brother Phelps had authority to draw up these plans, but apparently they decided to proceed because Church members began digging a foundation for the Far West Temple in July 1837. In November 1837 the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon visited Far West and held a council meeting with Missouri Church leaders. During that meeting the council approved plans to develop the city of Far West and build a temple, with the stipulation that they would delay building the temple until they received further direction from the Lord. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* ed. Mark Ashurst-McGee and others [2017], 112–13.)

On April 26, 1838, a few weeks after the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon settled in Far West, Missouri, the Lord revealed His will concerning the building up of the city of Far West and its temple. This revelation is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 115.



Doctrine and Covenants 115

The Lord commands Church members to build up Far West, Missouri, and to construct a temple

Read Doctrine and Covenants 115:1–6, looking for what the Lord told the presiding officers and members of the Church in Far West, Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 115:4. "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"

When the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, the Lord referred to it as "the Church of Christ in these last days" (D&C 20:1). Accordingly, Church members often referred to the early restored Church as the Church of Christ or the Church of Jesus Christ. In a Church conference held in Kirtland, Ohio, on May 3, 1834, "the elders unanimously passed a motion that the name of the church be changed to the Church of the Latter Day Saints" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–December 1835,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2016], 42). Four years later, the Lord declared, "For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (D&C 115:4).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the significance of this revealed name:



"For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (D&C 115:4).

"I have thought a lot about why the Savior gave the nine-word name to His restored Church. It may seem long, but if we think of it as a descriptive overview of what the Church is, it suddenly becomes wonderfully brief, candid, and straightforward. How could any description be more direct and clear and yet expressed in such few words?

"Every word is clarifying and indispensable. The word *The* indicates the unique position of the restored Church among the religions of the world.

"The words *Church of Jesus Christ* declare that it is His Church. In the Book of Mormon, Jesus taught: 'And how be it my church save it be called in my name? … If it be called in the name of a man [like Mormon] then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel' (3 Nephi 27:8). …

"*Of Latter-day* explains that it is the same Church as the Church that Jesus Christ established during His mortal ministry but restored in these latter days. …

"*Saints* means that its members follow Him and strive to do His will, keep His commandments, and prepare once again to live with Him and our Heavenly Father in the future. *Saint* simply refers to those who seek to make their lives holy by covenanting to follow Christ.

"The name the Savior has given to His Church tells us exactly who we are and what we believe" ("The Importance of a Name," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 80).

The **First Presidency** stated: "As the Church grows across boundaries, cultures and languages, the use of the revealed name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (D&C 115:4), is increasingly important in our responsibility to proclaim the name of the Savior throughout all the world. Accordingly, we ask that when we refer to the Church we use its full name wherever possible" (First Presidency letter, Feb. 23, 2001).

Doctrine and Covenants 115:5. "A standard for the nations"

In the scriptures, the words *standard* and *ensign* are often synonymous. An *ensign* is "a flag or standard around which people gather in a unity of purpose or identity. In ancient times an ensign served as a rallying point for soldiers in battle" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Ensign," scriptures.lds.org). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 115, the Lord called upon Church members to "arise and shine forth, that [their] light may be a standard for the nations" (D&C 115:5), thus helping gather the people of the world to His Church and restored gospel.

Sister Elaine S. Dalton, who served as Young Women General President, explained what the Lord's command to "be a standard" means for us: "By the way you live the gospel, you reflect [the Savior's] light. Your example will have a powerful effect for good on the earth. 'Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations' [D&C 115:5] is a call to each of you. It is a call to move to higher ground. It is a call to leadership—to lead out in decency, purity, modesty, and holiness. It is a call to share this light with others. It is time to 'arise and shine forth' " ("It Shows in Your Face," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2006, 109).

Make a plan to better follow the Lord's admonition to "arise and shine forth" and be a "light" to those around you (D&C 115:5). Consider writing your plan on a piece of paper and placing it where you can see it often to remind you of your commitment to be a light to others.

Doctrine and Covenants 115:6. "For a defense, and for a refuge from the storm"

In late 1833, Church members were driven from Jackson County, Missouri, or "the center place" of Zion (see D&C 57:3). After being driven from Jackson County, the Saints viewed their other settlements in Missouri as temporary until they could move back to Zion. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 115, the Lord commanded the Saints to build "a holy and consecrated" city in Far West, Missouri (see D&C 115:7). The Lord also clarified that Church members should gather "upon the land of Zion, *and* upon her stakes" (D&C 115:6; italics added), teaching them that stakes of Zion are also gathering places. "Though the Latter-day Saints were not in Zion's 'centre place' at Independence and were not building 'the City of Zion,' they were commanded to build up *a* city of Zion with a temple" in Far West (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 113).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how stakes, like the one established in Adam-ondi-Ahman, were as much a part of "the land of Zion" (D&C 115:6) as Jackson County and Far West:

"Stakes of Zion are … being organized at the ends of the earth. In this connection, let us ponder these truths: A stake of Zion is a part of Zion. You cannot create a stake of Zion without creating a part of Zion. Zion is the pure in heart; we gain purity of heart by baptism and by obedience. A stake has geographical boundaries. To create a stake is like founding a City of Holiness. Every stake on earth is the gathering place for the lost sheep of Israel who live in its area. …

"… Israel shall be gathered one by one, family by family, unto the stakes of Zion established in all parts of the earth so that the whole earth shall be blessed with the fruits of the gospel" ("Come: Let Israel Build Zion," *Ensign,* May 1977, 118).

The Lord said that "gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes" would be "for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm" (D&C 115:6). "A defense" implies help in resisting or protection from attack, "a refuge" refers to a place of safety or shelter, and "the storm" can refer to tumultuous or frightening surroundings, attacks from enemies of the Church, or Satan's temptations. The Lord also promised that those who gather to the stakes of Zion would be protected "from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (D&C 115:6).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles affirmed that the stakes of the Church provide safety and protection for faithful Latter-day Saints: "In the early years of this last dispensation, a gathering to Zion involved various locations in the United States: to Kirtland, to Missouri, to Nauvoo, and to the tops of the mountains [in Salt Lake City, Utah, and surrounding regions]. Always these were gatherings to prospective temples. With the creation of stakes and the construction of temples in most nations with sizeable populations of the faithful, the current commandment is not to gather to one place but to gather in stakes in our own homelands. There the faithful can enjoy the full blessings of eternity in a house of the Lord. There, in their own homelands, they can obey the Lord's command to enlarge the borders of His people and strengthen her stakes (see D&C 101:21; 133:9, 14). In this way, the stakes of Zion are 'for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth' (D&C 115:6)" ("Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 8).

How has gathering with Church members in stakes of Zion provided "a defense" and "a refuge" (D&C 115:6) for you?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 115:7–19, looking for what the Lord commanded Church members to do in Far West, Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 115:7–16. "Build a house unto me, for the gathering together of my saints"

During a November 6, 1837, council meeting in Far West, Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith and the council members decided to delay constructing the temple there "until revelation directed otherwise" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* ed. Brent M. Rogers and others [2017], 466). In a revelation received April 26, 1838, the Lord commanded the Saints to "let the city, Far West, be a holy and consecrated land unto [Him]" and to "build a house unto [Him], for the gathering together of [His] saints" there (D&C 115:7–8).



A temple site in Far West, Missouri, was dedicated in 1838.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained why the Lord has gathered His people in every dispensation: "What was the object of gathering the … people of God in any age of the world? … The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 416).

The Lord gave specific instructions regarding the building of the temple in Far West. The "beginning of this work, and a foundation, and a preparatory work" was to begin "on the fourth day of July next," or on July 4, 1838 (D&C 115:9–10). And then on April 26, 1839, or "in one year from [the] day" the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 115 was received, Church members were to "re-commence laying the foundation of [His] house" (D&C 115:11). In obedience to the Lord's command, Church leaders laid the cornerstones of the Far West Temple during a ceremony held on July 4, 1838 (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 115, note 559). However, because the Saints were driven from Missouri in the winter of 1838–39, they were unable to finish building the temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 116: Additional Historical Background

With the expectation that many Church members would soon arrive in Missouri from Ohio, and in obedience to the Lord's command that "other places should be appointed for stakes in the regions round about" Far West, Missouri (D&C 115:18), in May 1838 the Prophet Joseph Smith and several others left Far West to explore areas north, in Daviess County, looking for possible settlement sites. As part of their journey, the Prophet and his companions traveled approximately 25 miles north of Far West to a place called Spring Hill, where Lyman Wight and several other Church members had settled. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents,*

Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839, 163.) On May 19, 1838, Joseph Smith and his companions spent time "selecting and laying claims to [a] city plot near [Wight's] Ferry" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* ed. Dean C. Jessee and others [2008], 271; spelling standardized; see also Jacob W. Olmstead, "Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 237, or history.lds.org). The Prophet Joseph Smith's journal entry for May 19, 1838, indicates that on this date the Lord revealed to him that the place they had selected had both historic and future significance (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* 271). This revelation is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 116.

Doctrine and Covenants 116

The Lord reveals the location of Adam-ondi-Ahman

Read Doctrine and Covenants 116, looking for what the Lord revealed about Spring Hill, Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 116:1. Adam-ondi-Ahman

As He had done with other truths of the Restoration, the Lord revealed knowledge about Adam-ondi-Ahman "line upon line, precept upon precept" (D&C 98:12). On March 1, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in which the Lord declared Himself to be "the Lord God, the Holy One of Zion, who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman" (D&C 78:15). Records indicate that in March 1832 the Prophet taught that the word *Awmen,* or *Ahman,* was "the name of God in pure Language" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books,* ed. Robin Scott Jensen and others [2011], 204, 206). On May 19, 1838, the Prophet learned that "Spring Hill[, Missouri,] is named by the Lord Adam-ondi-Ahman" (D&C 116:1). And on July 8, 1838, the Lord affirmed that "Adam-ondi-Ahman … [is] the land where Adam dwelt" (D&C 117:8).

President Brigham Young (1801–1877) recalled the following about the significance of Adam-ondi-Ahman: "Joseph, the Prophet, told me that the Garden of Eden was in Jackson County, Missouri. When Adam was driven out he went to the place we now call Adam-ondi-Ahman, Daviess County, Missouri. There he built an altar and offered sacrifices" (in Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors* [1909], 481).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** further explained:

"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.

"This is why Adam blessed his posterity; he wanted to bring them into the presence of God" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 105; see also D&C 107:53–57).

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 116, the Lord not only revealed the location of Adam-ondi-Ahman but also said that at a future date "Adam shall come [there] to visit his people, or the Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (D&C 116:1; see also Daniel 7:9–14, 22).



Adam-ondi-Ahman in Daviess County, Missouri

Of that future event the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "Daniel in his seventh chapter speaks of the Ancient of Days; he means the oldest man, our Father Adam, Michael; he will call his children together and hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man [see Daniel 7:9–14]. He (Adam) is the father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. … The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe, but retains his standing as head of the human family" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 104).

Within a few weeks of receiving the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 116, the settlement of Adam-ondi-Ahman in Daviess County, Missouri, blossomed as new Saints began to arrive from Ohio. "On 28 June 1838, [Joseph Smith] served as the chairman of a conference to organize a stake of Zion at Adam-ondi-Ahman," and John Smith, an uncle of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was called to be the stake president (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 162; see also Olmstead, "Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman," 239, or history.lds.org). The population of Adam-ondi-Ahman may have grown to as large as 1,500 by the time Church members were forced to evacuate the area in November 1838 (see Baugh, "From High Hopes to Despair," 50).

For more information about Adam-ondi-Ahman, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–14 and 107:40–56 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 117: Additional Historical Background

On July 8, 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated five revelations in Far West, Missouri—the revelations recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 117–20 and one unpublished revelation directed to Frederick G. Williams and William W. Phelps. The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 117 was the final revelation recorded in the Prophet Joseph Smith's journal on that date and was directed to William Marks, Newel K. Whitney, and Oliver Granger.

After the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon fled Kirtland, Ohio, in January 1838, William Marks was appointed to oversee the Church in Kirtland and to settle the Prophet's and Sidney Rigdon's business affairs there. Newell K. Whitney remained as "the bishop in Kirtland, overseeing the temporal operations of the church there," but Brother Marks and Bishop Whitney apparently understood that they should "quickly settle the church's affairs and then move to Missouri in accordance with the 12 January 1838 revelation directing faithful Saints to relocate there" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 191; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 500–502). However, by July 6, 1838, when a large group of Saints left Kirtland, Ohio, for Missouri, Brother Marks and Bishop Whitney were still living in Kirtland (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 191).

Oliver Granger was a member of the Kirtland high council and a financial agent for the Church. He had traveled to Far West, Missouri, from Kirtland, arriving by July 8, 1838. The part of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 117 concerning Brother Granger may have been given as a response to information he gave to the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders in Missouri (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 191).

Doctrine and Covenants 117

The Lord commands William Marks and Newel K. Whitney to leave Kirtland, Ohio, and directs Oliver Granger to settle the First Presidency's business affairs there

Read Doctrine and Covenants 117:1–11, looking for what the Lord told William Marks and Newell K. Whitney after they had delayed moving to Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 117:1–9. "You … covet that which is but the drop, and neglect the more weighty matters"

The rebuke recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 117 indicates that the Lord was displeased that William Marks and Newell K. Whitney had not yet settled their affairs in Kirtland, Ohio, and moved to Missouri (see D&C 117:1), as they had been commanded to do earlier. While it is not clear how quickly they were supposed to

have "settle[d] up their business" and left Kirtland, this revelation indicates that they had not been obedient to the Lord's command.

The Lord commanded William Marks and Newel K. Whitney to "repent of all their covetous desires" that may have prevented them from obeying Him (see D&C 117:4). "As used in the scriptures, to covet is to envy someone or to have an excessive desire for something" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Covet," scriptures.lds.org). After telling these men to "repent of all their sins, and of all their covetous desires," the Lord asked, "For what is property unto me?" (D&C 117:4), emphasizing that their property and other material possessions were "that which is but the drop" compared to what He had prepared for them (D&C 117:8; see also D&C 117:6–7; Moses 1:27–33). He told Brother Marks and Bishop Whitney to "let the properties of Kirtland … go" (D&C 117:5). He pointed out what awaited them in Missouri, asking, "Will I not make solitary places to bud and to blossom and to bring forth in abundance? … Is there not room enough on the mountains of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and on the plains of Olaha Shinehah, or the land where Adam dwelt … ?" (D&C 117:7–8). Concerning this, **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) wrote: "The plains of Olaha Shinehah, or the place where Adam dwelt, must be a part of, or in the vicinity of Adam–Ondi–Ahman" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1946], 3:125).

The Lord then counseled William Marks and Newel K. Whitney not to "neglect the more weighty matters"—ministering to the Saints in Missouri and building up the Lord's kingdom—by focusing on insignificant matters (D&C 117:8). Shortly after this revelation was received, Brother Marks and Bishop Whitney responded with faith to the Lord's chastening counsel and left Kirtland, Ohio, for Missouri (see Olmstead, "Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman," 240, or history.lds.org).

Ponder what insignificant things may be preventing you from obeying God's commandments. Make a commitment to better focus on "the more weighty matters" (D&C 117:8).

Doctrine and Covenants 117:11. "Let my servant Newel K. Whitney be ashamed of the Nicolaitane band"

As recorded in Revelation 2:6, 15, the Lord said that He hated the deeds and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. The Nicolaitans were "an Antinomian sect in Asia Minor that claimed license for sensual sin" (Bible Dictionary, "Nicolaitans"). Antinomians were permissive Christians who claimed that the grace of God freed them from having to obey the commandments. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** explained that the Nicolaitans referred to in the Book of Revelation were "members of the Church who were trying to maintain their church standing while continuing to live after the manner of the world. … The designation has come to be used to identify those who want their names on the records of the Church, but do not want to devote themselves to the gospel cause with full purpose of heart" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary,* 3:446). The Lord's admonition to Newel K. Whitney to "be ashamed of the Nicolaitane band and of all their secret abominations" (D&C 117:11) was a warning to beware of associating with certain dissenters in Kirtland, Ohio, who were not willing to devote themselves to the gospel.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 117:12–16, looking for the responsibilities and promises the Lord gave Oliver Granger.

Doctrine and Covenants 117:12–15. "I remember my servant Oliver Granger"

Oliver Granger joined the Church in New York sometime in 1832–33. In 1833 he and his wife, Lydia, moved to Kirtland, Ohio, and Brother Granger was subsequently called on several missions and then to the Kirtland high council in 1837. It appears that Brother Granger stayed in Kirtland after the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon fled in January 1838. However, a few months later he traveled to Far West, Missouri, arriving sometime before July 8, 1839, the date the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 117 was received. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 624.) In fact, this revelation "may have come in response to information [Brother] Granger" brought to the Prophet concerning the condition of the Church in Kirtland (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 191). In this revelation Oliver Granger was called to return to Kirtland and to continue serving as a financial agent for the First Presidency (see D&C 117:1).

When the Lord sent Oliver Granger back to Missouri, He promised that Oliver's "name shall be held in sacred remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever" and that "when he falls he shall rise again, for his sacrifice shall be more sacred unto [the Lord] than his increase" (D&C 117:12–13). **President Boyd K. Packer** spoke about Oliver Granger and the promises Oliver received from the Lord:



Headstone for Oliver Granger, located in the cemetery adjacent to the Kirtland Temple, in Ohio

"Oliver Granger was a very ordinary man. He was mostly blind having 'lost his sight by cold and exposure' (*History of the Church,* 4:408). The First Presidency described him as 'a man of the most strict integrity and moral virtue; and in fine, to be a man of God' (*History of the Church,* 3:350).

"When the Saints were driven from Kirtland, Ohio, in a scene that would be repeated in Independence, Far West, and in Nauvoo, Oliver was left behind to sell their properties for what little he could. There was not much chance that he could succeed. And, really, he did not succeed! …

"The Lord did not expect Oliver to be perfect, perhaps not even to succeed. 'When he falls he shall rise again, for his sacrifice shall be more sacred unto me than his increase, saith the Lord' (D&C 117:13).

"We cannot always expect to succeed, but we should try the best we can. …

"Today we fulfill the prophecy 'that [Oliver Granger's] name shall be had in sacred remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever' (D&C 117:12). He was not a great man in terms of the world. Nevertheless, the Lord said, 'Let no man despise my servant Oliver Granger, but let the blessings … be on him forever and ever' (D&C 117:15).

"Let no one underestimate the power of faith in the ordinary Latter-day Saints" ("The Least of These," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2004, 86, 88).

Why do you think your sacrifices are sacred to the Lord even when your efforts are not completely successful?

Doctrine and Covenants 118: Additional Historical Background

Four of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had been excommunicated or otherwise removed from office by July 1838 for transgression or apostasy: John F. Boynton, Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and William E. McLellin. This caused great sorrow among Church members. On Sunday, July 8, 1838, during a leadership meeting, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 118 in response to the plea to "show unto us thy will O, Lord concerning the Twelve." (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 176–78.) John Taylor, John E. Page, Wilford Woodruff, and Willard Richards were appointed to fill the vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Doctrine and Covenants 118

The Lord calls four new Apostles and calls members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to serve missions overseas

Read Doctrine and Covenants 118, looking for the Lord's instructions to members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the names of those called to fill vacancies in the Quorum.

Doctrine and Covenants 118:4–5. "Next spring let them depart to go over the great waters"

In an earlier revelation, Church members in Far West, Missouri, were commanded to "re-commence laying the foundation of [the Far West Temple]" on April 26, 1839 (see D&C 115:11). **President Wilford Woodruff** (1807–1898) "later explained that this was a commandment to 'lay the corner stone of the Temple' " (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 139). In addition, in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 118, the Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph

Smith that on April 26, 1839, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were to depart from the Far West Temple site for their missions abroad (see D&C 118:4–5). By April 1839 most Church members had been driven out of Missouri, but during that month seven members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles traveled back to Far West. On April 26, 1839, they laid the chief cornerstone of the Far West Temple and took formal leave of the few Saints who remained in Missouri before they departed on their missions to Great Britain the following fall, thus fulfilling the Lord's commands (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 180, note 73; see also Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors,* 101–2).



One of the cornerstones laid in 1839 for the temple in Far West, Missouri

President Woodruff described his experience on that day:

"When the revelation was given [in 1838], all was peace and quietude in Far West, Missouri, the city where most of the Latter-day Saints dwelt; but before the time came for its fulfillment, the Saints of God had been driven out of the State of Missouri into the State of Illinois, under the edict of Governor Boggs; and the Missourians had sworn that if all the other revelations of Joseph Smith were fulfilled, that [one] should not be. It stated the day and the place where the Twelve Apostles should take leave of the Saints, to go on their mission across the great waters, and the mobocrats of Missouri had declared that they would see that it should not be fulfilled. …

"Having determined to carry out the requirement of the revelation, … we started for Far West. …

"On the morning of the 26th of April, 1839, notwithstanding the threats of our enemies that the revelation which was to be fulfilled this day should not be, and notwithstanding that ten thousand of the Saints had been driven out of the State

by the edict of the governor, … we moved on to the temple ground in the city of Far West, and held a council, and fulfilled the revelation and commandment given unto us, and we performed many other things at this council. …

"Bidding good-by to the small remnant of Saints who remained on the temple ground to see us fulfill the revelation and commandments of God, we turned our back on Far West and Missouri, and returned to Illinois. We had accomplished the mission without a dog moving his tongue at us [see Exodus 11:7], or any man saying, 'Why do you so?'" (*Teachings: Wilford Woodruff,* 139–41).

Doctrine and Covenants 119–20: Additional Historical Background

Two of the five revelations the Prophet Joseph Smith received on July 8, 1838, addressed the Church's financial needs. Previously the Prophet had received other revelations related to economic matters. In 1831 the Lord revealed principles concerning the law of consecration (see D&C 42:30–36). Later, He revealed that the United Firm should be established to manage the Church's printing and mercantile businesses (see D&C 78:1–16; 104). The Prophet Joseph Smith and others had also attempted to improve the Church's finances by establishing a banking institution and other businesses, but most of these endeavors had failed. These failures, combined with the United States economic recession of 1837, caused the Church to continue suffering under oppressing debt (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 184).

In late 1837, Bishop Newel K. Whitney in Ohio and Bishop Edward Partridge in Missouri began asking Church members to pay tithing. At that time Church members believed that *tithing* meant any offering willingly donated to the Church (see Steven C. Harper, "The Tithing of My People," in McBride and Goldberg, *Revelations in Context,* 251, or history.lds.org). In Kirtland, Ohio, the bishopric began "calling on church members everywhere to 'bring their tithes into the store house' to relieve church debts and to help establish the community of Saints in Missouri. While this general request did not include recommended donation amounts, in December 1837 a committee [of Church leaders in Missouri] proposed that every head of household be asked to annually donate a certain percentage of net worth, with the percentage based on church needs for the year. To cover anticipated church expenses for 1838, the committee proposed a 'tithing' of 2 percent. The committee believed that such a program would 'be in some degree fulfilling the law of consecration'" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 184–85; spelling standardized).

As Church members began to gather in and around Far West, Missouri, the Church and its leaders still faced enormous debt. The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 119 was received during a leadership meeting on July 8, 1838, in response to a request: "Lord, show unto thy servants how much thou requirest of the properties of thy people for a Tithing?" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 186; spelling standardized). The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 120 "was given in reference to 'the disposition of the properties tithed, as named in the preceding revelation [D&C 119]'" (in *The*

Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839, 190; spelling standardized).

Doctrine and Covenants 119

The Lord reveals the law of tithing

Read Doctrine and Covenants 119, looking for the Lord's answer to the Prophet Joseph Smith's pleas regarding tithing.

Doctrine and Covenants 119:1–4. "This shall be a standing law unto them forever"

The Lord gave a two-fold response to the Prophet Joseph Smith's inquiry concerning how much tithing Church members should pay. First, the Lord said, "I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop of my church in Zion" (D&C 119:1), and then He explained the purpose for doing so (see D&C 119:2). Thus, Church members would give property or possessions to the bishop after all their needs were met. During a council meeting held shortly after the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 119 was received, "surplus property" was defined as "property, such as land or cattle, that [the owners] could not 'make use of to advantage' " (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 187, note 121).

The second part of the Lord's answer to the Prophet's inquiry required the Saints to "pay one-tenth of all their interest annually" (D&C 119:4). The Lord has revealed further clarification of this commandment since the time when this revelation was given (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 188, note 126). In 1970 the **First Presidency** gave the following response in explaining "what is considered a proper tithe": "The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of the Church should pay 'one-tenth of all their interest annually,' which is understood to mean income. No one is justified in making any other statement than this" (First Presidency letter, Mar. 19, 1970).

The commandment to "pay one-tenth of all [a person's] interest annually" is not a lesser law to be replaced at some future time but is "a standing law unto [the Lord's people] forever" (D&C 119:4).



The Lord commanded the Saints to "pay one-tenth of all their interest annually" (D&C 119:4).

Doctrine and Covenants 119:5–6. "And by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me"

Some of the Church members who had gathered to Jackson County, Missouri, had not consecrated their property as the Lord required. After the Saints were

driven from their homes in Jackson County in 1833, the Lord told them that because of "jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them … they [had] polluted their inheritances" in the land of Zion (D&C 101:6). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 119, the Lord taught that those who did not "observe this law" of tithing would "not be found worthy to abide among [the Saints]" and that "by this law" the Saints would "sanctify the land of Zion unto [Him]" (D&C 119:5-6).

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) taught that the payment of tithing is a test: "By this principle (tithing) the loyalty of the people of this Church shall be put to the test. By this principle it shall be known who is for the kingdom of God and who is against it. By this principle it shall be seen whose hearts are set on doing the will of God and keeping his commandments, thereby sanctifying the land of Zion unto God, and who are opposed to this principle and have cut themselves off from the blessings of Zion. There is a great deal of importance connected with this principle, for by it it shall be known whether we are faithful or unfaithful. In this respect it is as essential as faith in God, as repentance of sin, as baptism for the remission of sin, or as the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 276).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that paying tithing refines us: "The honest payment of tithing is much more than a duty; it is an important step in the process of personal sanctification" ("The Windows of Heaven," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2013, 20). Those who are sanctified will "be found worthy" to inhabit the land of Zion (D&C 119:5).

Doctrine and Covenants 120

The Lord reveals who should manage tithing funds

Read Doctrine and Covenants 120, looking for who the Lord said should manage sacred tithing funds.

Doctrine and Covenants 120. "Disposed of by a council … and by mine own voice unto them"

Since the Church's organization on April 6, 1839, bishops and members of the United Firm, the First Presidency, stake presidencies, and the high council had all been involved at different times in managing funds donated to the Church (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 189). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 120, the Lord clarified that "a council, composed of the First Presidency of my Church, and of the bishop and his council, and by my high council"—all of them acting together under His inspiration—should manage and distribute the donated funds (D&C 120:1). The "bishop and his council" is the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, and "my high council" is the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (D&C 120:1; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 189).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how tithing funds are administered in the Church:

"According to revelation, bishops are ordained to 'keep the Lord's storehouse; to receive the funds of the church' [D&C 72:10]. Both bishops and clerks are expected to be full-tithe payers who have learned to live prudently within their means. Within hours of receiving tithing funds from members of their wards and branches, these local leaders transmit the funds directly to the headquarters of the Church.

"Then, as revealed by the Lord, the use of tithing is determined by a council comprised of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Lord specifically states that the council's work be directed 'by mine own voice unto them' [D&C 120:1)]. This council is called the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes.

"It is remarkable to witness this council heed the Lord's voice. Each member is aware of and participates in all the council's decisions. No decision is made until the council is unanimous. All tithing funds are spent for the purposes of the Church, including welfare—care for the poor and needy— temples, buildings and upkeep of meetinghouses, education, curriculum— in short, the work of the Lord. …

"To Church members and others throughout the world, I bear my testimony of the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes. I have sat on this council for 17 years, as the Presiding Bishop of the Church and now as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Without exception, the tithing funds of this Church have been used for His purposes" ("Tithing: A Test of Faith with Eternal Blessings," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 28).

Consider experiences you have had paying tithing. What blessings have you received? What can you do to improve your efforts to pay a full tithe?

CHAPTER 46

Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–10; 122–23

Introduction and Timeline

On October 31, 1838, Missouri state militia troops took the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders prisoner in Far West, Missouri. These men were eventually imprisoned in Liberty Jail in Clay County, Missouri, and suffered greatly during their four months of confinement. While in Liberty Jail, the Prophet dictated a letter to Church members on March 20, 1839, and a second letter approximately two days later, in which the Prophet included prayers he had written asking the Lord to have compassion on him and on all the "suffering Saints" (see D&C 121:4, 6). He also included the Lord's response to those prayers, as well as counsel to Church members who had been driven from their homes in Missouri. Portions of these letters are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121–23.

August–October 1838

Misunderstanding and tension between Missourians and Church members escalated to armed conflict.

October 27, 1838

Governor Lilburn W. Boggs authorized the extermination or expulsion of all Latter-day Saints from the state of Missouri.

October 30, 1838

Anti-Mormon vigilantes attacked Church members at the Hawn's Mill settlement, located 12 miles east of Far West, Missouri, killing 17 men and boys and wounding 13 others.

October 31, 1838

The Prophet Joseph Smith and others were taken prisoner by Missouri state militia troops at Far West, Missouri.

December 1, 1838

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions were imprisoned in Liberty Jail in Clay County, Missouri.

March 20–22, 1839

The Prophet Joseph Smith dictated letters from Liberty Jail, portions of which are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121–23.

April 6, 1839

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions were taken from Liberty Jail to Gallatin, Missouri, to attend a court hearing. On April 16, 1839, they were allowed to escape custody, and they joined the Saints in Illinois.

Think about a time in your life when you may have felt distant from God. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 121–23, look for principles that will help you know that God is aware of everything that we experience and is, therefore, our most important source of help during times of trouble.

Doctrine and Covenants 121–23: Additional Historical Background

On July 4, 1838, thousands of Church members gathered to celebrate the independence of the United States and to participate in a cornerstone-laying ceremony at the temple site in Far West, Missouri (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* ed. Mark Ashurst-McGee and others [2017], 170). One month later, however, the relative peace enjoyed in Far West had deteriorated, and by the end of 1838, Missourians were driving Church members out of the state. Earlier in the year, several prominent Church members had apostatized, including Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, William W. Phelps, Lyman Johnson, and others. Afraid that these individuals might stir up mob violence against the Saints, some Church members formed a private

military group and circulated a threatening letter among the dissenters, which caused the dissenters to flee Far West and Caldwell County. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 9–10.) While the Prophet Joseph Smith may have approved of the formation of this military group, eventually known as the Danites, he most likely was unaware of and did not approve of all of their activities, which sometimes involved intimidation and threats. These incidents increased the tension between Church members and the Missourians during the second half of 1838 ("Peace and Violence among 19th-Century Latter-day Saints," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org).

The religious, cultural, and political differences between Church members and the other residents of Missouri, combined with the vengeful efforts of individuals who had been excommunicated from the Church, led to hostilities on both sides. On October 25, 1838, a skirmish between Church members belonging to the Caldwell County militia and non-Mormon members of the Ray County militia at Crooked River, Missouri, resulted in the deaths of three Church members and one Missourian (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 269). Relying upon exaggerated anti-Mormon reports blaming Church members for this incident and other hostilities in Missouri, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued an executive order calling for the extermination or forcible removal of all Mormons from the state and authorized the state militia to march on Far West (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 269–70).



On October 30, 1838, approximately 240 men attacked a settlement of Latter-day Saints living at Hawn's Mill near this location in Caldwell County, Missouri. At least 17 people were killed.

On October 30, 1838, an armed mob attacked the Mormon settlement at Hawn's Mill (or Haun's Mill), approximately 12 miles east of Far West, and opened fire on men, women, and children. Seventeen Church members were brutally killed or

died later of their wounds, and thirteen others were wounded (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 269).



***Valiant in Our Testimony of the Savior,* by Dan Burr. The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were confined in Richmond, Missouri, in November 1838.**

Meanwhile, thousands of state militiamen approached Far West. The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were arrested and, following a hasty military court, were sentenced to be executed for treason. However, Alexander Doniphan, who was a brigadier general in the Missouri state militia, refused to carry out the order. The accused Church leaders were then taken under heavy guard to authorities in Independence, Missouri, arriving on November 4, 1838. Days later they were transferred to Richmond, Missouri, where they were kept in chains for three weeks along with several dozen other Latter-day Saint men who had been arrested in Far West. During that time, Judge Austin King held a court of inquiry and determined that there was sufficient evidence to charge Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae, and Caleb Baldwin with treason. He then sent them to Liberty Jail in Clay County, Missouri, to await their trial, which was scheduled for the following spring. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 265, 271–74.)

Through the winter of 1838–39, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions suffered in the unheated and filthy environment of Liberty Jail. Added to their misery was the fact that they could not help their families and other Church members who were being driven from Missouri without adequate provisions in the middle of a bitter winter. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 274–76; see also Justin R. Bray, "Within the Walls of Liberty Jail," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 258–59, or history.lds.org.) It was under these extremely difficult conditions that the Prophet Joseph Smith sought for and eventually received comfort and spiritual understanding from the Lord. On March 20, 1839, the Prophet dictated a letter to Bishop Edward Partridge and Church members in Quincy, Illinois, and in other locations. It was followed approximately two days later by another letter to Bishop Partridge and the Saints, in which the Prophet offered comfort and provided counsel. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 357, 389.) Portions of these letters are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121–23.



Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–10; 122

The Lord responds to the Prophet Joseph Smith's pleadings

Read Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–10, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed for during his imprisonment in Liberty Jail.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–6. "Where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?"

For approximately four months, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions suffered greatly in Liberty Jail. The only entrance into the dungeon-like room was through a trap door in the ceiling. The walls were four feet thick, and there were only two small, barred windows in the dim room. The stone floor was cold and the room unheated, and the prisoners slept on filthy straw mats. One of the prisoners described the food they were given as "very coarse and so filthy that we could not eat it until we were driven to it by hunger" (in Bray, "Within the Walls of Liberty Jail," 258). In the letter the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote to Church members on March 20, 1839, he described the jail as being a "hell surrounded with demons … where we are compelled to hear nothing but blasphemous oaths and witness a scene of blasphemy and drunkenness and hypocrisy and debaucheries of every description" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 361; spelling standardized). The prisoners also received discouraging reports of the hardships the Saints were experiencing as they were being driven from Missouri.



A replica of Liberty Jail, located in the Liberty Jail Visitors' Center in Missouri

In that same letter to the Saints, the Prophet pleaded with the Lord, "How long shall [the Saints] suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them?" (D&C 121:3). The Prophet also cried, "O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?" (D&C 121:1; see also *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 362). A *pavilion* is a covering, such as a canopy or tent that separates or hides something from view. After quoting this plea from the Prophet Joseph Smith, **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency explained:

"Many of us, in moments of personal anguish, feel that God is far from us. The pavilion that seems to intercept divine aid does not cover God but occasionally covers us. God is never hidden, yet sometimes we are, covered by a pavilion of motivations that draw us away from God and make Him seem distant and inaccessible. Our own desires, rather than a feeling of 'Thy will be done,' create the feeling of a pavilion blocking God. God is not unable to see us or communicate with us, but we may be unwilling to listen or submit to His will and His time.

"Our feelings of separation from God will diminish as we become more childlike before Him. That is not easy in a world where the opinions of other human beings can have such an effect on our motives. But it will help us recognize this truth: God is close to us and aware of us and never hides from His faithful children. …

"We remove the pavilion when we feel and pray, 'Thy will be done' and 'in Thine own time.' His time should be soon enough for us since we know that He wants only what is best" ("Where Is the Pavilion?" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2012, 72–73).

What can you do to ensure that there is no "pavilion" (D&C 121:1) between you and the Lord?

Doctrine and Covenants 121:4. "The dark and benighted dominion of Sheol"

Sheol is "the Hebrew name for the abode of departed spirits" (Bible Dictionary, "Sheol"). The phrase "dark and benighted dominion of Sheol" (D&C 121:4) may refer to the section of the world of spirits where darkness reigns. When the Prophet Joseph Smith addressed the Lord as the One "who controllest and subjectest the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Sheol" (D&C 121:4), he was expressing his faith in God's power and control over all things, including Satan and his followers.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–10. "Thine afflictions shall be but a small moment"

After long months of suffering, the Prophet Joseph Smith received reassurance from the Lord: "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7). Then the Lord promised him, "If thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes" (D&C 121:8).

Elder Jeffery R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about what we can learn from the Prophet's experience in Liberty Jail:

"In one way or another, great or small, dramatic or incidental, every one of us is going to spend a little time in Liberty Jail—spiritually speaking. We will face things we do not want to face for reasons that may not be our fault. Indeed, we may face difficult circumstances for reasons that were absolutely right and proper, reasons that came *because* we were trying to keep the commandments of the Lord. We may face persecution, we may endure heartache and separation from loved ones, we may be hungry and cold and forlorn. …



A replica of the door at Liberty Jail

"But the lessons of the winter of 1838–39 teach us that every experience can become a redemptive experience if we remain bonded to our Father in Heaven through it. These difficult lessons teach us that man's extremity is God's opportunity, and if we will be humble and faithful, if we will be believing and not curse God for our problems, He can turn the unfair and inhumane and debilitating prisons of our lives into temples—or at least into a circumstance that can bring comfort and revelation, divine companionship and peace" ("Lessons from Liberty Jail," *Ensign,* Sept. 2009, 28).

For more information about knowledge the Prophet Joseph Smith received during his experience in Liberty Jail, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 121:26–33 in this manual.

As you study Doctrine and Covenants 122, look for what these verses can teach us about how well-acquainted the Lord is with our personal trials.

Doctrine and Covenants 122:1–4. "The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name"

When the angel Moroni visited young Joseph Smith in September 1823, he told Joseph "that [his] name [would] be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues" (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). During the years that followed, the Prophet Joseph Smith experienced a fulfillment of that prophecy. In 1838 his enemies succeeded in having him imprisoned in Liberty Jail and in having the Saints expelled from the state of Missouri. During this challenging time the Prophet received divine reassurance that "God [would] stand by [him] forever and ever" (see D&C 122:4). Furthermore, he was promised that "the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, [would] seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under [his] hand" and that his "people [would] never be turned against [him] by the testimony of traitors" (D&C 122:2–3).



***Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail,* by Greg K. Olsen. The Prophet Joseph Smith was incarcerated at Liberty Jail for months in 1838–1839.**

Opposition against the Prophet Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has continued since that time. Church members today are sometimes confronted by the arguments of those who claim that Joseph Smith was not a prophet of God. **Elder Neil L. Andersen** of the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles emphasized that we must turn to God to obtain the spiritual understanding that Joseph Smith was a prophet:

"Why does the Lord allow the evil speaking to chase after the good? One reason is that opposition against the things of God sends seekers of truth to their knees for answers.

"Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration. His spiritual work began with the appearance of the Father and the Son, followed by numerous heavenly visitations. He was the instrument in God's hands in bringing forth sacred scripture, lost doctrine, and the restoration of the priesthood. The importance of Joseph's work requires more than intellectual consideration; it requires that we, like Joseph, 'ask of God' [James 1:5; see also Joseph Smith—History 1:11–13]. Spiritual questions deserve spiritual answers from God" ("Joseph Smith," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 28).

Doctrine and Covenants 122:5–7. "All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good"

The Lord's counsel to the Prophet Joseph Smith while the Prophet was imprisoned in Liberty Jail demonstrates that He was fully aware of Joseph's difficulties. The Prophet had experienced nearly every one of the trials the Lord listed in His response to the Prophet's suffering (see D&C 122:5–7). The Lord's divine instruction emphasized that adversity can strengthen and refine us. As we endure our trials patiently and faithfully, "all these things shall give [us] experience, and shall be for [our] good" (D&C 122:7; see also D&C 100:15). **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) taught:

"If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective.

"Is there not wisdom in [God] giving us trials that we might rise above them, responsibilities that we might achieve, work to harden our muscles, sorrows to try our souls? Are we not exposed to temptations to test our strength, sickness that we might learn patience, death that we might be immortalized and glorified? …



The Saints suffered much at Hawn's Mill and in other places in Missouri.

"Should all prayers be immediately answered according to our selfish desires and our limited understanding, then there would be little or no suffering, sorrow, disappointment, or even death,

and if these were not, there would also be no joy, success, resurrection, nor eternal life and godhood. …

"Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 15).

When have you experienced personal growth through adversity?

Doctrine and Covenants 122:8. "The Son of Man hath descended below them all"

The Prophet Joseph Smith experienced overwhelming challenges while he was imprisoned in Liberty Jail. He was blessed with the peaceful assurance that the Lord was aware of every detail of his suffering. Additionally, he learned that none of the adversity he experienced during his mortal life would ever equal what Jesus Christ suffered during His mortal mission. Answering the question the Lord asked the Prophet Joseph Smith—"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:8)—**Elder Jeffery R. Holland** explained:

"No, Joseph was not greater than the Savior, and neither are we. And when we promise to follow the Savior, to walk in His footsteps, and be His disciples, we are promising to go where that divine path leads us. And the path of salvation has always led one way or another through Gethsemane. So if the Savior faced such injustices and discouragements, such persecutions, unrighteousness, and suffering, we cannot expect that we are not going to face some of that if we still intend to call ourselves His true disciples and faithful followers.

"In fact, it ought to be a matter of great doctrinal consolation to us that Jesus, in the course of the Atonement, experienced all of the heartache and sorrow, all of the disappointments and injustices that the entire family of man had experienced and would experience from Adam and Eve to the end of the world in order that we would not have to face them so severely or so deeply. However heavy our load might be, it would be a lot heavier if the Savior had not gone that way before us and carried that burden with us and for us.

"Very early in the Prophet Joseph's ministry, the Savior taught him this doctrine. After speaking of sufferings so exquisite to feel and so hard to bear, Jesus said, 'I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they [and that means you and I and everyone] might not suffer if they would repent' (D&C 19:16). In our moments of pain and trial, I guess we would shudder to think it could be worse, but without the Atonement it not only *could* be worse, it *would* be worse. Only through our faith and repentance and obedience to the gospel that provided the sacred Atonement is it kept from *being* worse.



"The Son of Man hath descended below them all" (D&C 122:8).

"Furthermore, we note that not only has the Savior suffered, in His case entirely innocently, but so have most of the prophets and other great men and women recorded in the scriptures. The point is this: if you are having a bad day, you've got a lot of company—very, very good company. The best company that has ever lived" ("Lessons from Liberty Jail," 31).

Doctrine and Covenants 122:9. "Hold on thy way"

When the Lord gave the instructions that are recorded in the Prophet Joseph Smith's letters to the Saints and in Doctrine and Covenants 122, the Prophet and his companions in Liberty Jail did not know that within a month they would be reunited with their families. The Lord clarified that the influence of the Prophet's enemies was limited and that his life was in the Lord's hands (see D&C 122:9). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) would later express confidence in the Lord's protection: "I understand my mission and business. God almighty is my shield, and what can man do if God is my friend[?] I shall not be sacrificed until my time comes, then I shall be offered freely. … I thank God for preserving me from my enemies; I have no enemies but for the Truth's sake. I have no desire but to do all men good; I feel to pray for all men" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1 [addenda], page 6, josephsmithpapers.org).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland gave the following counsel regarding how we might proceed when times are difficult:

"Cling to your faith. Hold on to your hope. 'Pray always, and be believing' [D&C 90:24]. …

"Even if you cannot always see that silver lining on your clouds, God can, for He is the very source of the light you seek. He does love you, and He knows your fears. He hears your prayers. He is your Heavenly Father, and surely He matches with His own the tears His children shed" ("An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign,* Nov. 1999, 36).

Which part of the Savior's counsel to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail is most meaningful to you? How will you respond differently to your trials based on what you have learned in your study of Doctrine and Covenants 121–22?

Doctrine and Covenants 123

The Prophet Joseph Smith counsels the Saints to publish accounts of their suffering and persecution

Read Doctrine and Covenants 123:1–6, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith counseled the Saints to do after being forced from their homes in Missouri.

Doctrine and Covenants 123:1–6. "Gathering up a knowledge of all the facts, and sufferings and abuses put upon them"

From January through March 1839, after facing intense persecution and threats of violence, approximately eight to ten thousand Church members from Caldwell and Daviess Counties fled the state of Missouri in harsh winter conditions. Many of them found refuge across the Mississippi River in Quincy, Illinois, and in other areas of Illinois and Iowa (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 275, 327). With the help of a neighboring Church member, the Prophet's wife, Emma Smith, left Far West, Missouri, with her children in February 1839. The Mississippi River had temporarily frozen, and Emma was able to cross the river by walking on the ice with her four small children (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 369). She and many other Church members were blessed by the kindness and compassion of the residents of Quincy, Illinois. By early April 1839, most Church members had left Missouri.



Many Latter-day Saints found refuge in Quincy, Illinois, after they were forced to leave the state of Missouri in early 1839. The Saints crossed the Mississippi River near this monument, which commemorates the kindness shown by the residents of Quincy, Illinois.

From Liberty Jail the Prophet Joseph Smith instructed Church members to prepare affidavits, or formal statements, detailing "all the facts, and sufferings and abuses put upon them by the people of [Missouri]," as well as "all the property and amount of damages which [Church members had] sustained, both of character and personal injuries, as well as real property" (D&C 123:1–2). Hundreds of Church members went before civil authorities in Illinois and Iowa and completed petitions for redress—requests for compensation for their losses and justice for the wrongs they had suffered. In late fall 1839 the Prophet Joseph Smith traveled to Washington, D.C. with a small delegation of Church members to meet with United States president Martin Van Buren and members of the United States Congress. These officials refused to act on behalf of the Saints. For example, President Van Buren was sympathetic to the circumstance of the Saints but exclaimed, "What can I do? … If I do any thing, I shall come in contact [conflict] with the whole State of Missouri" (in Joseph Smith and Elias Higbee, Letter to Hyrum Smith and Nauvoo, Illinois, High Council, Dec. 5, 1839, page 85, josephsmithpapers.org). In the early 1840s, Church leaders again attempted several times to obtain redress from the United States government, but their efforts failed (see Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* [1992], xxi–xxii). However, they had done what the Lord required of them (see D&C 123:6).

Doctrine and Covenants 123:7–14. "An imperative duty"

In his second letter to Church members written from Liberty Jail in March 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained that it was their "imperative duty" to publish accounts "of [the] murder, tyranny, and oppression" they had suffered at the hands

of their enemies, who had acted under the adversary's influence (D&C 123:7). On other occasions, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught:

"Our religious principles are before the world ready for the investigation of all men, yet we are aware that all the persecution against our friends has arisen in consequence of calumnies [false charges] and misconstructions without foundation in truth and righteousness. This we have endured in common with all other religious societies at their first commencement."

"It is thought by some that our enemies would be satisfied with my destruction; but I tell you that as soon as they have shed my blood they will thirst for the blood of every man in whose heart dwells a single spark of the spirit of the fullness of the Gospel. The opposition of these men is moved by the spirit of the adversary of all righteousness. It is not only to destroy me, but every man and woman who dares believe the doctrines that God hath inspired me to teach to this generation."

"I have learned by experience that the enemy of truth does not slumber, nor cease his exertions to bias the minds of communities against the servants of the Lord, by stirring up the indignation of men upon all matters of importance or interest" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 372–73).



Liberty Jail, located in Liberty, Missouri
Courtesy LDS Church Archives

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught that the word of God can protect us from Satan's influence:

"We live in a day of great challenge. We live in that time of which the Lord spoke when he said, 'Peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power

over his own dominion.' (D&C 1:35.) … Satan is waging war against the members of the Church who have testimonies and are trying to keep the commandments. And while many of our members are remaining faithful and strong, some are wavering. Some are falling. …

"The Apostle Paul … saw our day. He described it as a time when such things as blasphemy, dishonesty, cruelty, unnatural affection, pride, and pleasure seeking would abound. (See 2 Tim. 3:1–7.) He also warned that 'evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.' (2 Tim. 3:13.)

"Such grim predictions by prophets of old would be cause for great fear and discouragement if those same prophets had not, at the same time, offered the solution. In their inspired counsel we can find the answer to the spiritual crises of our age.

"In his dream, Lehi saw an iron rod which led through the mists of darkness. He saw that if people would hold fast to that rod, they could avoid the rivers of filthiness, stay away from the forbidden paths, stop from wandering in the strange roads that lead to destruction. Later his son Nephi clearly explained the symbolism of the iron rod. When Laman and Lemuel asked, 'What meaneth the rod of iron?' Nephi answered, 'It was the word of God; and [note this promise] *whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction.*' (1 Ne. 15:23–24; italics added.) Not only will the word of God lead us to the fruit which is desirable above all others, but in the word of God and through it we can find the power to resist temptation, the power to thwart the work of Satan and his emissaries" ("The Power of the Word," *Ensign,* May 1986, 79–80).

Doctrine and Covenants 123:12–13. "There are many … who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it"

The Prophet Joseph Smith identified false religious "creeds," or beliefs, as a source of the oppression against Church members (D&C 123:7). He explained that these beliefs had "filled the world with confusion" (D&C 123:7) and "blinded" many of God's children so that it was difficult for them to recognize the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ (D&C 123:12). Therefore, Church members have a duty to help others discover the truth.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how we should respond when others challenge our faith:

"Through the years we learn that challenges to our faith are not new, and they aren't likely to disappear soon. But *true disciples of Christ see opportunity in the midst of opposition.* …

"Experience shows that seasons of negative publicity about the Church can help accomplish the Lord's purposes. In 1983 the First Presidency wrote to Church leaders, 'Opposition may be in itself an opportunity. Among the continuing challenges faced by our missionaries is a lack of interest in religious matters and in our message. These criticisms create … interest in the Church. … This provides an

opportunity [for members] to present the truth to those whose attention is thus directed toward us' [First Presidency letter, Dec. 1, 1983].

"We can take advantage of such opportunities in many ways: a kind letter to the editor, a conversation with a friend, a comment on a blog, or a reassuring word to one who has made a disparaging comment. We can answer with love those who have been influenced by misinformation and prejudice—who are 'kept from the truth because they know not where to find it' (D&C 123:12). I assure you that to answer our accusers in this way is never weakness. *It is* Christian courage in action" ("Christian Courage: The Price of Discipleship," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 72–73).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"There are conversations going on about the Church constantly. Those conversations will continue whether or not we choose to participate in them. But we cannot stand on the sidelines while others, including our critics, attempt to define what the Church teaches. While some conversations have audiences in the thousands or even millions, most are much, much smaller. But all conversations have an impact on those who participate in them. Perceptions of the Church are established one conversation at a time. …

"Now, may I ask that you join the conversation by participating on the Internet to share the gospel and to explain in simple and clear terms the message of the Restoration. … *This, of course, requires that you understand the basic principles of the gospel.* It is essential that you are able to offer a *clear* and *correct* witness of gospel truths. It is also important that you and the people to whom you testify understand that you do not speak for the Church as a whole. You speak as one member—but you testify of the truths you have come to know.

"Far too many people have a poor understanding of the Church because most of the information they hear about us is from news media reports that are often driven by controversies. Too much attention to controversy has a negative impact on peoples' perceptions of what The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints really is. …

"… Do not be afraid to share with others your experiences as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. We all have interesting stories that have influenced our identity. Sharing those stories is a nonthreatening way to talk to others. Telling those stories can help demystify the Church. You could help overcome misperceptions through your own sphere of influence, which ought to include the Internet.

"… Let us all stand firmly and speak with faith in sharing our message with the world" ("Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet," *Ensign,* July 2008, 61–63).

Doctrine and Covenants 123:13–17. "May we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God"

In contrast to the discouragement the Prophet Joseph Smith expressed in the opening words of his March 20, 1839, letter (see D&C 121:1–6), he concluded his subsequent letter to Church members with renewed spiritual confidence. He comforted the persecuted Saints, and he reminded them that they were doing God's work "in bringing to light all the hidden things of darkness" (D&C 123:13).

He also assured them, "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed" (D&C 123:17).

President Henry B. Eyring testified that God strengthens those who seek to assist Him in His work: "You can have the utmost assurance that your power will be multiplied many times by the Lord. All He asks is that you give your best effort and your whole heart. Do it cheerfully and with the prayer of faith. The Father and His Beloved Son will send the Holy Ghost as your companion to guide you. Your efforts will be magnified in the lives of the people you serve. And when you look back on what may now seem trying times of service and sacrifice, the sacrifice will have become a blessing, and you will know that you have seen the arm of God lifting those you served for Him, and lifting you" ("Rise to Your Call," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 78).



Letter written by the Prophet Joseph Smith while he was in Liberty Jail

What will you do to help others better understand the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

CHAPTER 47

Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–46

Introduction and Timeline

On October 31, 1838, Missouri state militia troops took the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders prisoner in Far West, Missouri. These men were eventually imprisoned in Liberty Jail in Clay County, Missouri, and suffered greatly during their four months of confinement. While in Liberty Jail, the Prophet dictated a letter to Church members on March 20, 1839, and a second letter approximately two days later, in which he described the judgments the wicked will suffer as well as the blessings promised to those "who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ" (D&C 121:29). The Prophet Joseph Smith also taught principles about the authority and power of the priesthood. Portions of these letters are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–46.

August–October 1838

Misunderstanding and tension between Church members and other Missourians escalated to armed conflict.

October 27, 1838

Governor Lilburn W. Boggs authorized the extermination or expulsion of all Latter-day Saints from the state of Missouri.

October 30, 1838

Anti-Mormon vigilantes attacked Church members at the Hawn's Mill settlement, located 12 miles east of Far West, Missouri, killing 17 men and boys and wounding 13 others.

October 31, 1838

The Prophet Joseph Smith and others were taken prisoner by Missouri state militia troops at Far West, Missouri.

December 1, 1838

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions were imprisoned in Liberty Jail in Clay County, Missouri.

March 20–22, 1839

The Prophet Joseph Smith dictated letters from Liberty Jail, portions of which are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121–23.

April 6, 1839

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions were taken from Liberty Jail to Gallatin, Missouri, to attend a court hearing. On April 16, 1839, they were allowed to escape custody, and they joined the Saints in Illinois.

Think of examples in scripture in which the wicked have attempted to silence the Lord's prophets. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 121, think about how the Lord fulfills His purposes despite opposition to His prophets, and consider how the Prophet Joseph Smith's imprisonment strengthened him and blessed Church members.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–46: Additional Historical Background

After Governor Lilburn W. Boggs ordered the expulsion of all Latter-day Saints from the state of Missouri in October 1838, eight to ten thousand Church members were forced to leave their homes. From January through March 1839, many of them traveled east across the Mississippi River to Quincy, Illinois. The Quincy residents welcomed the Church members warmly, "providing [them with] food, shelter, and work" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* ed. Mark Ashurst-McGee and others [2017], 275). Immediately, Church leaders began searching for potential settlement sites for the Saints. A land speculator named Isaac Galland offered to sell large tracts of land to the Church in Iowa as well as in Commerce, Illinois, and Church leaders wrote to the Prophet Joseph

Smith, who was in Liberty Jail at the time, about the possibility of purchasing this land (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 376–77; see also 377, note 650). On March 20, 1839, and again on approximately March 22, 1839, the Prophet responded to Church leaders by writing lengthy letters that included his thoughts and instructions regarding the potential land purchases (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 389–90). These letters also included revelation the Lord gave the Prophet during his imprisonment. Portions of both letters are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–46.

For additional information, see "Doctrine and Covenants 121–23: Additional Historical Background" in the previous chapter of this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–25

The Lord describes the punishments reserved for those who oppose His work

Read Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–25, looking for what the Lord said will happen to those who oppose His servants.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:11–25. "They who do charge thee with transgression"

The Church's financial institution, the Kirtland Safety Society, ended near the end of the summer of 1837 due to opposition from local citizens, the effects of a national economic crisis, and poor financial decisions made by Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. Many Church members in Ohio were disappointed and angry with the Prophet Joseph Smith, blamed him for their financial troubles, and called him a "fallen prophet" (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* ed. Brent M. Rogers and others [2017], 365). Some of these dissenters were excommunicated, after which they continued to oppose the Prophet and the Church and even threatened the lives of Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. Heeding the Lord's warning that their lives were in danger, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon left Kirtland, Ohio, in January 1838 and arrived with their families in Far West, Missouri, in March 1838. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* 441–42, 537.) When they arrived they found that some of the Kirtland dissenters had also moved to Far West and had influenced Church leaders there, leading some of them to oppose the Prophet as well (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* 4, 8–9). These former Church members contributed to the events that led to the Prophet Joseph Smith's imprisonment and the Saints' expulsion from Missouri.

In the inspired words given to the Prophet Joseph Smith during his imprisonment in Liberty Jail, the Lord declared severe consequences for those who had lost faith and had actively sought to destroy God's "anointed" servant (D&C 121:16). During the Last Supper, Jesus Christ announced that one of His disciples would betray Him. He quoted from a passage in the Old Testament: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9; see also John 13:18). The phrase "hath lifted up his heel against

me" describes a person who has decided to openly oppose or fight against the Lord and His work or to turn his or her back and walk away from it. The use of this phrase in John 13:18 referred to the treachery of Judas, who betrayed Jesus Christ into the hands of His enemies. As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121, the Lord used the same phrase when referring to the apostates who had turned against the Prophet Joseph Smith and were seeking his destruction (see D&C 121:16).



An Old Testament prophecy spoke of those who, like Judas, "hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9; see also John 13:18; D&C 121:16).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained:

"From apostates the faithful have received the severest persecutions. Judas was rebuked and immediately betrayed his Lord into the hands of His enemies, because Satan entered into him.

"There is a superior intelligence bestowed upon such as obey the Gospel with full purpose of heart, which, if sinned against, the apostate is left naked and destitute of the Spirit of God, and he is, in truth, nigh unto cursing, and his end is to be burned. When once that light which was in them is taken from them they become as much darkened as they were previously enlightened, and then, no marvel, if all their power should be enlisted against the truth, and they, Judas-like, seek the destruction of those who were their greatest benefactors" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 321).

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cautioned Church members about individuals today who, like the apostates in Ohio and Missouri, fight against God's kingdom:

"[The Lord] warned us of those few in the Church 'who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house' [D&C 112:26]. …

"Some few within the Church openly or perhaps far worse, in the darkness of anonymity, reproach their leaders in the wards and stakes and in the Church, seeking to make them 'an offender for a word' [Isaiah 29:21], as Isaiah said. To them the Lord said:

"'Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned … but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them. …

"'But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves. …

"… because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house.

"'Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them.

"'They shall not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them from generation to generation' [D&C 121:16–17, 19–21].

"That terrible penalty will not apply to those who try as best they can to live the gospel and sustain their leaders. Nor need it apply to those who in the past have been guilty of indifference or even opposition, if they will repent, confess their transgressions, and forsake them [see D&C 58:43]" ("The Twelve Apostles," *Ensign,* Nov. 1996, 7).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:19–21. "They shall not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them"

The unrepentant apostates in Missouri determined that they would no longer follow the Prophet of God and, therefore, lost the privilege of participating in the ordinances and blessings of the priesthood. Their decision to separate themselves from God's Church would eventually impact "their posterity after them from generation to generation" and restrict these descendants' opportunities to enjoy the blessings of the gospel and the "right to the priesthood" (D&C 121:21). **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) explained how this can occur:

"Among Church members rebellion frequently takes the form of criticism of authorities and leaders. They 'speak evil of dignities' and 'of the things that they understand not,' says Peter. (2 Pet. 2:10, 12.) They complain of the programs, belittle the constituted authorities, and generally set themselves up as judges. After a while they absent themselves from Church meetings for imagined offenses, and fail to pay their tithes and meet their other Church obligations. In a word, they have the spirit of apostasy, which is almost always the harvest of the seeds of criticism. …

"Such people fail to bear testimony to their descendants, destroy faith within their own homes, and actually deny the 'right to the priesthood' [D&C 121:21] to succeeding generations who might otherwise have been faithful in all things" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 42–43).

While it is important to know that a person's choices have a significant influence on their generations after them, it should be remembered that each person is

accountable for his or her own choices and not for the choices of his or her forbearers.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:26–33

The Prophet Joseph Smith teaches that God will reveal eternal truths through the Spirit

Read Doctrine and Covenants 121:26–33, looking for what God will reveal to those who remain faithful.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:26–33. "God shall give unto you knowledge"

While the Prophet Joseph Smith certainly longed for release during the four difficult months he spent in Liberty Jail, it also provided opportunities for him to be taught. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"The period of adversity commencing in Richmond Jail and continuing in Liberty Jail from 1 December 1838 until the first week in April 1839 provides a special window through which we can see the process of revelation and personal consolidation under way. …

"During his stay in Liberty Jail, the Prophet Joseph Smith received some of the most sublime revelations ever received by any prophet in any dispensation, known now as sections 121 and 122 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Therein are divine tutorials by which the Lord schooled his latter-day prophet—probably the most tender tutorials in all of holy writ now available" ("A Choice Seer" [Brigham Young University fireside, Mar. 30, 1986], 5, speeches.byu.edu).



***Winter at Liberty Jail,* by Al Rounds. The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders suffered during the winter of 1838–1839 while they were imprisoned in Liberty Jail.**

The lofty truths that the Prophet recorded in his March 1839 letters to the Saints are evidence that his experiences in Liberty Jail drew him even closer to the Lord. **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"Most of us, most of the time, speak of the facility at Liberty as a 'jail' or a 'prison'—and certainly it was that. But Elder Brigham H. Roberts (1857–1933) of the First Council of the Seventy, in recording the history of the Church, spoke of the facility as a temple, or, more accurately, a 'prison-temple' [see *Comprehensive History of the Church,* 1:521 chapter heading; see also 526]. … Certainly this prison-temple lacked the purity, beauty, comfort, and cleanliness of our modern temples. The speech and behavior of the guards and criminals who came there were anything but temple-like. In fact, the restricting brutality and injustice of this experience at Liberty would make it seem the very antithesis of the liberating, merciful spirit of our temples and the ordinances performed in them.

"So in what sense could Liberty Jail be called a 'temple,' and what does such a title tell us about God's love and teachings, including where and when that love and those teachings are made manifest? In precisely this sense: that you can have sacred, revelatory, profoundly instructive experiences with the Lord in *any* situation you are in. Indeed, you can have sacred, revelatory, profoundly instructive experiences with the Lord *in the most miserable experiences of your life*—in the worst settings, while enduring the most painful injustices, when facing the most insurmountable odds and opposition you have ever faced" ("Lessons from Liberty Jail," *Ensign,* Sept. 2009, 28).

Not long after the Church was organized, the Lord promised faithful Church members that if they asked, they would "receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, … that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61; see also D&C 1:28). Those who keep God's commandments

"receiveth truth and light, until [they are] glorified in truth and knoweth all things" (D&C 93:28). As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121:26–32, God will bless the Saints with significant revelation.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: "The dispensation of the fullness of times will bring to light the things that have been revealed in all former dispensations; also other things that have not been before revealed" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 510–11). And on another occasion he wrote that this dispensation is "a day in which God has begun to make manifest and set in order in His Church those things which have been, and those things which the ancient prophets and wise men desired to see but died without beholding them; a day in which those things begin to be made manifest, which have been hid from before the foundation of the world, and which Jehovah has promised should be made known in His own due time unto His servants, to prepare the earth for the return of His glory, even a celestial glory, and a kingdom of Priests and kings to God and the Lamb, forever, on Mount Zion" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 510).

This outpouring of knowledge began at the beginning of the Restoration and will continue into the Millennium, when "the Lord … shall reveal all things" (D&C 101:32) and "nothing shall be withheld" (D&C 121:28). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the knowledge that will be revealed during the Millennium:

"We have the fulness of the everlasting gospel, meaning that we have all that is needed to gain the fulness of salvation. We have every truth, doctrine, and principle, every rite, power, and ordinance—all that is needed—to gain exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world. But we do not know all things. …

"All things are to be revealed in the millennial day. The sealed part of the Book of Mormon will come forth; the brass plates will be translated; the writings of Adam and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and prophets without number will be revealed. We shall learn a thousand times more about the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus than we now know. We shall learn great mysteries of the kingdom that were not even known to those of old who walked and talked with the Eternal One. We shall learn the details of the creation and the origin of man. … Nothing in or on or over the earth will be withheld from human [knowledge], for eventually man, if he is to be as his Maker, must know all things" (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 675–77).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:28. "Whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest"

The phrase "whether there be one God or many gods" (D&C 121:28) is an example of the questions that will be more clearly answered when "the Lord … shall reveal all things" (D&C 101:32) during the Millennium. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** gained firsthand knowledge that the Father and the Son are separate Beings (see Joseph Smith—History 1:17; see also D&C 76:19–23; 137:1–3). He later explained, "I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 41–42). The Lord also revealed to the Prophet

Joseph Smith what God's children must do in order to become like Him (see D&C 132:19–20). However, our understanding of the nature and order of heavenly beings will continue to be limited until "a time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld" (D&C 121:28).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–46

The Prophet Joseph Smith teaches that "the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven"

As you read Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–46, look for ways in which you can invite "the powers of heaven" (D&C 121:36) into your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–35. "There are many called, but few are chosen"

During late 1837 and throughout 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith watched a number of friends who had been members and leaders of the Church apostatize from the Church. In the inspired instructions he wrote to Church members while he was in Liberty Jail, the Prophet distinguished between those who are "called" and those who are "chosen" (D&C 121:34). In this context, being "called" can refer specifically to receiving the authority of the priesthood, but to be "chosen," a priesthood holder must be worthy to draw on "the powers of heaven" [D&C 121:36] to help others receive the blessings of the priesthood. However, being "called" and being "chosen" can also apply more broadly to all Church members—not just to those who hold the priesthood. Before the Church was organized in 1830, the Lord taught, "If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work" (D&C 4:3). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** gave the following explanation about what it means to be "called":

"To be called is to be a member of the Church and kingdom of God on earth; it is to be numbered with the saints; it is to accept the gospel and receive the everlasting covenant; it is to have part and lot in the earthly Zion. …

"Within this over-all framework, there are individual calls to positions of trust and responsibility, but these are simply assignments to labor on the Lord's errand, in particular places, for a time and a season. The call itself is to the gospel cause; it is not reserved for apostles and prophets or for the great and mighty in Israel; it is for all the members of the kingdom" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* [1973], 3:326).

To be "chosen" is used in the scriptures to refer to "those selected by God for special responsibilities" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Chosen," scriptures.lds.org). As used in Doctrine and Covenants 121, "chosen" also refers to those who receive priesthood power and other blessings from God because of their faithfulness in fulfilling the calling or special responsibilities they have received (see D&C 121:36, 45–46). **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave the following insight on what it means to be "chosen":

"The dictionary indicates that *chosen* suggests one who is selected, taken by preference, or picked out. It also can be used to refer to the elect or chosen of God (*Oxford English Dictionary Online,* second ed. [1989], 'Chosen'). …

"To be or to become chosen is not an exclusive status conferred upon us. Rather, you and I ultimately determine if we are chosen. Please now note the use of the word *chosen* in the following verses from the Doctrine and Covenants:

"'Behold, there are many called, but few are *chosen.* And why are they not *chosen?*

"'Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men' (D&C 121:34–35; emphasis added).

"I believe the implication of these verses is quite straightforward. God does not have a list of favorites to which we must hope our names will someday be added. He does not limit 'the chosen' to a restricted few. Rather, it is *our* hearts and *our* aspirations and *our* obedience which definitively determine whether we are counted as one of God's chosen" ("The Tender Mercies of the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2005, 100–101).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:36. "The rights of the priesthood"

The Prophet Joseph Smith indicated that the proper understanding and use of "the rights of the priesthood" (D&C 121:36) can determine whether a person will obtain the promised blessing of being "chosen" (D&C 121:34, 40). **President Boyd K. Packer** explained: "*Authority* in the priesthood comes by way of ordination; *power* in the priesthood comes through faithful and obedient living in honoring covenants. It is increased by exercising and using the priesthood in righteousness" ("The Power of the Priesthood," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2010, 9).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency discussed why priesthood holders need to be righteous in order to access priesthood power:



The use of priesthood authority is based "upon the principles of righteousness" (D&C 121:36).

"Our all-powerful Father in Heaven has entrusted priesthood authority to us—mortal beings who, by definition, are flawed and imperfect. He grants to us the authority to act in His name for the salvation of His children. By this great power we are authorized to preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation, help build the kingdom of God on the earth, and bless and serve our families and our fellowmen. …

"The priesthood, or any responsibility within it, cannot be purchased or commanded. The use of priesthood power cannot be influenced, swayed, or compelled by position, by wealth, or by influence. It is a spiritual power that operates on heavenly law. It originates in the great Heavenly Father of us all. Its power can be controlled and directed only through principles of righteousness, not self-righteousness [see D&C 121:36].

"Christ is the source of all true priesthood authority and power on earth [see Hebrews 5:4–10; D&C 107:3]. It is His work, in which we are privileged to assist. 'And no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care' [D&C 12:8]" ("The Joy of the Priesthood," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2012, 58–59).

Every faithful Church member can enjoy the blessings of priesthood power. **Elder Neil L. Andersen** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"We sometimes overly associate the power of the priesthood with men in the Church. The priesthood is the power and authority of God given for the salvation and blessing of all—men, women, and children.

"A man may open the drapes so the warm sunlight comes into the room, but the man does not own the sun or the light or the warmth it brings. The blessings of the priesthood are infinitely greater than the one who is asked to administer the gift.

"To receive the blessings, power, and promises of the priesthood in this life and the next is one of the great opportunities and responsibilities of mortality. As we are worthy, the ordinances of the priesthood enrich our lives on earth and prepare us for the magnificent promises of the world ahead. The Lord said, 'In the ordinances … the power of godliness is manifest' [D&C 84:20].

"There are special blessings from God for every worthy person who is baptized, receives the Holy Ghost, and regularly partakes of the sacrament. The temple brings added light and strength, along with the promise of eternal life [see D&C 138:37, 51]" ("Power in the Priesthood," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2013, 92).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:37–40. "Any degree of unrighteousness"

The examples listed in Doctrine and Covenants 121:37–40 illustrate the improper or unworthy use of the priesthood. Any priesthood holder who abuses his authority and fails to repent will lose the Spirit of the Lord and no longer have access to the authority and power of the priesthood.

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

"I fear that there are too many men who have been given the *authority* of the priesthood but who lack priesthood *power* because the flow of power has been blocked by sins such as laziness, dishonesty, pride, immorality, or preoccupation with things of the world.

"I fear that there are too many priesthood bearers who have done little or nothing to develop their ability to access the powers of heaven. I worry about all who are impure in their thoughts, feelings, or actions or who demean their wives or children, thereby cutting off priesthood power.

"I fear that too many have sadly surrendered their agency to the adversary and are saying by their conduct, 'I care more about satisfying my own desires than I do about bearing the Savior's power to bless others.'

"I fear, brethren, that some among us may one day wake up and realize what power in the priesthood really is and face the deep regret that they spent far more time seeking power over others or power at work than learning to exercise fully the power of God [see D&C 121:36]" ("The Price of Priesthood Power," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2016, 67–68).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:38. What does it mean to "kick against the pricks"?

"A 'prick' refers to a goad, which is a sharp spear or stick used to poke animals to make them move ahead. Rather than move forward, stubborn animals sometimes kick back to retaliate, literally kicking 'against the pricks.' Such a reaction only adds distress as the animal incurs more painful prompting from its master" (*New Testament Student Manual* [Church Educational System manual, 2014], 295). In Doctrine and Covenants 121:38, the phrase "to kick against the pricks" means to oppose or resist direction from the Lord or His appointed servants.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–45. The righteous use of the priesthood

Priesthood holders properly use the priesthood by following "the principles of righteousness" (D&C 121:36). They must work to develop the attributes listed in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–45 in order to exercise the priesthood righteously. These characteristics are exemplified in Jesus Christ's life and ministry. **President Boyd K. Packer** taught: "When priesthood authority is exercised properly, priesthood bearers do what [God] would do if He were present" ("The Power of the Priesthood," 7).



Those who seek to influence others through priesthood power do so "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41).

President Thomas S. Monson gave the following counsel to those who hold the priesthood:

"Brethren, each of us has been entrusted with one of the most precious gifts ever bestowed upon mankind. As we honor our priesthood and live our lives so that we are at all times worthy, the blessings of the priesthood will flow through us. I love the words found in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 121, verse 45 which tell us what we must do to be worthy: 'Let thy bowels … be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.'

"As bearers of the priesthood of God, we are engaged in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have answered His call; we are on His errand. Let us learn of Him. Let us follow in His footsteps. Let us live by His precepts. By so doing, we will be prepared for any service He calls us to perform" ("The Priesthood—a Sacred Gift," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2015, 90).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:45. "The doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul"

The following statement by **Elder Craig A. Cardon** of the Seventy helps us understand the application of the truths recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121:45:

"The Lord instructed all of us when He taught that for priesthood bearers, unrighteousness brings an end to heavenly power or influence, while righteousness strengthens them. He identified qualities that 'greatly enlarge the soul' as 'persuasion, … long-suffering, … gentleness[,] … meekness, … love unfeigned[,] … kindness, and pure knowledge' [D&C 121:41–42]. He then added these instructive words: 'Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven' [D&C 121:45].

"It is significant that after inviting us to have charity toward 'all men,' the Lord added the phrase 'and to the household of faith.' Why? Doesn't 'all men' include the household of faith? Consider the implications when this added phrase is understood to mean more specifically 'your very own household of faith.' Unfortunately, there are a few within the Church who exhibit greater charity toward nonfamily members than toward their own spouses and children, siblings and parents. They may show feigned kindness publicly while privately sowing and cultivating seeds of contention, demeaning those who should be closest to them. These things should not be.

"The Lord then spoke of thoughts that are garnished—embellished and guarded—by virtue unceasingly. Such thoughts abhor sin [see Alma 13:12]. They allow our communications to be 'Yea, yea; Nay, nay' [Matthew 5:37], unencumbered by guile. They see the good and the potential in others, undeterred by the inevitable imperfections in others.

"The verse concludes with a beautifully instructive reference to a distilling process. To better understand the application of these principles in the refinement of our personal lives, consider two glasses of water, each with the same outward appearance, placed in a room with high humidity. After a period of time, water begins to condense on one of the glasses because it is at a different temperature, occasioned by prior preparation not obvious initially, while the other glass remains dry and unaffected. Without compulsory means, the humidity is able to 'flow unto' [D&C 121:46] the one glass while the other receives nothing. In a similar way, qualities that greatly enlarge the soul; charity toward others, especially our families; and thoughts garnished with virtue adjust our spiritual temperatures to allow the doctrine of the priesthood to distil upon our souls.

"So it is that the priesthood, through the workings of the Spirit, moves individuals closer to God through ordination, ordinances, and refinement of individual natures, thus affording God's children the opportunity to become like Him and live eternally in His presence—a work more glorious than moving mountains [see Moses 1:39]" ("Moving Closer to Him," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2006, 96).

Doctrine and Covenants 121:46. "The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth"

Priesthood holders who seek for and practice the Christlike attributes listed in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–45 will receive power through the blessings of the priesthood. This divine power is described as "an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth" (D&C 121:46). A scepter is a rod or staff representing earthly authority held by a ruler, such as a king. In Doctrine and Covenants 121:46, the scepter is a metaphor for the authority and power of the priesthood granted by Jesus Christ, the King of kings, to those who exercise "the rights of the priesthood" using "the principles of righteousness" (D&C 121:36). These righteous priesthood holders will also have "the Holy Ghost [as their] constant companion," and their "dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto [them] forever and ever" (D&C 121:46). Thus, the power of the wicked, exercised through "unrighteous dominion" (D&C 121:39), is contrasted with the divine power shared by the Lord with "all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Christ" (D&C 121:29), whose "bowels [are] full of charity," and who have allowed "virtue [to] garnish [their] thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45). These individuals lead and influence others through love and righteousness, rather than by coercion or compulsion (see D&C 121:37), and consequently, those who love righteousness desire to follow them.

Consider which of the righteous attributes listed in Doctrine and Covenants 121 you might seek to develop so that you can have a greater influence for good on others. Set a goal to pray for and practice these attributes.

CHAPTER 48

Doctrine and Covenants 124

Introduction and Timeline

When Church members were driven from Missouri in the winter of 1838–1839, they found refuge in Illinois and Iowa Territory. After being allowed to escape captivity in April 1839, the Prophet Joseph Smith joined the Saints in Quincy, Illinois, and helped establish a new gathering place in Commerce, Illinois, which was later renamed Nauvoo. Nearly two years later, on January 19, 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124, in which the Lord commanded him to write "a solemn proclamation of [His] gospel" to the leaders of "all the nations of the earth" (D&C 124:2–3) and instructed the Saints to build a boarding house for visitors and a temple in Nauvoo. He also counseled various Church members and appointed brethren to serve in priesthood leadership positions.

Winter 1838–1839

Church members were driven out of Missouri and took refuge in Illinois and Iowa Territory.

April 16, 1839

While being transported to Columbia, Missouri, for trial, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions were allowed to escape captivity.

April–May 1839

Church members purchased land in Commerce, Illinois—later renamed Nauvoo—and established it as a gathering place.

August 15, 1840

The Prophet Joseph Smith delivered his first public discourse on baptisms for the dead at the funeral service for Seymour Brunson in Nauvoo, Illinois.

December 16, 1840

The state of Illinois granted an official charter to the city of Nauvoo.

January 19, 1841

Doctrine and Covenants 124 was received.

April 6, 1841

The cornerstones of the Nauvoo Temple were laid.

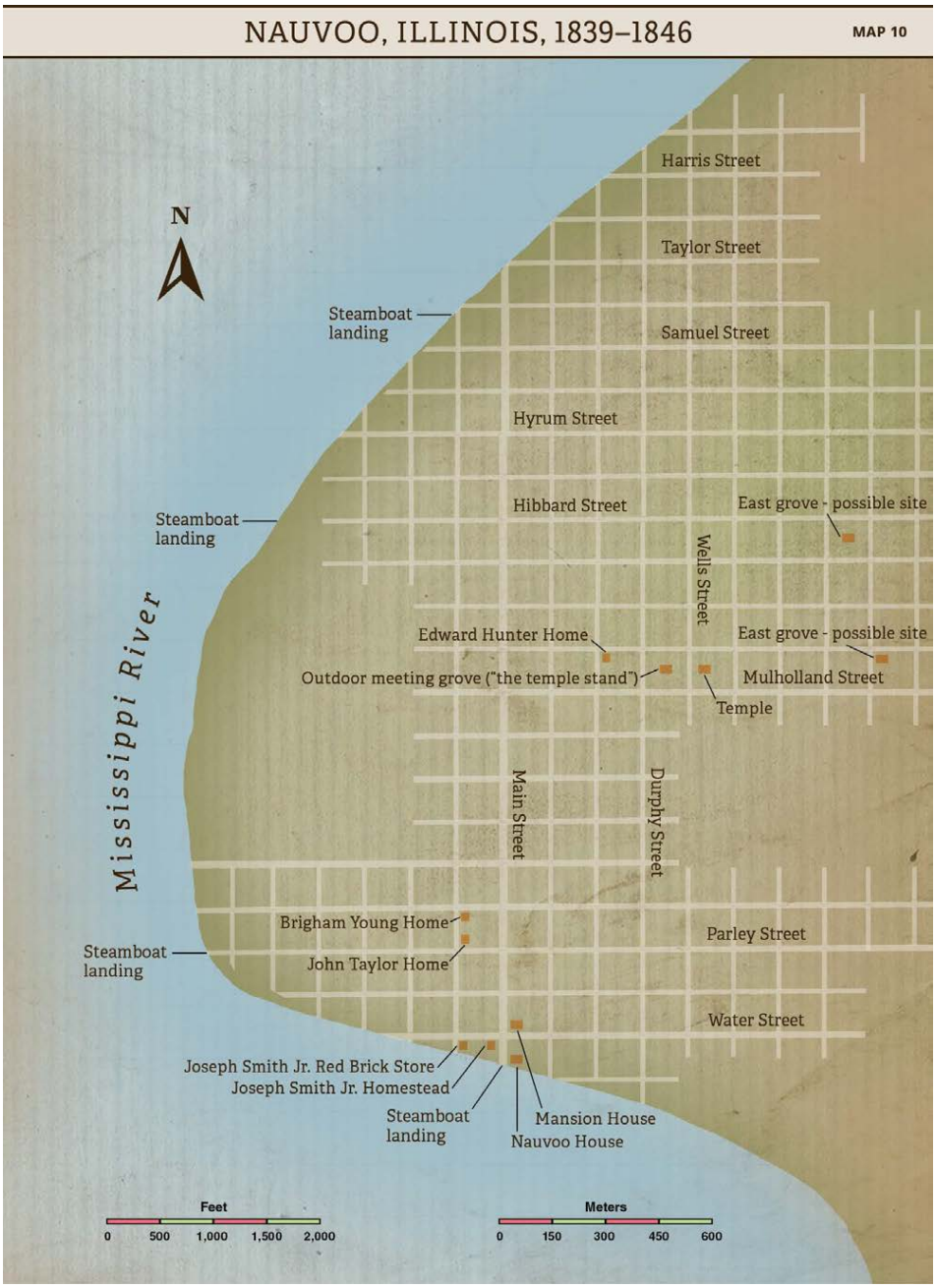
If the Lord gave you personal counsel and instruction today, what might He say to you? What might He approve of in your life? What improvements might He suggest? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 124, look for principles the Lord taught as He praised and counseled His servants, and consider how you can apply these principles in your life.

Doctrine and Covenants 124: Additional Historical Background

After their violent expulsion from Missouri in the winter of 1838–1839, Church members "fled east to the Mississippi [River], taking refuge … in various settlements along the river in Iowa Territory and Illinois, with the largest number of Saints congregating in and around Quincy, Illinois" (Alex D. Smith, "Organizing the Church in Nauvoo," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 264, or history.lds.org). In April 1839, after being imprisoned in Liberty Jail for more than four months, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his fellow prisoners were allowed to escape, and the Prophet traveled to Quincy, where he was reunited with his family. In the weeks that followed, he identified and arranged to buy large parcels of land in Commerce, Illinois, and across the Mississippi River

in Iowa as settlement sites for the Saints (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* ed. Mark Ashurst-McGee and others [2017], 431–32). By the summer of 1839, Church members began building a city in Commerce, which the Prophet "soon renamed … Nauvoo, a Hebrew word denoting beauty," and which became the Saints' new gathering place (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839,* xxviii-xxix). For the next several years, those living in Nauvoo worked hard to build the city because "this land was virtually swamp wilderness with only a few simple buildings. The Saints drained the land and established homes" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Nauvoo, Illinois (USA)," scriptures.lds.org).

As Church members transformed the small settlement of Nauvoo into a city, the Prophet Joseph Smith applied to the Illinois state legislature for a city charter, which would allow Church members to better protect their religious rights by enacting local laws, appointing their own city officials, and creating a locally controlled militia. The Illinois legislature approved the charter in December 1840, and it became effective in February 1841. It was while the Prophet Joseph Smith was establishing the city of Nauvoo as a new headquarters for the Church that he received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124. This revelation, received on January 19, 1841, provided direction for the Church members living in Nauvoo and served as a development guide for the city and the Church over the next five years. (See Smith, "Organizing the Church in Nauvoo," 264–66, or history.lds.org.)



Doctrine and Covenants 124:1–21

The Lord commands the Prophet Joseph Smith to send a proclamation of the gospel "to all the nations of the earth" and counsels individual Church members

Read Doctrine and Covenants 124:1–21, looking for the Lord's commendations and counsel to the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:2–12, 16. "Make a solemn proclamation … to all the nations"

The Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith to "make a solemn proclamation of [His] gospel" to the leaders of "all the nations of the earth" (D&C 124:2–3). He said that He would "visit and soften their hearts, … that they may come to the light of truth, and the Gentiles to the exaltation or lifting up of Zion" (D&C 124:9). In writing the proclamation, the Prophet was to follow the inspiration he would receive "by power of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 124:4) and boldly proclaim the truth, "fearing them not" (D&C 124:7). Drawing upon imagery used by the prophet Isaiah, the Lord likened the rulers of the earth to grass and their glory to "the flower thereof which soon falleth" (D&C 124:7; see also Isaiah 40:6–8). Just as "the grass withereth, [and] the flower fadeth" (Isaiah 40:8), so too will the power and glory of earthly rulers and kingdoms "in the day of visitation," when the Lord comes again (D&C 124:8; see also Psalm 103:15–16; Isaiah 40:5–8; Revelation 11:15). By accepting the restored gospel and allowing it to be preached in their lands, world leaders could help their nations prepare for the Savior's Second Coming.

Although the Prophet Joseph Smith worked on writing this proclamation, other concerns and challenges took precedence, including the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. Also, Robert B. Thompson, whom the Lord had commanded to assist the Prophet in writing the proclamation, died unexpectedly in August 1841. As a result, the proclamation was not written until after the Prophet Joseph Smith's death. Under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the proclamation was written by Elder Parley P. Pratt and published in 1845. (See Smith, "Organizing the Church in Nauvoo," 269, or history.lds.org.)

In the October 1975 general conference, **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) quoted from this proclamation and then reaffirmed its central message:

"To the rulers and peoples of all nations, we solemnly declare again that the God of heaven has established his latter-day kingdom upon the earth in fulfillment of prophecies. Holy angels have again communed with men on the earth. God has again revealed himself from heaven and restored to the earth his holy priesthood with power to administer in all the sacred ordinances necessary for the exaltation of his children. His church has been reestablished among men with all the spiritual gifts enjoyed anciently. All this is done in preparation for Christ's second coming. The great and dreadful day of the Lord is near at hand. In preparation for this great event and as a means of escaping the impending judgments, inspired messengers have gone, and are now going, forth to the nations of the earth carrying this testimony and warning. …

"… As humble servants of the Lord, we call upon the leaders of nations to humble themselves before God, to seek his inspiration and guidance. We call upon rulers and people alike to repent of their evil ways. Turn unto the Lord, seek his forgiveness, and unite yourselves in humility with his kingdom. There is no other way. If you will do this, your sins will be blotted out, peace will come and remain, and you will become a part of the kingdom of God in preparation for Christ's second coming" ("A Message to the World," *Ensign,* Nov. 1975, 33–34).

Doctrine and Covenants 124:2. Nauvoo, "a cornerstone of Zion"

The Lord designated the city of Nauvoo, Illinois, as a stake and "a cornerstone of Zion" (D&C 124:2). A *cornerstone* is a large stone laid at the corner of a foundation to give strength and stability to the entire structure. In Nauvoo, Church members received a flood of knowledge regarding temple ordinances and covenants, eternal marriage, salvation for the dead, the purposes and organization of the Relief Society, the nature of God, and truths relating to the plan of salvation (see D&C 127–32). The revelation of and teaching of essential doctrine and gospel ordinances in Nauvoo added to the spiritual foundation upon which all subsequent generations of Church members have built.



The Joseph Smith family homestead in Nauvoo, Illinois

Doctrine and Covenants 124:15. "I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart"

The Lord expressed His approval and love of the Prophet Joseph Smith's devoted older brother Hyrum for "the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me" (D&C 124:15). *Integrity* means a state of completeness. Thus, to have integrity of heart is to be whole or complete in personal purity, honesty, and uprightness. After quoting the Lord's words describing Hyrum Smith, **Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "To me, integrity means always doing what is right and good, regardless of the immediate consequences. It means being righteous from the very depth of our soul, not only in our actions but, more importantly, in our thoughts and in our hearts. Personal integrity implies such trustworthiness and incorruptibility that we are incapable of being false to a trust or covenant" ("Personal Integrity," *Ensign,* May 1990, 30).

Hyrum Smith exemplified "integrity of … heart" (D&C 124:15) and love of righteousness in his unwavering support of the Prophet and the gospel of Jesus

Christ. Describing his brother Hyrum, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** wrote, "I could pray in my heart that all my brethren were like unto my beloved brother Hyrum, who possesses the mildness of a lamb, and the integrity of a Job, and in short, the meekness and humility of Christ; and I love him with that love that is stronger than death" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 486).

President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) described Hyrum Smith as follows: "No mortal man who ever lived in this Church desired more to do good than did Hyrum Smith, the patriarch. I have it from the lips of my own sainted mother, that of all the men she was acquainted with in her girlhood days in Nauvoo, she admired Hyrum Smith most for his absolute integrity and devotion to God, and his loyalty to the prophet of God" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1920, 84).

Why do you think the Lord approves of and trusts those who have "integrity of … heart" (D&C 124:15, 20)? Ponder what you can do to have more integrity.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:16–17. John C. Bennett

The Lord called John C. Bennett, a new convert to the Church, to help the Prophet Joseph Smith "in sending [His] word to the kings and people of the earth" (D&C 124:16). The Lord also noted that He had "seen the work" that Brother Bennett had done (D&C 124:17), possibly referring to the help he had given in drafting and obtaining approval for the Nauvoo city charter (see Kimberly Reid, "Joseph Smith: Prophet and City Leader," history.lds.org). After the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124, Brother Bennett became an influential leader in Nauvoo. He was elected as the city's first mayor and appointed as the chancellor of the University of Nauvoo and major general of the Nauvoo Legion (see "Bennett, John Cook," josephsmithpapers.org). Furthermore, in April 1841, during the general conference of the Church, he was called to serve as an Assistant to the First Presidency until Sidney Rigdon, who was then ill, regained his health (see "Bennett, John C.," in Dennis L. Largey and Larry E. Dahl, eds., *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion* [2012], 53–54; see also D&C 124:103–4).

Unfortunately, John C. Bennett's rise to prominence in Nauvoo was short-lived. He "used both his government and ecclesiastical positions to spread damaging rumors about Joseph Smith, plot an assassination attempt, and claim spiritual license to seduce women" (Reid, "Joseph Smith: Prophet and City Leader," history.lds.org). He promoted the false doctrine of "spiritual wifery," which "taught that sexual relations were permissible outside of legalized marital relationships, on condition that the relations remained secret" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," note 21, topics.lds.org). He was excommunicated from the Church in May 1842, after which he "embarked on a speaking tour addressing the perceived evils of Joseph Smith and Mormonism" and published an anti-Mormon "history" of the Church ("Bennett, John C.," in Largey and Dahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 54).

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124, the Lord counseled John C. Bennett that "his reward shall not fail *if* he receive counsel" and *if* he

continued to do the Lord's will (see D&C 124:16–17; italics added). However, he did not heed these instructions and consequently forfeited the blessings promised to him in this revelation.

Some may question why John C. Bennett was allowed to hold positions of leadership and trust in Nauvoo. At the time the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124 was received and when he was appointed as an Assistant President in the First Presidency, Brother Bennett was striving to do what was right.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:22–83

The Lord commands the Saints to build a house for visitors and a temple in Nauvoo

Read Doctrine and Covenants 124:22–44, looking for why the Lord commanded Church members in Nauvoo to build a house for visitors and a temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:22–24, 56–82. The Nauvoo House

The Lord commanded Church members to build two houses in His name—the Nauvoo House and the Nauvoo Temple (see D&C 124:22–23, 27). The Nauvoo House was to be a hotel, or "a house for boarding," where visitors and travelers could stay and "contemplate the word of the Lord" and "receive … counsel" (D&C 124:23, 61). During a conference held in Nauvoo on August 29, 1842, Hyrum Smith explained, "It is important that the Nauvoo House should be finished that we may have a suitable place wherein to entertain the great ones of the Earth and teach them the truth" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, pages 1387–88, josephsmithpapers.org). "Because [Joseph] and Emma Smith were to donate the land on which the hotel [the Nauvoo House] would be built, the Smith family was to live there and serve as the hosts" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 7: September 1839–January 1841,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2018], 513; see also D&C 124:56).

Shortly before his death in 1844, the Prophet instructed the Saints to stop work on the Nauvoo House "so that more resources and manpower could be directed toward constructing the Nauvoo Temple. At the time of the martyrdom [of the Prophet Joseph Smith], the Nauvoo House remained uncompleted" ("Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 124," in Largey and Dahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 838). Unfortunately, the Nauvoo House was never finished according to Church leaders' plans.



Construction began on the Nauvoo House, but it was never completed (see D&C 124:56). The Riverside Mansion, shown here, was built on the same location.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:26–28. "Build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein"

The Lord instructed Church members to donate their "precious things of the earth" and skills for the construction of a temple in Nauvoo (see D&C 124:26–27). Just as they had done in Kirtland, Ohio, the Saints faithfully volunteered much of their time, labor, and means to construct the Nauvoo Temple. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) explained:

"In 1841, two years after [the Prophet Joseph Smith] came to Nauvoo, he broke ground for a house of the Lord that should stand as a crowning jewel to the work of God. …

"No effort was spared. No sacrifice was too great. Through the next five years men chiseled stone and laid footings and foundation, walls and ornamentation. Hundreds went to the north, there to live for a time to cut lumber, vast quantities of it, and then bind it together to form rafts which were floated down the river to Nauvoo. Beautiful moldings were cut from that lumber. Pennies were gathered to buy nails. Unimaginable sacrifice was made to procure glass. They were building a temple to God, and it had to be the very best of which they were capable" ("O That I Were an Angel, and Could Have the Wish of Mine Heart," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2002, 4–5).



***Joseph Smith at the Nauvoo Temple,* by Gary E. Smith. The Prophet Joseph Smith directed the construction of the Nauvoo Temple.**

Under the Prophet Joseph Smith's direction, the cornerstones of the Nauvoo Temple were laid on April 6, 1841. The completed temple was dedicated on April 30 and May 1, 1846, almost two years after the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and after most of the Saints had left Nauvoo for the Salt Lake Valley (see Matthew S. McBride, "The First Nauvoo Temple: So Great a Cause," *Ensign,* July 2002, 12). In October 1848 a fire destroyed much of the temple, and in 1850 a tornado destroyed one of the remaining outer walls and weakened two others. By 1853 the temple was in ruins. Under the direction of President Gordon B. Hinckley, the Church constructed a new temple in Nauvoo, Illinois, on the original temple site and dedicated it in June 2002. (See "The Nauvoo Temple: Destruction and Rebirth," history.lds.org.)



The reconstructed Nauvoo Illinois Temple

Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–36. "Your baptisms for your dead"



Baptisms for the dead were performed in the Mississippi River after the doctrine was taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith in August 1840.

The Lord began to unfold the doctrine of salvation for the dead as early as January 1836, in a vision given to the Prophet Joseph Smith of the celestial kingdom (see D&C 137:7–10). Four years later, "at the funeral of Seymour Brunson on August 15, 1840, Joseph Smith taught the principle that men and women on earth could act on behalf of their deceased kin and fulfill the requirement of baptism on their behalf. The Saints joyfully embraced this opportunity and began almost immediately to be baptized for departed loved ones in rivers and streams near Nauvoo" (Matthew McBride, "Letters on Baptism for the Dead," in McBride and Goldberg, *Revelations in Context,* 273, or history.lds.org).



The doctrine of the redemption of the dead makes it possible for members of the Church to perform proxy baptisms in a baptismal font such as this one in the Ogden Utah Temple.

Commenting on the Lord's instructions to the Saints recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–36, **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (1876–1972) explained: "So important did the Lord consider baptisms for the dead that he authorized the Saints to be baptized for their dead in the Mississippi River, until a place could be provided in his house for this purpose. He further said he would give them sufficient time to build such a house, and while they were doing so, their baptisms for their dead would be acceptable to him if performed in the river, but after a place was prepared, then all baptisms for the dead in the river must cease for this ordinance as well as other ordinances for the dead, properly belongs to the house of the Lord. This revelation was given January 19, 1841, and from that time until the October conference of the Church in 1841, the baptisms in the river were accepted. At the conference in October, the Prophet announced that the time for the discontinuance of the river baptism for the dead had come, and from that time forth they must be performed in the temple. The temple was not finished at that time, but it had in the six months progressed far enough so that the basement could be enclosed, and in the basement a font had been built and dedicated, so that early in November, 1841, under the direction of the Prophet Joseph, baptisms for the dead commenced in the house of the Lord" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1949], 4:81).

Doctrine and Covenants 124:28, 37–42. "That I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people"



Photograph of the original Nauvoo Temple

The Lord's people have always been a temple-building people. Just as in ancient times, temples are built in our day so that sacred ordinances can be revealed and performed and the "oracles," or revelations of God, can be received (see D&C 124:38–40). The Lord explained that the central purpose for building the Nauvoo Temple was to provide a place "for the Most High to dwell therein. … That he may come to and restore again … the fulness of the priesthood" (D&C 124:27–28). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught, "If a man gets a fulness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 419). By receiving all the ordinances of the temple and keeping the associated covenants, Church members can receive all of the blessings that Heavenly Father offers to His children through the priesthood.

As construction of the temple in Nauvoo, Illinois, began, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** and the counselors in the First Presidency wrote to Church members and explained the reasons for building the house of the Lord: "The Temple of the Lord is in process of erection here [in Nauvoo], where the Saints will come to worship the God of their fathers, according to the order of His house and the powers of the Holy Priesthood, and will be so constructed as to enable all the functions of the Priesthood to be duly exercised, and where instructions from the Most High will be received, and from this place go forth to distant lands" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 415).

The Prophet Joseph Smith knew that the Nauvoo Temple would take years to build. He also knew that he might not live to see its completion. **Elder Franklin D. Richards** (1821–1899) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote: "When the Spirit prompted [Joseph Smith] that his life's work was drawing to a close, and when he saw that his earthly days might be ended before the completion of the temple, he called a chosen few, and conferred upon them the ordinances of the holy endowments, so that the divine treasures of his mind might not perish from the world with his death" (in *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 413–14).

On May 4, 1842, the Prophet arranged the upper room of his brick store in Nauvoo to represent the intended interior of the temple. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** later recorded:



Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois

"I spent the day in the upper part of the store, … instructing [a group of priesthood leaders] in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days [Adam], and all those plans and principles by which anyone is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim [God the Father] in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days.

"And the communications I made to this council were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritually minded: and there was nothing made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them … ; therefore let the Saints be diligent in building the Temple, and all houses which they have been, or shall hereafter be, commanded of God to build" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 414).

After the martyrdom of the Prophet, Church members continued work on the Nauvoo Temple, even after the decision had been made to leave Nauvoo. From December 1845 to February 1846, as construction continued, endowments for the living were performed in the temple. Thousands of Church members were endowed before they began their exodus to the Salt Lake Valley. (See McBride, "The First Nauvoo Temple," 12.)

Consider the blessings that you and your family can receive through temple ordinances and covenants. What sacrifices are you willing to make so that you can be worthy and prepared to receive temple ordinances and faithfully keep your temple covenants?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 124:45–83, looking for additional instructions the Lord gave regarding building the Nauvoo Temple and the blessing the Saints would receive if they built it.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:45–46. "Hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants"

The Lord reassured Church members that "if [they would] hearken unto [His] voice, and unto the voice of [His] servants, … they [would] not be moved out of their place" (D&C 124:45). While the word *place* can denote a physical location, in

this context it likely refers to the Saints' spiritual standing before the Lord. As Church members "hearken" to the word of the Lord as contained in the scriptures and as taught by His chosen servants, they will be able to resist temptation, detect falsehood, and stand firm and steadfast in truth and righteousness. In short, "they shall not be moved out of their place" (D&C 124:45).

Consider which teachings and counsel given through the Lord's chosen servants you can better obey so that you will "not be moved out of [your] place" (D&C 124:45).

Doctrine and Covenants 124:49–54. "When … their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work"

In July 1831 the Lord revealed that Independence, in Jackson County, Missouri, was to be the location of the city of Zion and its temple (see D&C 57:3). The following year the Lord reaffirmed His commandment to Church members to build the city of Zion, beginning with the temple (see D&C 84:4–5). However, by the winter of 1833, the Saints had been violently driven from Jackson County, Missouri, by their enemies. Consequently, they were unable to fulfill the Lord's commandment to build the city and the temple. In the revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith on January 19, 1841, the Lord explained that He accepted the Saints' sacrifice and excused them from the commandment to build a city and temple in Zion at that time (see D&C 124:49).

President Charles W. Penrose (1832–1925) of the First Presidency explained that the principle taught in Doctrine and Covenants 124:49 "applied in the past, and will apply in the future, and we should remember it. If God gives a commandment, and we do not obey it, why he revokes it, and he revokes the blessings. If he gives us a commandment to do certain things, and we find ourselves unable to do them, either by restricted laws or any other obstacles in the way of physical force, the Lord requires them no more but accepts our offering, and he will visit his wrath and indignation upon those who prevent his people from accomplishing that which he required at their hands" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1924, 14). However, we should remember that if God were to excuse the Church from obeying a commandment based on the principle outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 124:49, He would make it known by revelation through His chosen prophet.

Although the early Saints were prevented from fulfilling the Lord's commandment to build a city and temple in Jackson County, Missouri, revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants teach that the latter-day Zion will still be built there at a future date (see D&C 101:17–18; 105:13). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught: "The release from the building of the temple did not, however, cancel the responsibility of building the City and the House of the Lord, at some future time. When the Lord gets ready for it to be accomplished, he will command his people, and the work will be done" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 3:79).

Doctrine and Covenants 124:84–122

The Lord gives instructions, assignments, and promises to specific Church members

Read Doctrine and Covenants 124:84–122, looking for the individual instructions and promises the Lord gave to various Church members.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:84. "He aspireth to establish his counsel instead of the counsel which I have ordained"

Almon Babbitt served as a member of Zion's Camp and was called as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. In October 1840 the Prophet Joseph Smith called him to preside over the Kirtland, Ohio, stake. (See "Babbitt, Almon Whiting," josephsmithpapers.org.) In a letter announcing this call, the Prophet wrote: "It has been deemed prudent to advise the Eastern Brethren who desire to locate in Kirtland, to do so, consequently you may expect an increase of members in your stake, who probably will be but young in the faith, and who will require kind treatment" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. C-1, page 1114, josephsmithpapers.org). After receiving these instructions Almon became overzealous in his efforts to rebuild Kirtland and "not only encouraged members in the [eastern United States] to gather to Kirtland" but also immigrating converts from England. He also tried to persuade Church members already living in Nauvoo, Illinois, to move back to Kirtland. "These strenuous efforts … would have built up Kirtland at the expense of other Mormon communities," including Nauvoo (Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People* [2009], 552).

The Lord pointed out that Almon Babbitt had tried "to establish his counsel instead of the counsel which I have ordained, even that of the Presidency of my Church" (D&C 124:84). He compared Almon Babbitt's zeal in building up Kirtland to "sett[ing] up a golden calf for the worship of my people" (D&C 124:84). This has reference to the children of Israel, who turned away from the commandments of the Lord to worship the golden calf Aaron built (see Exodus 32:1–8). When Church members put other pursuits before God's will, they may stray from or ignore His counsel and commandments. Just as there is no salvation in worshipping a graven image or golden calf, there is no saving power in following counsel contrary to the counsel the Lord gives through His chosen servants. Because of his actions, Almon Babbit was disfellowshipped from the Church for a time. He later returned to full fellowship and served faithfully for the rest of his life.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:87–91, 97–102. "Let him be humble before me, and be without guile"

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124:87–91, 97–102, the Lord addressed William Law, who was called to take Hyrum Smith's place as Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church. The Lord promised William that if he would "be humble before [the Lord], and be without guile, … he [would] receive of [His] Spirit, even the Comforter, which [would] manifest unto him the truth of all things" (D&C 124:97). In speaking of the importance of humility in learning truth by the Spirit, **Elder Richard G. Scott** (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "*Humility* is essential to the acquiring of spiritual knowledge. To

be humble is to be teachable. Humility permits you to be tutored by the Spirit and to be taught from sources inspired by the Lord, such as the scriptures. The seeds of personal growth and understanding germinate and flourish in the fertile soil of humility. Their fruit is spiritual knowledge to guide you here and hereafter" ("Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge," *Ensign,* Nov. 1993, 87).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin explained what it means to "be without guile" (D&C 124:97):

"To be without guile is to be free of deceit, cunning, hypocrisy, and dishonesty in thought or action. … A person without guile is a person of innocence, honest intent, and pure motives, whose life reflects the simple practice of conforming his [or her] daily actions to principles of integrity. …

"If we are without guile, we are honest, true, and righteous. All of these are attributes of Deity and are required of the Saints. Those who are honest are fair and truthful in their speech, straightforward in their dealings, free of deceit, and above stealing, misrepresentation, or any other fraudulent action. Honesty is of God and dishonesty of the devil. …

"I suggest that we look into our hearts and see whether our motives and actions are pure and above reproach and to see whether we are free of deceit and fraud" ("Without Guile," *Ensign,* May 1988, 80–82).

For a time, William Law served in the First Presidency with humility and integrity. However, by the winter of 1843 his faith in the restored gospel and the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith had wavered, partly due to the difficulty he had with accepting the principle of plural marriage. He was removed from his office and eventually excommunicated on April 18, 1844. He became embittered toward the Prophet and helped publish a slanderous anti-Mormon newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor.* The decision of the Nauvoo city council to destroy this paper led to the arrests of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and their subsequent murders in Carthage Jail. (See "Law, William," in Largey and Dahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 358, 360.)

Consider what you can do to more fully humble yourself before the Lord and to "be without guile" (D&C 124:97) so that the Spirit can influence you and teach you divine truth.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:91–96. "That my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch"

In December 1833, Joseph Smith Sr. was called to be the first Patriarch to the Church, and he served in this office until his death in September 1840 (see *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* "Patriarch to the Church" [1992], 3:1065; see also D&C 107:39–56). Shortly before his death, Joseph Smith Sr. "laid his hands upon [Hyrum Smith's] head" and "seal[ed] upon [his] head the patriarchal power [whereby he might] bless the people" (Lucy Mack Smith, "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," book 18, page 5, josephsmithpapers.org). On January 19, 1841, the Lord called Hyrum Smith to "take the office of … Patriarch, which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right" and to "hold the

keys of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people" (D&C 124:91–92), thus designating Hyrum as the Patriarch to the Church.

For much of the Church's history, there was a Patriarch to the Church in addition to stake patriarchs. The Patriarch to the Church was sustained as a general authority and was responsible for giving patriarchal blessings to Church members who did not have access to a stake patriarch. This office was held primarily by members of the Smith family (see *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* "Patriarch to the Church" [1992], 3:1065–66). In 1979 the office of Patriarch to the Church was discontinued "because of the large increase in the number of stake patriarchs and the availability of patriarchal service throughout the world" (see "The Sustaining of Church Officers," *Ensign,* Nov. 1979, 18).

The Lord also called Hyrum Smith to "be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto [the] Church," along with his brother Joseph (see D&C 124:94–95). Concerning Hyrum's unique calling, **President Joseph Fielding Smith** explained that the blessing for Hyrum recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124:91–93 "pertains to the office and calling of the man who holds the keys of the Patriarchal Priesthood.



Joseph and Hyrum Smith, **by Kenneth A. Corbett. Hyrum Smith was called by the Lord to stand with his brother Joseph as a prophet, seer, and revelator (see D&C 124:91–96).**

"The Lord conferred upon Hyrum Smith, however, another important and special honor, in making him as well as Joseph Smith a holder of the keys of authority in this dispensation of the fulness of times. …

"This was a special blessing given to Hyrum Smith, and in accepting it he took the place of Oliver Cowdery, upon whom these keys had previously been bestowed. It should be remembered that whenever the Lord revealed priesthood and the keys of priesthood from the heavens, Oliver Cowdery stood with Joseph Smith in the presence of the heavenly messengers, and was a recipient, as well as Joseph Smith, of all this authority. They held it conjointly, Joseph Smith as the first and Oliver Cowdery as the second Elder of the Church.

"Thus the law pertaining to witnesses was fully established, for there were two witnesses standing with authority, keys and presidency, at the head of this the greatest of all dispensations. When through transgression Oliver Cowdery lost this wonderful and exalted blessing, Hyrum Smith was chosen by revelation of the Lord to take his place" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 3:165–66).

Doctrine and Covenants 124:123–45

The Lord names those who are to serve in priesthood leadership positions

Read Doctrine and Covenants 124:123–45, looking for why the Lord established the "offices" and "keys" of the priesthood (D&C 124:143) described in these verses.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:143. "For the work of the ministry and the perfecting of my saints"

The Lord established priesthood "offices" and committed to His servants "the keys thereof" for the purpose of governing His Church and "for the work of the ministry and the perfecting of [His] saints" (D&C 124:143; see also Ephesians 4:11–12). **President John Taylor** (1808–1887) explained how those serving in priesthood offices direct the Lord's work and help Church members become perfected:

"The Lord has placed in his church apostles and prophets, high priests, seventies, elders, etc. What for? … These various officers are for perfecting of the Saints. What else? For the work of the ministry, that men might be qualified and informed and be full of intelligence, wisdom, and light, and learn to proclaim the principles of eternal truth and to bring out from the treasury of God things new and old, things calculated to promote the welfare of the people. …

"… God has ordained among you presidents, apostles, prophets, high priests, seventies, bishops and other authorities; they are of his appointment, empowered and directed by him, under his influence, teaching his law, unfolding the principles of life, and are organized and ordained expressly to lead the people in the path of exaltation and eternal glory" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* [2001], 131).

Ponder how you have grown spiritually and been blessed through the service of priesthood leaders. What can you do, or continue to do, to sustain and follow those called to lead the Church?

CHAPTER 49

Doctrine and Covenants 125–28

Introduction and Timeline

By the summer of 1839, many of the Saints who had been forced from their homes in Missouri were establishing new settlements on land purchased by the Church in Commerce, Illinois, and in Iowa Territory. In March 1841 the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 125, in which the Lord revealed His will concerning the gathering of the Saints in Iowa Territory.

After his baptism in April 1832, Brigham Young served missions in Upper Canada, in the northeastern United States, and in England. His extensive missionary service required him and his family to make significant sacrifices. On July 1, 1841, Brigham Young returned from his mission in England after an absence of almost two years. On July 9, 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation for Brigham Young, which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 126. In this revelation, the Lord told Brigham that he was no longer required to leave his family to serve missions "as in times past" (D&C 126:1).

On September 1, 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote a letter to Church members instructing them to keep records of the baptisms they performed for their deceased ancestors. This letter is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 127. Recent research indicates that on September 7, 1842 (rather than September 6, as reported in the section heading), the Prophet wrote another letter to Church members, in which he taught them further about the proper administration and recording of baptisms for the dead. He also explained the doctrinal significance of this ordinance. This letter is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 128.

August 15, 1840

The Prophet Joseph Smith delivered his first public discourse on baptisms for the dead at the funeral service for Seymour Brunson in Nauvoo, Illinois.

March 6–16, 1841

Doctrine and Covenants 125 was received.

July 1, 1841

Brigham Young arrived in Nauvoo after serving a mission in England.

July 9, 1841

Doctrine and Covenants 126 was received.

November 8, 1841

A temporary baptismal font was dedicated for baptisms for the dead in the basement of the unfinished temple in Nauvoo, Illinois.

August 1842

To avoid being unlawfully arrested and returned to Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith hid in various locations in and around Nauvoo, Illinois.

September 1, 1842

The Prophet Joseph Smith dictated a letter to Church members, which is **recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 127.**

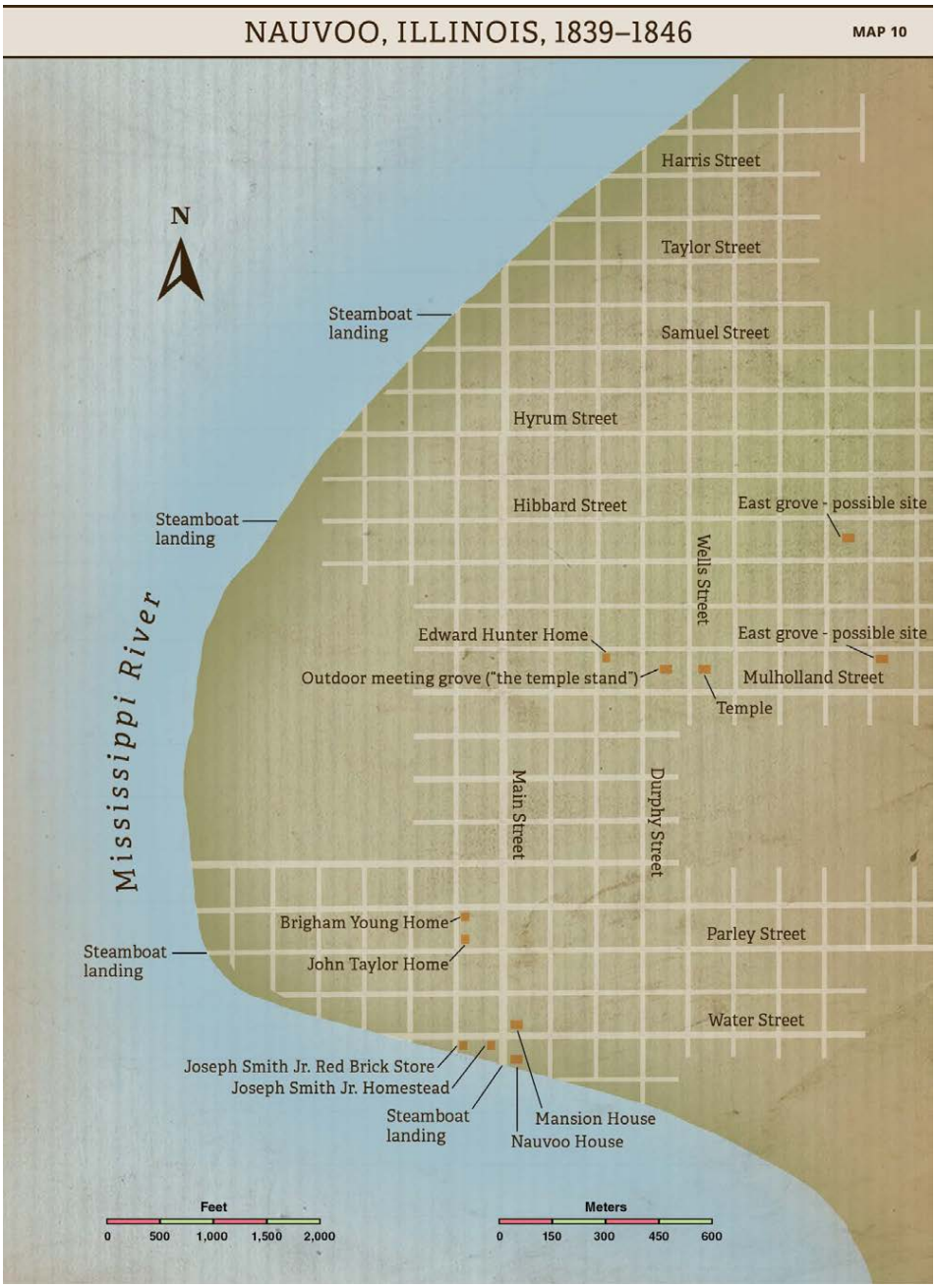
September 7, 1842

The Prophet Joseph Smith dictated another letter to Church members, which is **recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 128.**

Think about opportunities you have to serve the Lord. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 125–28, consider how you can follow the example of leaders such as President Brigham Young as you faithfully strive to fulfill your Church callings and responsibilities.

Doctrine and Covenants 125: Additional Historical Background

After Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued the executive order to remove all Mormons from the state of Missouri in October 1838, thousands of Church members fled to Iowa Territory and Illinois. The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders arranged to buy 700 acres of land in Commerce (later named Nauvoo), Illinois, and nearly 18,000 acres in Lee County, Iowa Territory. Branches of the Church were eventually established in Iowa Territory in Zarahemla and Nashville and in other small settlements near the existing community of Montrose. During a Church conference held on October 5, 1839, the Iowa Stake was created. In March 1841 the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 125, in which the Lord named Zarahemla and Nashville as principal gathering places for Church members in Iowa Territory. In August 1841 the name of the Iowa Stake was changed to the Zarahemla Stake. However, because all available Church members were needed to help build the Nauvoo Temple and complete other construction projects in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Zarahemla Stake was dissolved in January 1842 after numerous Church members moved from Iowa Territory to Nauvoo. (See "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 125," in Dennis L. Largey and Larry E. Dahl, eds., *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion* [2012], 840.)



Doctrine and Covenants 125

The Lord directs Church members in Iowa Territory to gather to designated places

Read Doctrine and Covenants 125, looking for the instructions the Lord gave Church members in Iowa Territory.

Doctrine and Covenants 125. The gathering of the Saints

Several of the revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants taught that Church members were to gather to places designated by the Lord through His prophet (see D&C 37:3; 57:1–2; 101:20–21; 115:6–8). By gathering together, these Church members received spiritual strength, gospel instruction, and other benefits of associating with each other and with Church leaders. In the revelation the Prophet Joseph Smith received in March 1841, the Lord explained that Church members in Iowa Territory were to "build up cities unto my name" (D&C 125:2). He also told these Saints that they were to gather in Zarahemla or Nashville in Iowa Territory, "in the city of Nauvoo," or in any of the stakes that the Lord had appointed (see D&C 125:3–4). Today, Church members are not commanded to gather to one particular place; rather, each member is assigned to a local ward or branch within a stake or mission in the area in which he or she lives. **President Ezra Taft Benson** (1899–1994) taught:

"As the Church grows, it is very important that we build solidly and well, and that our prospective stakes have the basic ingredients that are necessary for success and that existing stakes work tirelessly for full stakehood in the sense of spiritual achievement. These stakes are to be the gathering spots for the Zion of today, and they need to be spiritual sanctuaries and to be self-sufficient in as many ways as is possible.

"The stakes and districts of Zion are symbolic of the holy places spoken of by the Lord where His Saints are to gather in the last days as a refuge from the storm" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 293).



The location of Fort Des Moines in Montrose, Iowa, where some Latter-day Saints lived in deserted U.S. Army barracks after fleeing from Missouri in 1839

Doctrine and Covenants 126: Additional Historical Background

From the time of his baptism on April 5, 1832, Brigham Young demonstrated great missionary zeal. Describing the feelings he had, he later said: "I wanted to thunder, and roar out the gospel to the nations. It burned in my bones like fire pent up. … Nothing would satisfy me but to cry abroad in the world what the Lord is doing in the latter days" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], viii).



***Brigham Young, America's Moses,* by Kenneth A. Corbett. Portrait of Brigham Young, 1801–1877.**

During his first five years as a member of the Church, Brigham Young served missions throughout Upper Canada and in New York and other eastern states. He also participated in the Zion's Camp march from Ohio to Missouri in the summer of 1834. He was ordained a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in Kirtland, Ohio, on February 14, 1835, and later became the president of that Quorum on April 14, 1840, while he was serving a mission in England. On July 1, 1841, after completing his mission in England, President Young rejoined his wife and children, who were then living in Nauvoo, Illinois. (See Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* [1985], 413–14.) On July 9, 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith visited President Young in his home and dictated the revelation that is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 126.

Doctrine and Covenants 126

The Lord tells Brigham Young that he is no longer required to leave his family to serve missions

Read Doctrine and Covenants 126, looking for the Lord's instructions to President Brigham Young.

Doctrine and Covenants 126. "Your offering is acceptable to me"

Brigham Young's many absences while he was in the Lord's service were difficult for his wife Mary Ann and their children. In the summer of 1839, while he and the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were preparing to serve missions in Great Britain, a malaria epidemic struck the area, leaving Brigham and most of his family members ill (see Lisa Olsen Tait and Chad M. Orton, "Take Special Care of Your Family," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 245, or history.lds.org). However, this did not stop him

from serving his mission. He later recalled: "I was determined to go to England or to die trying. My firm resolve was that I would do what I was required to do in the Gospel of life and salvation, or I would die trying to do it" (*Teachings: Brigham Young,* 5).



Mary Ann Angell married Brigham Young in Kirtland, Ohio, on February 18, 1834.

Brigham Young left Montrose, Iowa Territory, for England on September 14, 1839, just 10 days after his wife Mary Ann gave birth to their fourth child. Mary Ann was also still suffering from malaria. This was the eighth time since they had been married that they had been separated while President Young served a mission (including the Zion's Camp expedition). In addition, because they had been driven out of Missouri the previous year and had lost most of their possessions, Brigham was only able to leave Mary Ann $2.72 with which to support their family, which also included two daughters from his marriage to his first wife, Miriam, who had died about five months after he joined the Church. But the Youngs trusted that the Lord would provide for them, and they relied on the Prophet Joseph Smith's promise that the families of the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles would have their needs met while the Apostles were away on their missions. (See Arrington, *Brigham Young,* 74–75, 413, 420; "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 126," in Largey and Dahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 841.) As Brigham Young and his friend and fellow Apostle Heber C. Kimball departed for their mission, they arose from the back of the wagon where they lay gravely ill and cheered their ailing families, shouting, "Hurrah, hurrah for Israel" (in Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball,* 3rd ed. [1967], 266). During her husband's absence, Mary Ann moved the family from Montrose, Iowa Territory, to Nauvoo, Illinois, where she constructed a log home "with blankets hung over the doors and windows to keep out the elements." After returning from his mission to England on July 1, 1841, President Young began building a brick home in Nauvoo for his family, "although he was not able to move his family into it until May 1843" (in Tait and Orton, "Take Special Care of Your Family," 246, or history.lds.org).

As a result of Brigham Young's faithful obedience and dedicated service, he received the Lord's reassurance that he had done well and that his offering was acceptable to the Lord (see D&C 126:1).

According to the Lectures on Faith, a collection of lessons that were published with the sanction and approval of the Prophet Joseph Smith, one thing that is "necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation" is "an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is

pursuing is according to [God's] will" (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 38). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles added:

"Obviously, our imperfections make God's full and final approval of our lives impossible now, but the basic course of our life can be approved. If we have that basic reassurance, we can further develop faith. Once our *direction* is correct, we can give attention to pace.

"There are various and specific duties in the 'course of life' which go with (and help us to keep) the commandments. These duties are usually quite measurable and are quite familiar. They include partaking of the sacrament, attending meetings and the temple, praying, fasting, studying the scriptures, rendering Christian service, attending to all family duties, being involved in missionary work and reactivation, doing genealogical work, paying our tithes and offerings, and being temporally prepared. …

"When we perform these measurable duties properly, they produce a series of highly desirable results which are less measurable but very real. Indeed, when we have personal, reinforcing spiritual experiences, they will almost always occur in the course of our carrying out the duties just named. Further, carrying out these duties will entitle us to an ever-increasing companionship of the Holy Ghost" ("The Christ-Centered Life," *Ensign,* Aug. 1981, 13).

Consider times in your life when you have felt that your efforts to build the Lord's kingdom were "acceptable to [Him]" (D&C 126:1).

Doctrine and Covenants 126:3. "Send my word abroad"

Before the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 126, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles generally functioned as local authorities in the outlying areas of the Church and in the mission field. As Brigham Young and other members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles returned from their missions in Great Britain, the Lord indicated that President Young, who was then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was not required to leave his family any longer to serve missions (see D&C 126:1). Rather, the Lord said that he was to remain near the headquarters of the Church and "send my word abroad" (D&C 126:3), meaning that he would oversee missionary work. Although President Young served three more brief missions in 1842, 1843, and 1844, he generally was able to remain in Nauvoo, Illinois, with his family. There he had the blessing of spending time with and learning from the Prophet Joseph Smith during the remaining three years of the Prophet's life.

Doctrine and Covenants 126:3. "Take especial care of your family"

After returning home from a mission to England, Brigham Young followed the Lord's command to "take especial care of [his] family" (D&C 126:3). He took time each day to instruct and pray with his children, who remembered him as a gentle and loving father. Brigham was 40 years old when the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 126 was received, but the following account illustrates his longstanding devotion to his family:

"At age 23 he married [his first wife,] Miriam Angeline Works. Two daughters were born to the young couple. Brigham supported his family by making and repairing chairs, tables, and cupboards and installing windows, doors, stairways, and fireplace mantels. …

"When Miriam contracted tuberculosis, Brigham assumed much of the burden of her work in addition to his own. As she became progressively more bedridden, he regularly prepared breakfast for the family, dressed his daughters, cleaned up the house, and 'carried his wife to the rocking chair by the fireplace and left her there until he could return in the evening,' when he cooked supper, got his family into bed, and finished the household chores [Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, *The Life Story of Brigham Young* (1930), 5]. His experiences in his youth and early marriage in caring for children and managing a home taught him much about family cooperation and housekeeping. Years later he counseled the Saints on these subjects and teasingly boasted that he could beat 'most of the women in [the] community at housekeeping' [*Deseret News Weekly,* Aug. 12, 1857, 4]" (*Teachings: Brigham Young,* 2).



The home of Brigham Young in Nauvoo, Illinois

Learning to balance our family responsibilities with schooling, work, and Church callings can be difficult. In a 1999 letter to the membership of the Church, the **First Presidency** proclaimed:

"We call upon parents to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church. The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.

"We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must

not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform" (First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999; see also *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 1.4.1).

Doctrine and Covenants 127: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith's first public teaching about the doctrine of vicarious baptisms for the dead occurred as he preached a funeral sermon for Brother Seymour Brunson, who had been a member of the Nauvoo High Council and a bodyguard of the Prophet, on August 15, 1840, in Nauvoo, Illinois. Soon afterward, Church members began performing baptisms for the dead in the Mississippi River. (See Matthew McBride, "Letters on Baptism for the Dead," in McBride and Goldberg, *Revelations in Context,* 273, or history.lds.org; Susan Easton Black, "A Voice of Gladness," *Ensign,* Feb. 2004, 35.) Four months later the Prophet announced the doctrine in a letter to members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles serving in Great Britain: "The saints have the priviledge of being baptized for those of their relatives who are dead, who they feel to believe would have embraced the gospel if they had been priviledged with hearing it, and who have received the gospel in the spirit through the instrumentality of those who may have been commissioned to preach to them while in the prison" (Letter to Quorum of the Twelve, 15 December 1840, page 6, josephsmithpapers.org).



Photo of the Nauvoo House landing for steamboats. Some of the Saints performed baptisms for the dead near this location.

Before the baptistry in the Nauvoo Temple was completed, the Lord permitted the Saints to temporarily perform baptisms for the dead in places other than the temple, explaining: "This ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. … I grant unto you a sufficient time to build a house unto me; and during this time your baptisms shall be acceptable unto me" (D&C 124:30–31). By the end of November 1841, a large, wooden baptismal font was prepared in the basement of the Nauvoo Temple and "enclosed … in a temporary clapboard building" while the construction of the walls and upper floors of the temple continued (see Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* [2002], 250–51).

In May 1842, Lilburn W. Boggs, the former governor of Missouri who had issued the extermination order against Church members, was wounded in an assassination attempt. Missouri authorities accused the Prophet Joseph Smith of helping plan the attack, and both Missouri and Illinois officials tried to arrest the Prophet, who was living in Nauvoo, Illinois, at the time, and return him to Missouri for trial. Knowing that if he returned to Missouri he would likely be killed, the Prophet was in and out of hiding from early August 1842 through December 1842 to avoid being arrested. In January 1843 it was determined that the proceedings to arrest the Prophet and return him to Missouri were illegal. (See "Letter to John M. Bernhisel, 7 September 1842," pages 2–3, josephsmithpapers.org; "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 127," in Largey and Dahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 842.)

On September 1, 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith worked in a room above the Red Brick Store (where Church business was often conducted) as well as at his home. At some time during that day, the Prophet wrote a letter containing instructions for Church members letting them know that he was planning to once again go into hiding and instructing them regarding the ordinance of proxy baptism for the dead. Two days later he was forced to hide once more. On September 4, 1842, the letter was read aloud to Church members who were gathered at the outdoor meeting grove near the Nauvoo Temple. The contents of that letter are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 127. (See "Journal, December 1841–December 1842," pages 184, 189–90, josephsmithpapers.org; "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 127," 842.)



The Joseph Smith Homestead in Nauvoo, Illinois, where the Prophet and his family lived from 1839–1843

Doctrine and Covenants 127

The Prophet Joseph Smith "glor[ies] in tribulation" and counsels Church members to keep records of their baptisms for the dead

Read Doctrine and Covenants 127, looking for the instructions the Prophet Joseph Smith gave Church members regarding baptisms for the dead.

D&C 127:1–3. "Let all the saints rejoice … and be exceedingly glad"

Following the attempted assassination of former Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs on May 6, 1842, some of the Prophet Joseph Smith's enemies falsely claimed that the Prophet helped plan the attack. Formal legal charges were filed, and beginning in early August 1842, Missouri and Illinois officials attempted to arrest the Prophet and return him to Missouri for trial. The Prophet Joseph Smith strongly denied the charge, explaining in his letter to the Saints that "they pursue me without a cause" (D&C 127:1). In a separate letter written to a Church member on September 7, 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "The Missourians, together with some of the principal officers of this state [Illinois] … are again disgracing themselves by persecution and cruelty. They have so little regard for truth,—the laws of the land,— and constitution of the United States, that they have issued processes for my arrest as illegal as can be imagined, and they themselves are aware of it. … Thus you see I am obliged to exile myself to save the lives of the people as well as my own life from day to day" ("Letter to John M. Bernhisel, 7 September 1842," pages 2–3, josephsmithpapers.org).

In spite of the threats to his life, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: "As for the perils which I am called to pass through, they seem but a small thing to me. … And I feel,

like Paul, to glory in tribulation; for to this day has the God of my fathers delivered me out of them all, and will deliver me from thenceforth; for behold, and lo, I shall triumph over all my enemies" (D&C 127:2). The Prophet also declared, "Let all the saints rejoice, therefore, and be exceedingly glad; for Israel's God is their God" (D&C 127:3), meaning that Church members could trust that the Great Jehovah who performed mighty miracles on behalf of His people anciently would continue to do so in their day.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why God permitted the Prophet Joseph Smith to experience adversity: "There is meaning and purpose in our earthly challenges. Consider the Prophet Joseph Smith: throughout his life he faced daunting opposition—illness, accident, poverty, misunderstanding, false accusation, and even persecution. One might be tempted to ask, 'Why didn't the Lord protect His prophet from such obstacles, provide him with unlimited resources, and stop up the mouths of his accusers?' The answer is, Each of us must go through certain experiences to become more like our Savior. In the school of mortality, the tutor is often pain and tribulation, but the lessons are meant to refine and bless us and strengthen us, not to destroy us" ("Faith through Tribulation Brings Peace and Joy," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2003, 17).

How have the trials and struggles you have faced helped you become more like the Savior?

Doctrine and Covenants 127:4. "Let the work of my temple … be continued on and not cease"

A revelation received on January 19, 1841, directed Church members to build a temple in Nauvoo, Illinois (see D&C 124:27, 34, 40–44). The Prophet Joseph Smith presided over the laying of the four cornerstones of the Nauvoo Temple on April 6, 1841 (see Manuscript History of the Church, vol. C-1, pages 1184–86, josephsmithpapers.org). In his letter to Church members dated September 1, 1842, the Prophet urged the Saints to be diligent and complete the construction of the temple (see D&C 127:4). In our day, **President Howard W. Hunter** (1907–1995) urged Church members to participate in temple worship:



***Joseph Smith at the Nauvoo Temple,* by Gary E. Smith. The original Nauvoo Temple was completed after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was dedicated in May 1846, after most of the Saints had left for the West.**

"It should be no surprise to us that the Lord does desire that his people be a temple-motivated people. I repeat what I have said before: It would please the Lord for every adult member to be worthy of—and to carry—a current temple

recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families.

"Let us truly be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. We should hasten to the temple as frequently, yet prudently, as our personal circumstances allow. We should go not only for our kindred dead but also for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety that are within those hallowed and consecrated walls. As we attend the temple, we learn more richly and deeply the purpose of life and the significance of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us make the temple, with temple worship and temple covenants and temple marriage, our ultimate earthly goal and the supreme mortal experience. …

"… As the prophets have said, the temple is a place of beauty; it is a place of revelation; it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It must be holy and important to us" ("A Temple-Motivated People," *Ensign,* Feb. 1995, 5).

Doctrine and Covenants 127:5. "Baptism for your dead"

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 127:5 and 128:14, the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to the deceased persons for whom the Saints were performing proxy baptisms as "your dead"—meaning their own deceased ancestors. **Elder Quentin L. Cook** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that as we participate in family history and temple service, our primary responsibility is to find our own ancestors and perform saving ordinances for them: "The Lord in initial revelatory instructions referred to 'baptism for *your* dead' [D&C 127:5; emphasis added]. Our doctrinal obligation is to our own ancestors. This is because the celestial organization of heaven is based on families [see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* (2013), 68]. The First Presidency has encouraged members, especially youth and young single adults, to emphasize family history work and ordinances for their own family names or the names of ancestors of their ward and stake members [see First Presidency letter, Oct. 8, 2012]. We need to be connected to both our roots and branches. The thought of being associated in the eternal realm is indeed glorious" ("Roots and Branches," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2014, 45).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the blessings that come to those who participate in the work of salvation for their ancestors:

"I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for *your* kindred dead (see D&C 124:28–36). And I urge you to help other people identify their family histories.

"As you respond in faith to this invitation, your hearts shall turn to the fathers. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be implanted in your hearts. Your patriarchal blessing, with its declaration of lineage, will link you to these fathers and be more meaningful to you. Your love and gratitude for your ancestors will increase. Your testimony of and conversion to the Savior will become deep and

abiding. And I promise you will be protected against the intensifying influence of the adversary. As you participate in and love this holy work, you will be safeguarded in your youth and throughout your lives" ("The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2011, 26–27).

Doctrine and Covenants 127:5–7, 9. "Let all the records be had in order"

On August 31, 1842, the day before the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the letter recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 127, he met with the members of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo in the outdoor meeting grove located west of the temple. According to the notes Eliza R. Snow took at that meeting, the Prophet stated that "a few things had been manifested to him [while he had been in hiding], respecting the baptisms for the dead." He briefly explained to the sisters that "all persons baptiz'd for the dead must have a Recorder present, that he may be an eye-witness to testify of it" (in *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History,* ed. Jill Mulvay Derr and others [2016], 94–95). The Lord emphasized the importance of record keeping throughout revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 21:1; 47:1, 3–4; 69:8), including records such as journals, minutes of meetings, and other historical records. In the Prophet Joseph Smith's letter dated September 1, 1842, he taught that record keeping is a vital part of temple ordinance work. Records associated with temple work were to "be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of [the] holy temple, to be held in remembrance from generation to generation" (D&C 127:9).

Initially, before receiving additional instruction and "in their hurry to administer [baptism] for their loved ones," Church members did not always accurately record their baptisms for the dead. In addition, proxies were sometimes baptized for people of the opposite gender, and the ordinance was often performed without witnesses. (See McBride, "Letters on Baptism for the Dead," 275–76, or history.lds.org.) **President Brigham Young** (1801–1877) explained:

"When an infinite being gives a law to his finite creatures, he has to descend to the capacity of those who receive his law[;] when the doctrine of baptism for the dead was first given, this church was in its infancy, and was not capable of receiving all the knowledge of God in its highest degree. …

"… When [the doctrine of baptism for the dead] was first revealed all the order of it was not made known, afterwards it was made known, that records, clerks, and one or two witnesses were necessary or else it will be of no value to the saints.

"The Lord has led this people all the while in this way, by giving them here a little and there a little, thus he increases their wisdom, and he that receives a little and is thankful for that shall receive more and more" ("Speech," *Times and Seasons,* July 1, 1845, 954; see also McBride, "Letters on Baptism for the Dead," 275–76, or history.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 127:8. "I am about to restore many things … pertaining to the priesthood"

While teaching of the necessity of building a temple in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Lord declared, "Let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people" (D&C 124:40). "In response to the Lord's command, the

Prophet and the Saints moved forward as quickly as possible to begin building a house of the Lord. But the Prophet realized that the construction would take years, and he knew that the Saints needed the full blessings of the temple. Consequently, on May 4, 1842, even though the temple was not complete, Joseph Smith administered the endowment to a small group of faithful brethren" (in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 413). He later taught the doctrine of eternal marriage and introduced the sealing ordinance to the Saints (see D&C 131:1–4; 132:19–25).



The Nauvoo Illinois Temple was dedicated in June 2002, on the same site as the original Nauvoo Temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 128: Additional Historical Background

On September 3, 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith was at home with his family when he learned that sheriffs from Missouri and Illinois were approaching with the intent to arrest him and return him to Missouri. The Prophet was able to slip away unnoticed and eventually made his way that evening to the home of Edward Hunter. (See Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1 [addenda], josephsmithpapers.org.) The following day, the Prophet's letter dated September 1, 1842, was read aloud to Church members who had gathered in the outdoor meeting grove near the Nauvoo Temple (see "Doctrine and Covenants 127: Additional Historical Background" in this chapter). On September 7, while still at Brother Hunter's home, the Prophet "dictated a long Epistle to the Saints which he ordered to be read [the] next Sabbath" ("Journal, December 1841–December 1842," page 192, josephsmithpapers.org). The contents of that letter are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 128.



The home of Edward Hunter in Nauvoo, Illinois, where the Prophet Joseph Smith stayed in September 1842 to avoid being arrested and returned to Missouri. The Prophet wrote two letters about baptism for the dead here, which are recorded today in Doctrine and Covenants 127 and 128.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:1–18

The Prophet Joseph Smith explains why keeping records of saving ordinances is necessary

Read Doctrine and Covenants 128:1–14, looking for how the Lord's plan makes salvation possible for those who have died without hearing the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:1–5. "The ordinance … prepared before the foundation of the world"

Billions of Heavenly Father's children have died without knowledge of Jesus Christ and without receiving the essential ordinance of baptism (see 2 Nephi 2:6–7; Alma 9:27). The restoration of the doctrine of redemption of the dead demonstrates that God has prepared a way for salvation to be offered to all—including those who have died without the opportunity to receive the gospel in mortality (see D&C 128:22). The Prophet Joseph Smith explained in his September 7, 1842, letter to Church members that the ordinance of baptism for the dead had been "prepared before the foundation of the world" (D&C 128:5).

Doctrine and Covenants 128:6–10. "Whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven"

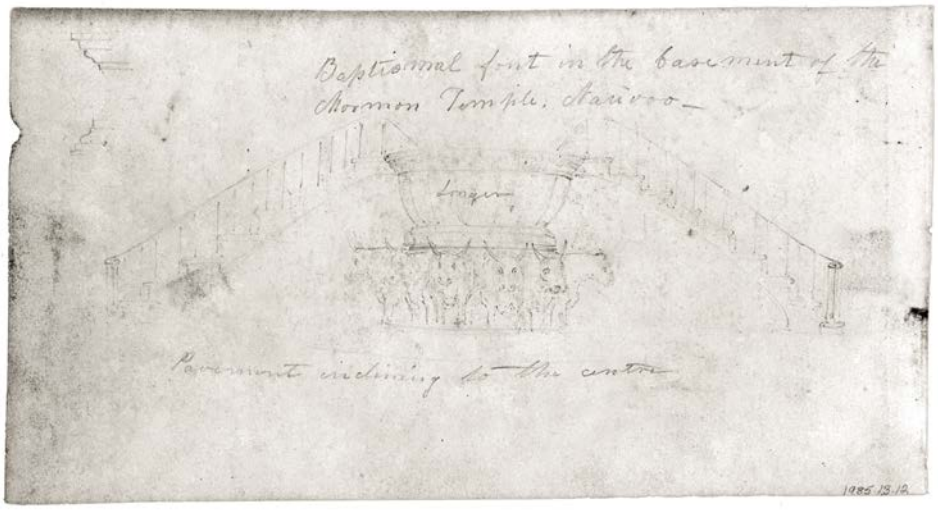
The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that as records of our works, including a record of sacred ordinance work, "are kept on the earth," a similar "record … is kept in heaven" (D&C 128:7). These records will someday be among the books that will be opened when the dead are judged (see D&C 128:6–7; see also Revelation 20:12; 3 Nephi 27:24–26). The Prophet likened the power of the priesthood used to perform and record ordinances to the sealing power the Lord promised to Peter when He declared, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (D&C 128:10; see also Matthew 16:18–19). The Prophet also linked the word *bind* with the word *record* as he modified the Bible verse, saying, "Whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven, and whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven" (D&C 128:8). This binding or sealing power of the priesthood enables ordinances performed on earth for God's children to have binding power in heaven.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:11. Priesthood keys give knowledge and spiritual power to the Lord's prophet

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that the "keys" and "the powers of the Holy Priesthood" that had been conferred upon him qualified him to "[obtain] a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living" (D&C 128:11). The same priesthood keys have been committed to the latter-day prophets who have succeeded the Prophet Joseph Smith, allowing them to search out greater understanding of the salvation of the dead.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:12–14. "A similitude of the grave"

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, "The ordinance of baptism by water, to be immersed therein … and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves" (D&C 128:12). He also explained that "the baptismal font [for baptisms for the dead] was instituted as a similitude of the grave" and was therefore to be located in the basement area of the Nauvoo Temple, or "in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead, and that all things may have their likeness" (D&C 128:13).



When the Nauvoo Temple was built, the Prophet Joseph Smith directed that the baptismal font be built in the basement, on the backs of twelve carved oxen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught: "The Lord has placed the baptismal font in our temples below the foundation, or the surface of the earth. This is symbolical, since the dead are in their graves, and we are working for the dead when we are baptized for them. Moreover, baptism is also symbolical of death and the resurrection, in fact is virtually a resurrection from the life of sin, or from spiritual death, to the life of spiritual life. (See D. & C. 29:41–45.) Therefore when the dead have had this ordinance performed in their behalf they are considered to have been brought back into the presence of God, just as this doctrine is applied to the living" (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 2:332).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 128:15–18, looking for why the salvation of our deceased ancestors "is necessary and essential to our salvation" (D&C 128:15).

Doctrine and Covenants 128:15–18. "A whole and complete and perfect union"

Using the words of the Old Testament prophet Malachi, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the ordinance of baptism for the dead was intended to forge "a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children" (D&C 128:18), or between generations of families, and "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (D&C 128:17; see also Malachi 4:6). The Prophet also used the words of the Apostle Paul to teach that our deceased ancestors' "salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation," emphasizing that "they [the dead] without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect" (D&C 128:15; see also Hebrews 11:40).

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: "There must be a family organization, a family unit, and each generation must be linked to the chain that goes before in order to bring perfection in family organization. Thus eventually we will be one

large family with Adam at the head, Michael, the archangel, presiding over his posterity" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 2:175).

The process of linking generations begins with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, but it also requires that our deceased ancestors receive the other ordinances of salvation by proxy. These saving ordinances, which must also be performed in temples, include confirmation and the receipt of the gift of the Holy Ghost, ordination of men to the Melchizedek Priesthood, the temple endowment, and family sealings. Church members did not begin performing endowment and sealing ordinances for their deceased ancestors until after they relocated to Utah (see Richard O. Cowan, "The Unfolding Restoration of Temple Work," *Ensign,* Dec. 2001, 39). **Elder Quentin L. Cook** explained: "The essential doctrine of uniting families came forth line upon line and precept upon precept. Vicarious ordinances are at the heart of welding together eternal families" ("Roots and Branches," 45).

Doctrine and Covenants 128:19–25

The Prophet Joseph Smith rejoices in the restored gospel and explains how performing baptisms for the dead prepares Church members for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Read Doctrine and Covenants 128:19–25, looking for reasons why the Prophet Joseph Smith rejoiced in the Restoration of the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:19–23. The restoration of all things

Although the Prophet Joseph Smith was in hiding and was being pursued unlawfully when he wrote the letter recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 128, he concluded his letter with a remarkable summary of the blessings of the Restoration of the gospel. Though we do not have specific details about "Michael … detecting the devil" (D&C 128:20) or know the identity of the angel Raphael (see D&C 128:21), the Prophet's words gave particular emphasis to the glorious doctrine of redemption for the dead.



Large groups of Saints gathered for open-air meetings in a few locations in Nauvoo, Illinois, where a grove of trees would provide shade.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:22. "The prisoners shall go free"

The scriptures often refer to the portion of the spirit world inhabited by those who have not received saving ordinances as a prison or a place of darkness (see Isaiah 24:22; 1 Peter 3:19; Alma 40:13–14; D&C 38:5; 138:18, 22, 30). The Prophet Joseph Smith announced that the ordinance of proxy baptism for the dead "enable[s] us to redeem [the dead] out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free" (D&C 128:22). **Elder Quentin L. Cook** encouraged Church members to consider how the ordinances we perform in the temple affect our ancestors:

"Think of those on the other side of the veil waiting for the saving ordinances that would free them from the bondage of spirit prison. *Prison* is defined as 'a state of confinement or captivity' [*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary,* 11th ed. (2003), 'prison']. …

"One faithful sister shared a special spiritual experience in the Salt Lake Temple. While in the confirmation room, after a vicarious confirmation ordinance was pronounced, she heard, 'And the prisoner shall go free!' She felt a great sense of urgency for those who were waiting for their baptismal and confirmation work. Upon returning home, she searched the scriptures for the phrase she had heard. She found Joseph Smith's declaration in section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants [D&C 128:22; see also D&C 138:42]" ("Roots and Branches," 46). Similar language is also found in Isaiah's messianic prophecy in Isaiah 61:1.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:24. "An offering in righteousness"

One of the purposes of the Restoration of the gospel is to prepare Heavenly Father's children for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Prophet Joseph Smith

expanded upon words written by the Old Testament prophet Malachi to show that those "who [will] abide the day of [the Lord's] coming" will make "an offering in righteousness" to Him of "a book containing the records of [their] dead"—meaning a record showing that ordinances of salvation have been performed on behalf of their deceased ancestors (D&C 128:24; see also Malachi 3:2–3). After quoting Doctrine and Covenants 128:24, **Elder Allen F. Packer** of the Seventy taught:

"This 'book' will be prepared using the records of names and ordinances in the Church's FamilyTree database.

"I am checking and adding records to this database because I want the names of all those I love to be in the book. Don't you? …

"Family history is more than genealogy, rules, names, dates, and places. It is more than a focus on the past. Family history also includes the present as we create our own history. It includes the future as we shape future history through our descendants. …

"Like partaking of the sacrament, attending meetings, reading the scriptures, and saying personal prayers, doing family history and temple work should be a regular part of our personal worship. The response of our youth and others to prophetic invitations has been inspiring and proves this work *can and should* be done by *all* members at *any* age.

"… Doing the work now is much easier and limited only by the number of members who make this a priority. The work still takes time and sacrifice, but *all* can do it, and with relative ease compared to just a few years ago.

"To assist members, the Church has gathered records and provided tools so that much of the work can be done in our own homes or in the ward buildings and the temple. Most obstacles have been removed. *Whatever* your past perception, it is different now!

"However, there is one obstacle the Church cannot remove. It is an individual's hesitation to do the work. All it requires is a decision and a little effort. It does not require a large block of time. Just a little time on a consistent basis will yield the joy of the work. Make the decision to take a step, to learn and ask others to help you. They will! The names you find and take to the temple will become the records for 'the book' [D&C 128:24]" ("The Book," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 100–101).

Consider making a plan to help your ancestors receive temple ordinances. You may want to work with members of your family or with a ward or branch family history consultant as you make this plan.

CHAPTER 50

Doctrine and Covenants 129–30

Introduction and Timeline

On February 9, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave instructions to Parley P. Pratt and others regarding how to distinguish between heavenly messengers and evil spirits. These instructions are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 129. On April 2, 1843, the Prophet met with Church members in Ramus, Illinois, and taught doctrine regarding various gospel topics, including the Godhead, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and how we can receive God's blessings. These teachings are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 130.

February 7, 1843

Elder Parley P. Pratt arrived in Nauvoo, Illinois, from his mission in England.

February 9, 1843

The Prophet Joseph Smith delivered the instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 129.

April 1, 1843

The Prophet Joseph Smith and others traveled to Ramus, Illinois.

April 2, 1843

The Prophet Joseph Smith delivered the instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 130.

Prophets have the responsibility to "make known God's will and true character to mankind and to show the meaning of His dealings with them" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Prophet," scriptures.lds.org). As you study Doctrine and Covenants 129–30, look for doctrine and principles taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith that can help you better understand "God's … true character" and "His dealings with [His children]."

Doctrine and Covenants 129: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith received many visits and communications from heavenly messengers. In a letter written to Church members on September 7, 1842, the Prophet listed some of the remarkable events of the Restoration, including visits from heavenly messengers (see Matthew McBride, "Letters on Baptism for the Dead," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 274, or history.lds.org). He referred to an occasion when he heard "the voice of [the angel] Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna [River], detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light" (see D&C 128:20). Although the Prophet did not explain how Michael had detected the devil, sometime before the summer of 1839 the Prophet learned how to discern between heavenly messengers and Satan and his angels. During a June 27, 1839, meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Wilford Woodruff recorded the Prophet Joseph Smith's teachings regarding "the Keys of the Kingdom of God" by which the Apostles could "detect the [devil] when he transforms himself nigh unto an angel of light" ("Discourse, 27 June 1839, as Reported by Wilford Woodruff," page [85], josephsmithpapers.org). The following year, the Prophet gave similar instruction to

William Clayton, a new convert to the Church from England. In May 1842 the Prophet gave a sermon in Nauvoo in which he taught that "the keys are certain signs [and] words by which false spirits [and] personages may be detected from true.—which cannot be revealed to the Elders till the Temple is completed" ("Discourse, 1 May 1842, as Reported by Willard Richards," page 94, josephsmithpapers.org).



***Joseph Smith Ordaining Parley P. Pratt as an Apostle,* by Walter Rane. Parley P. Pratt was ordained an Apostle in Kirtland, Ohio, on February 21, 1835.**

When the Prophet Joseph Smith first instructed the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1839 regarding the appearance of angels and spirits, some of the Apostles were absent, including Parley P. Pratt. Elder Pratt "likely … learned about Joseph Smith's teachings on the subject while laboring with the Twelve in England." After he returned to Nauvoo from his mission on February 7, 1843, Elder Pratt was "apparently eager to learn firsthand from Joseph Smith what he had taught the Twelve in 1839" ("Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 129," in Dennis L. Largey and Larry E. Dahl, eds., *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion* [2012], 844). He and others met with the Prophet on February 9, 1843. During this meeting the Prophet instructed Elder Pratt and his companions regarding discerning heavenly messengers from evil spirits. The Prophet's journal entry for that day became the source for the text of Doctrine and Covenants 129. (See "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 129," 844–45.)

Doctrine and Covenants 129

The Prophet Joseph Smith gives instructions regarding ministering angels and evil spirits

Read Doctrine and Covenants 129, looking for the "three grand keys" (D&C 129:9) the Prophet Joseph Smith gave for distinguishing heavenly messengers from the devil and his angels.

Doctrine and Covenants 129:1–3. "There are two kinds of beings in heaven"

The scriptures teach that God sends heavenly messengers to His children "to minister according to the word of his command," "to call [them] unto repentance," and "to prepare the way" for His work to be accomplished (Moroni 7:30–31). As part of the Restoration, angels visited the Prophet Joseph Smith to reveal God's will and to restore priesthood keys (see D&C 13; 110; 128:20–21; Joseph Smith—History 1:30–43). **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles taught, "From the beginning down through the dispensations, God has used angels as His emissaries in conveying love and concern for His children" ("The Ministry of Angels," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 29).

In his instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 129, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained that "there are two kinds of beings in heaven" (D&C 129:1). The first are "angels, who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones" (D&C 129:1), which the Prophet illustrated by citing Luke's account of the resurrected Savior appearing to His disciples (see D&C 129:2; see also Luke 24:36–43). The second kind of beings in heaven are "the spirits of just men made perfect, they who are not resurrected, but inherit the same glory" (D&C 129:3). The phrase "just men" refers to those who live in obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Such individuals can be sanctified and "made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out his perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood" (D&C 76:69). Thus, the phrase "spirits of just men made perfect" in Doctrine and Covenants 129:3 refers to righteous "spirits who have once had a mortal body and are awaiting resurrection" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Angels," scriptures.lds.org).

While the Prophet Joseph Smith referred only to resurrected beings as angels, **President George Q. Cannon** (1827–1901) of the First Presidency explained, "In the broadest sense, any being who acts as a messenger for our Heavenly Father is an angel, be he a God, a resurrected man, or the spirit of a just man" ("Editorial Thoughts," *The Juvenile Instructor,* Jan. 15, 1891, 53). Thus, in addition to the heavenly messengers described in Doctrine and Covenants 129, God's angels also include spirits who "have not yet obtained a body of flesh and bone" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Angels," scriptures.lds.org; see also Ether 3:6–16; Moses 5:6) as well as translated beings—individuals whose mortal bodies are changed so that they do not experience pain or death (see 3 Nephi 28:6–9; Mormon 8:10–11; D&C 7:1–3).



The Prophet Joseph Smith's office in the Red Brick Store served as the headquarters of the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Doctrine and Covenants 129:4–9. Discerning heavenly messengers from the devil and his angels

Just as God has angels who help Him accomplish His work, the devil has spirit followers who seek to destroy God's work. The devil "is literally a spirit son of God and was at one time an angel in authority in the presence of God (Isa. 14:12; 2 Ne. 2:17)" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Devil," scriptures.lds.org; see also D&C 76:25–27). When Satan rejected Heavenly Father's plan of salvation in the premortal life, "a third part of the hosts of heaven," or a third of God's spirit children, rebelled with him (D&C 29:36; see also Moses 4:1–4; Abraham 3:27–28). "They were cast out of heaven, were denied the opportunity of obtaining mortal bodies and experiencing mortal life, and will be eternally damned. Since the time the devil was cast out of heaven, he has constantly sought to deceive all men and women and lead them away from the work of God in order to make all mankind as miserable as he is (Rev. 12:9; 2 Ne. 2:27; 9:8–9)" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Devil," scriptures.lds.org). As recorded in the Book of Mormon, Korihor, an anti-Christ, admitted to being "deceived" by "the devil," who "appeared unto [him] in the form of an angel" (Alma 30:53). The devil and his angels are skillful deceivers who attempt to counterfeit the light that accompanies true messengers sent from God (see D&C 128:20; 129:8).

For this reason the Prophet Joseph Smith explained "three grand keys whereby [we] may know whether any administration is from God" (D&C 129:9). These keys, or indicators, include the knowledge needed to discern heavenly messengers from the devil or one of his agents when he appears "as an angel of light" (D&C 129:8). Since "resurrected personages [have] bodies of flesh and bones" (D&C 129:1), when a heavenly messenger who is a resurrected being is invited to shake hands,

"he will do so, and you will feel his hand," thereby discerning the angel to be a true messenger from God (see D&C 129:4–5).

Some may wonder why the devil or one of his agents would "offer … his hand" (D&C 129:8), knowing that doing so would reveal his true identity. Part of the answer may be found in the Prophet Joseph Smith's teaching that "wicked spirits have their bounds, limits, and laws, by which they are governed" ("Try the Spirits," *Times and Seasons,* Apr. 1, 1842, 745). Those who understand the laws that govern angels and spirits can discern true messengers sent from God from false spirits seeking to deceive.

In addition to the instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 129, what else has Heavenly Father given you to help you discern Satan's deceptions?

Doctrine and Covenants 130: Additional Historical Background

On April 1, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith, accompanied by William Clayton, Orson Hyde, and J. B. Backenstos, left Nauvoo and traveled 20 miles southeast to Ramus, Illinois, to visit family and friends. The next morning, the Prophet held a meeting with Church members in Ramus. During the meeting Orson Hyde preached a sermon in which he spoke of the Savior's Second Coming and gave his interpretation of passages in the New Testament. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843,* ed. Andrew H. Hedges and others [2011], 321, 323.)

After the morning meeting, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions had lunch at the home of the Prophet's sister Sophronia Smith McCleary. During lunch the Prophet said, "Elder Hyde I am going to offer some corrections to you." Elder Hyde humbly responded, "They shall be thankfully received." The Prophet then corrected Elder Hyde's interpretation of scripture. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843,* 323–24; spelling standardized.) Responding to a question William Clayton asked, the Prophet shared additional doctrinal insights (see Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [1985], 289). The Prophet addressed Church members in Ramus during two other meetings held that afternoon and evening. In his remarks the Prophet repeated the correction he had given Orson Hyde and taught about the true nature of the Godhead. He also taught the importance of gaining spiritual knowledge and the necessity of obeying God's laws in order to receive His blessings (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843,* 324–26). The Prophet's teachings were recorded in his journal, and they became the basis for the text of Doctrine and Covenants 130.



Doctrine and Covenants 130

The Prophet Joseph Smith clarifies and teaches doctrine

Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:1–3, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith taught about "the Father and the Son" (D&C 130:3) as well as eternal relationships.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:1–3. The personal appearance of "the Father and the Son"

In his April 2, 1843, sermon in Ramus, Illinois, Orson Hyde used 1 John 3:2 and Revelation 19:11 to teach that when Jesus Christ comes again, "he will appear on a white horse.—as a warrior." Elder Hyde suggested that Church members "shall be like [the Savior]" in this manner and that "may be we shall have some of the same spirit." He then quoted from John 14:23 and taught that "it is our privilege to have the father [and] son dwelling in our hearts." (In *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843,* 323.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith corrected Elder Hyde's misinterpretation of the scriptures by teaching that "when the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man [in form and feature] like ourselves" (D&C 130:1), except with a glorified, resurrected body (see D&C 130:22). He further explained that the "same sociality [social relationships] which exists among us here [as mortals on earth] will exist among us there," or when we are in the Lord's presence, but "it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy" (D&C 130:2).



The Saints established the community of Ramus and built a meetinghouse near this site in present-day Webster, Illinois.

The Prophet Joseph Smith further taught that the promise recorded in John 14:23 does not refer to "the Father and the Son [literally dwelling] in [a person's] heart" (D&C 130:3). This "old sectarian notion … is false" (D&C 130:3) and assumes that God is a spirit. The Prophet clarified that the Father and the Son have "bod[ies] of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22) and thus are glorified, resurrected Beings with physical bodies. During a meeting with members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the summer of 1839, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained that when the Savior taught that He and the Father would "come unto" those who keep the commandments "and make [their] abode with [them]" (John 14:23), He was referring to the gift of the Second Comforter:

"After a person hath faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins, and receives the Holy Ghost (by the laying on of hands) which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son thou shalt be exalted. … When the Lord has [thoroughly] proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazard, then the man will find his calling and Election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in [John 14:12–27]. … Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter, that when any man obtains this last Comforter he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him or appear unto him from time to time, and even he will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. C-1 addenda, pages 8–9, josephsmithpapers.org; underlining in original; see also John 14:16–23; D&C 88:68; 93:1).

Doctrine and Covenants 130:2. "That same sociality … will exist among us there"

Sociality refers to our personal interactions and relationships. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that for faithful Church members, the social relationships they enjoy in mortality among their families and friends will continue in the eternities but "will be coupled with eternal glory" (D&C 130:2). **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency testified of the eternal nature of family relationships:

"The thought and the hope that I can have eternal relationships carries me through the trials of separation and the loneliness which are part of mortal existence. The promise to the faithful in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that we may have associations and an expansion of families in the eternities. That assurance changes forever and for the better all of our associations in families.

"… Because of the restoration of the knowledge of eternal families, we are more hopeful and more kindly in all our family relations. The greatest joys in this life center in families, as they will in the worlds to come. I am so grateful for the assurance I have that if we are faithful, the same sociality which we enjoy here in this life will be forever with us in the world to come, in eternal glory [see D&C 130:2]" ("The True and Living Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2008, 22).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:4–7, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith taught about "the reckoning of … time" (D&C 130:4).

Doctrine and Covenants 130:4–7. "All things … past, present, and future … are continually before the Lord"

In answer to a question that William Clayton asked relating to time, the Prophet Joseph Smith confirmed that "the reckoning [calculation] of God's time, angel's time, prophet's time, and man's time [is] according to the planet on which they reside" (D&C 130:4). This teaching reaffirms what is taught in the book of Abraham, which Joseph Smith began publishing approximately one year earlier—in March 1842—in the Church's newspaper *Times and Seasons* (see "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 130," in Largey and Dahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 846). The book of Abraham teaches that "one revolution," or day, on the planet Kolob is equivalent to "one thousand years according to the time appointed" on earth (see Abraham 3:4).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that exalted, resurrected angels "do not reside on a planet like this earth; but they reside in the presence of God, on a globe [planet] like a sea of glass and fire, where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord" (D&C 130:6–7). Speaking about how the principle of time relates to God's foreknowledge of all things, **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

"God does not live in the dimension of time as do we. Moreover, since 'all things are present with' God [Moses 1:6], his is not simply a predicting based solely upon the past. In ways which are not clear to us, he actually *sees,* rather than *foresees,* the future—because all things are, at once, present, before him! …

"… He is the living God who is, at once, in the dimensions of the past and present and future, while we labor constrained by the limitations of time itself" ("A More Determined Discipleship," *Ensign,* Feb. 1979, 72–73).

How can understanding that "all things … past, present, and future … are continually before the Lord" (D&C 130:7) help you to trust and have faith in Him?

Doctrine and Covenants 130:5. "Angels who minister to this earth … belong or have belonged to it"

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that "angels who minister to this earth" are those who have lived or who will live on it (D&C 130:5). **President Joseph F. Smith** (1838–1918) further taught that angels who visit this earth are not strangers to it or to those to whom they minister: "When messengers are sent to minister to the inhabitants of this earth, they are not strangers, but from the ranks of our kindred, friends, and fellow-beings and fellow-servants. The ancient prophets who died were those who came to visit their fellow creatures upon the earth. … In like manner our fathers and mothers, brothers, sisters and friends who have passed away from this earth, having been faithful, and worthy to enjoy these rights and privileges, may have a mission given them to visit their relatives and friends upon the earth again, bringing from the divine Presence messages of love, of warning, or reproof and instruction, to those whom they had learned to love in the flesh" (*Gospel Doctrine,* 5th ed. [1939], 435–36).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:8–11, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith taught about the earth and those who inherit the celestial kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:8–9. "This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, … will be a Urim and Thummim"

In a December 1832 revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that "[the earth] must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the celestial glory; for after it hath fulfilled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father; that bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it forever and ever; for, for this intent was it made and created" (D&C 88:18–20; see also D&C 88:25–26). On February 18, 1843, Joseph Smith taught that the earth would eventually be sanctified and become a Urim and Thummim (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843,* 266). The Prophet repeated this instruction on April 2, 1843, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 130:8–9. "This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state" (D&C 130:9) has reference to the exalted earth after it becomes the celestial kingdom of God following the Savior's Millennial reign. In its celestial state, "this earth … will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon" (D&C 130:9). This is a symbolic expression. Isaiah spoke of a future day when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). The Urim and Thummim was an instrument prepared by God to assist His servants in obtaining revelation and in translating languages (see Exodus

28:30; Mosiah 8:13; D&C 17:1; Abraham 3:1). Just as the Urim and Thummim revealed light and truth to God's servants, the celestialized earth will be a place where the glory, power, and knowledge of God will be manifested.

Elder Mark E. Peterson (1900–1984) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:



Earth in its celestial state will be a place where the glory, power, and knowledge of God will be manifested.

"This earth was not designed merely as a home for mortals. … It has a greater destiny than that. This earth will not remain in its present condition. It is to become immortal. It will pass through a refining process by which it will become a celestial globe and be like a Urim and Thummim in the skies. (See D&C 130:9.) That will require further acts of divine creation. …

"The Savior will reside here when earth is celestialized, and His Father will visit it from time to time. It then will be the eternal home of those who achieve celestial glory in the kingdom of God.

"Such is the final destiny of the earth. Such was the purpose God had in mind in creating it, for He planned it so in the beginning" ("Creator and Savior," *Ensign,* May 1983, 63–64).

For more information regarding the celestialized earth, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 77:1 and Doctrine and Covenants 88:17–20, 25–26 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:10–11. "A white stone"

The book of Revelation in the New Testament is a record of the Lord's revelation to the Apostle John. The revelation contains a message of hope and encouragement to the faithful members of the Church who lived at a time of intense trial and persecution. The Lord promised great blessings, including exaltation and "a crown of [eternal] life," to those who overcome the wickedness of the world (see Revelation 2:7, 10), meaning those who receive eternal life in the celestial kingdom of God. The revelation also teaches that each person who "overcometh" the world will each be given "a white stone" (Revelation 2:17). In his teachings recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 130, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained that each white stone will function as a personal Urim and Thummim (see D&C 130:10). Whereas the celestial earth will reveal "all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order," the white stone will reveal "things pertaining to a higher order of kingdoms" (see D&C 130:9–10).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:12–13, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith prophesied would occur before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:12–13. "The commencement of the difficulties … will be in South Carolina"

On December 25, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated a "revelation and prophecy on war" (D&C 87, section heading), which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 87. The revelation warned that "wars [would] shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina [in the United States], which [would] eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls" (D&C 87:1–2). The Prophet had learned about a serious conflict between the United States government and the state of South Carolina over federal tariffs, or taxes on imported goods. At the time, the United States government was charging states high taxes on products imported from other countries, which particularly affected farmers in the Southern states. In November 1832, state government leaders in South Carolina passed an ordinance declaring federal tariff laws to be unconstitutional and threatened to withdraw from the United States if the federal government tried to enforce the tariff laws in South Carolina. The crisis almost resulted in armed conflict, but the United States government peacefully settled the issue in February 1833. (See Jed Woodworth, "Peace and War," in McBride and Goldberg, *Revelations in Context,* 158–60, or history.lds.org.)

With the crisis resolved and war averted, some may have believed that the prophecy recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 87 went unfulfilled. However, almost 11 years later the Prophet Joseph Smith reaffirmed the prophecy he received in 1832. He emphasized that before the Savior's Second Coming, "difficulties which would cause much bloodshed … [would] be in [the state of] South Carolina" and would "probably arise" over the issue of slavery (D&C 130:12–13). The fulfillment of this prophecy began in December 1860, when South Carolina seceded (withdrew) from the United States because of disputes over slavery. Four months later the first shots of the American Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina.



While visiting the Saints in Ramus, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith reaffirmed a revelation he received years earlier that a great civil conflict related to slavery would begin in South Carolina (see D&C 87).

Elder Orson Pratt, who carried a copy of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 87 as a missionary and shared it with others, described how those he taught reacted to this prophecy:

"I went forth … when I was a youth of nineteen, … and from that time on I published these tidings among the inhabitants of the earth. I carried forth the written revelation, foretelling this great contest, some twenty-eight years before the [American Civil War] commenced. This prophecy has been printed and circulated extensively in this and other nations and languages. It pointed out the place where it should commence in South Carolina. …

"What did [the people] have to say to me? They … laughed me to scorn, and they looked upon that revelation as they do upon all others that God has given in these latter days,—as without divine authority. But behold and lo! in process of time it came to pass, again establishing the divinity of this work, and giving another proof that God is in this work, and is performing that which He spoke by the mouths of the ancient prophets" ("Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt," *Deseret News,* Apr. 20, 1870, 127).

For additional explanation regarding the Prophet Joseph Smith's prophecy on war, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 87 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:14–17. "The coming of the Son of Man"

In 1843 a Christian preacher named William Miller predicted that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ would occur sometime between the spring of 1843 and the spring of 1844. This prediction was widely publicized and caused many to speculate about the Lord's Second Coming, including some of the early Saints. The Prophet Joseph Smith's teachings to Church members in Ramus, Illinois, recorded in

Doctrine and Covenants 130:14–17, "may have been prompted by someone in the meeting voicing questions and concerns regarding Miller's predictions" ("Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 130," in Largey and Dahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* 847). The Prophet shared a revelation he had received when "[he] was once praying very earnestly to know the time of the coming of the Son of Man" (D&C 130:14). He explained that he "heard a voice" telling him, "If thou livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man" (D&C 130:14–15). The Prophet expressed uncertainty about how to interpret the Lord's revelation (see D&C 130:16). By responding to the Prophet Joseph Smith's question in the way that He did, the Lord essentially withheld the time of His coming from the Prophet and asked him to "trouble [Him] no more on this matter" (D&C 130:15).

Previous revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding Jesus Christ's Second Coming reflected the Savior's teachings to His disciples during His mortal ministry. A May 1831 revelation taught: "But the hour and the day no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor shall they know until he comes" (D&C 49:7; see also D&C 39:21). Similarly, shortly before William Miller's appointed time for the Savior's Second Coming drew near, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** warned the Saints about those claiming to know the time of this event: "Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come [see Matthew 24:36; D&C 49:7]. Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and all that say so are false teachers" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 253).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–21, looking for how you can gain more knowledge, intelligence, and blessings from God.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19. "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life"

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection" (D&C 130:18). **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** clarified what the word *intelligence* means in Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19: "If we ponder just what it is that will rise with us in the resurrection, it seems clear that our intelligence will rise with us, meaning not simply our IQ, but also our capacity to receive and apply truth. Our talents, attributes, and skills will rise with us; certainly also our capacity to learn, our degree of self-discipline, and our capacity to work" (*We Will Prove Them Herewith* [1982], 12).



"Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection" (D&C 130:18).

It is customary to speak of obtaining knowledge and intelligence through study. However, the Lord instructed the Saints in an earlier revelation to "seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). The Prophet's teachings in Ramus, Illinois, help clarify what it means to learn "by faith." When God's children act in faith "through [their] diligence and obedience" to Him, they "[gain] more knowledge and intelligence" and "will have so much the advantage in the world to come" (D&C 130:19; see also D&C 93:26–28, 36). On another occasion, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught, "God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 210).

Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21. "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven"

An irrevocable law is permanent and unchangeable. The irrevocable law that God "decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world" was that "when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated," or based on (D&C 130:20–21). Speaking of the premortal council in heaven, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught, "God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 210).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency explained that the laws or commandments of God are gifts to us from a loving and kind Heavenly Father, who is anxious to bless His children:

"Our Father in Heaven is an eternal being whose experience, wisdom, and intelligence are infinitely greater than ours [see Isaiah 55:9]. Not only that, but He is also eternally loving, compassionate, and focused on one blessed goal: to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life [see Moses 1:39].

"In other words, He not only *knows* what is best for you; He also anxiously *wants you to choose* what is best for you.

"If you believe this in your hearts—if you truly believe the great mission of our Heavenly Father is to exalt and glorify His children and that He knows best how to do it—doesn't it make sense to embrace and follow His commandments, even the ones that appear difficult? Should we not cherish the light posts He has given that guide us through the darkness and the trials of mortality? They mark the way back to our heavenly home! …

"Part of our challenge is, I think, that we imagine that God has all of His blessings locked in a huge cloud up in heaven, refusing to give them to us unless we comply

with some strict, paternalistic requirements He has set up. But the commandments aren't like that at all. In reality, Heavenly Father is constantly raining blessings upon us. It is our fear, doubt, and sin that, like an umbrella, block these blessings from reaching us.

"His commandments are the loving instructions and the divine help for us to close the umbrella so we can receive the shower of heavenly blessings" ("Living the Gospel Joyful," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 121–22).

Consider some of the blessings you have received through obedience to God's commandments. What law or laws will you seek to better obey so you can more fully receive the blessings Heavenly Father desires to bestow upon you?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:22–23, looking for the doctrine the Prophet Joseph Smith taught about the Godhead.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:22. "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also"

In the Prophet Joseph Smith's concluding remarks to Church members in Ramus, Illinois, he again referred to Orson Hyde's incorrect teachings regarding the Father and the Son and instructed these Saints about the correct attributes of the Godhead. He taught that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are distinct and separate individuals who have physical bodies "of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22). In a sermon given at a general conference of the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois, the following year, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** expounded on this doctrine and explained the importance of understanding the nature and character of God:

"If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves. I want to go back to the beginning, and so lift your minds into more lofty spheres and a more exalted understanding than what the human mind generally aspires to. …

"God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make Himself visible,—I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 40).

Referring to the Prophet's teachings about God the Father having a physical body, **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "This belief does not mean that we claim sufficient spiritual maturity to comprehend God. Nor do we equate our imperfect mortal bodies to his immortal, glorified being. But we can comprehend the fundamentals he has revealed about himself and the other

members of the Godhead. And that knowledge is essential to our understanding of the purpose of mortal life and of our eternal destiny as resurrected beings after mortal life" ("Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign,* May 1995, 85–86).

Doctrine and Covenants 130:22–23. "The Holy Ghost … is a personage of Spirit"

The Prophet Joseph Smith's description of the Holy Ghost as "a personage of Spirit" (D&C 130:22) indicates He is a person who is separate and distinct from the Father and the Son, although "these three persons are one in perfect unity and harmony of purpose and doctrine" (Guide to the Scriptures, "God, Godhead," scriptures.lds.org). **Elder Gary E. Stevenson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "The Holy Ghost has a spirit body, unlike God the Father and Jesus Christ, who have physical bodies. This truth clarifies other names given to the Holy Ghost and familiar to us, including Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Holy Spirit of Promise, and Comforter" ("How Does the Holy Ghost Help You?" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2017, 118). As a "personage of Spirit" (D&C 130:22), the Holy Ghost can only be in one place at one time. However, His influence and power can be manifested everywhere at the same time.

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that if the Holy Ghost was not a spirit, He "could not dwell in us" (D&C 130:22). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified what it means to have the Holy Ghost dwell in us: "The Holy Ghost as a personage does not inhabit the bodies of mortal men, but that member of the Godhead dwells in a man in the sense that his promptings, the whisperings of the Spirit, find lodgment in the human soul. When the Holy Spirit speaks to the spirit in man, the Holy Ghost is thereby dwelling in man, for the truths that man then gives forth are those which have come from the Holy Ghost" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* [1973], 1:738).

Doctrine and Covenants 130:23. "Not tarry with him"

Using the example from the New Testament of the Roman centurion Cornelius (see Acts 10), the **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained how the Holy Ghost can influence—but not "tarry," or stay, with—someone who has not been baptized or received the gift of the Holy Ghost: "There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him. [See Acts 10:1–48.]" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 97).

In addition, the Holy Ghost will "not tarry" (D&C 130:23) with those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost but then withdraw themselves from His companionship. **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encouraged Church members to consider how their choices affect their ability to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost:

"We should … endeavor to discern when we 'withdraw [ourselves] from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in [us] to guide [us] in wisdom's paths that [we] may be blessed, prospered, and preserved' (Mosiah 2:36). …

"The standard is clear. If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us. Because the Spirit cannot abide that which is vulgar, crude, or immodest, then clearly such things are not for us. Because we estrange the Spirit of the Lord when we engage in activities we know we should shun, then such things definitely are not for us.

"I recognize we are fallen men and women living in a mortal world and that we might not have the presence of the Holy Ghost with us every second of every minute of every hour of every day. However, the Holy Ghost can tarry with us much, if not most, of the time—and certainly the Spirit can be with us more than it is not with us. As we become ever more immersed in the Spirit of the Lord, we should strive to recognize impressions when they come and the influences or events that cause us to withdraw ourselves from the Holy Ghost" ("That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2006, 30).

Ponder the doctrine and principles taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 130. How can these truths help increase your desire to faithfully obey your Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ?

CHAPTER 51

Doctrine and Covenants 131; 132:1–33

Introduction and Timeline

On May 16–17, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith stayed with Benjamin and Melissa Johnson in Ramus, Illinois. While there, the Prophet taught the Johnsons the Lord's law of marriage and sealed them for eternity. The next morning the Prophet preached a sermon on 2 Peter 1 in Ramus and explained the meaning of the phrase "more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19). Later that day, after a Protestant minister gave a sermon to the Saints in Ramus, the Prophet taught that "all spirit is matter" (D&C 131:7). Portions of the Prophet Joseph Smith's teachings on these occasions are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131.

On July 12, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, in which the Lord taught about "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2). Historical evidence suggests that the Prophet had received some of the principles found in this revelation as early as 1831. This chapter of the student manual covers Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–33, in which the Lord taught principles concerning eternal marriage and the importance of abiding by His law. Chapter 52 of this manual covers Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–66, which includes the Lord's teachings about plural marriage.

Early 1840

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught Parley P. Pratt about eternal marriage.

1840

Joseph Smith began privately teaching the doctrine of plural marriage in Nauvoo, Illinois.

May 16–17, 1843

The teachings recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131 were given.

May 28, 1843

Joseph and Emma Smith were sealed in marriage for eternity.

May–July 1843

Emma Smith consented to several of Joseph Smith's plural marriages but struggled to accept the practice.

July 12, 1843

Doctrine and Covenants 132 was dictated.

Many people today view marriage as nothing more than a social contract between two individuals. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 131; 132:1–33, look for doctrine and principles that can help you understand the importance of marriage between a man and a woman in God's eternal plan of happiness.

Doctrine and Covenants 131: Additional Historical Background

The Prophet Joseph Smith's understanding of the vital role of marriage in Heavenly Father's plan of salvation developed gradually. In March 1831, in response to doctrine being taught by a religious group called the Shakers, who "rejected marriage and believed in a life of total celibacy" (D&C 49, section heading), the Lord declared that "marriage is ordained of God unto man" (see D&C 49:15). In the same revelation the Lord explained that "it is lawful that [a man] should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation" (D&C 49:16). On November 24, 1835, while performing a marriage ceremony, the Prophet taught that marriage is "an institution of heaven first solemnized in the garden of Eden by God himself, by the authority of the

everlasting priesthood" ("History, 1834–1836," page 136, josephsmithpapers.org). On April 3, 1836, the Prophet Elijah appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple and restored the priesthood keys that make it possible for families to be sealed together for eternity (see D&C 110:13–16). Records indicate that as early as 1840, the Prophet Joseph Smith privately taught the principle of eternal marriage (see *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 297–98).

On May 16, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his scribe William Clayton traveled to Ramus, Illinois, and stayed in the home of Benjamin and Melissa Johnson. "The Johnsons had been married since Christmas Day 1841, but Joseph told them he intended to marry them according to the law of the Lord. … He taught that men and women needed to enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in order to obtain God's highest blessings. He then sealed Benjamin and Melissa for eternity" (Matthew McBride, "Our Hearts Rejoiced to Hear Him Speak," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 279–80; see also Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* [1947], 96). William Clayton recorded the Prophet's teachings on this occasion, and some of these teachings are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4.

The next morning, May 17, the Prophet Joseph Smith preached a sermon based on 2 Peter 1 to a gathering of Church members in Ramus. During his sermon the Prophet expounded on the phrase "more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19). William Clayton recorded the Prophet's teachings during that sermon. (See "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 131," in Dennis L. Largey and Larry E. Dahl, eds., *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion* [2012], 848.) A portion of these teachings is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131:5–6.

A Methodist minister by the name of Samuel A. Prior also attended the Prophet Joseph Smith's sermon in Ramus on May 17, 1843, and "later that night (17 May) arrangements were made for Reverend Prior to address the Saints." After the sermon, the Prophet "asked if he could share his thoughts on a few points in which they differed." As the Prophet delivered his remarks, William Clayton recorded his teachings. (See "Historical context and overview of Doctrine and Covenants 131," 848.) Some of these teachings are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8.



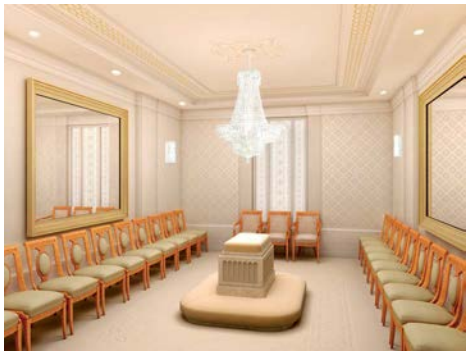
Doctrine and Covenants 131

The Prophet Joseph Smith teaches about eternal marriage and clarifies other truths

Read Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–2, looking for what the Prophet Joseph Smith taught about the importance of entering into the covenant of eternal marriage.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4. "Three heavens or degrees"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and the Saints learned about the requirements for receiving exaltation in the celestial kingdom gradually as the Restoration unfolded. Examples of these truths came as part of revelations beginning in 1829: Those who "keep [God's] commandments and endure to the end … shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). Those who "hearken unto [the Lord's] voice, and believe, and repent … and [are] baptized, even in water. … shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," and they will be worthy to "inherit the kingdom of God" (Moses 6:52, 57). Those who "doeth the works of righteousness shall receive … eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23). And those who do all these things and "overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, … are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just. … These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all" (D&C 76:53, 65, 70).



A sealing room in the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple

On May 16, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught additional doctrine about receiving eternal life when he explained that "in the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees" (D&C 131:1). Exaltation, or eternal life, is "the highest state of happiness and glory in the celestial kingdom" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Exaltation," scriptures.lds.org). The Prophet taught that "in order to obtain the highest [degree of the celestial kingdom], a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]" (D&C 131:2). **President Marion G. Romney** (1897–1988) of the First Presidency summarized this doctrine when he said, "The new and everlasting covenant of celestial marriage is the gate to exaltation in the celestial kingdom" (in Conference Report, April 1962, 17).

Sister Julie B. Beck, who served as Relief Society General President, explained that the blessings obtained through "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2) are equally shared by husband and wife: "A man and a woman who enter into the full partnership of a covenant temple marriage share equally in the blessings of that covenant if they are faithful [see D&C 131:1–2]. The Lord has said that their covenant will be in force after this life, and together they are promised

power and exaltation [see D&C 132:19–20]" ("An Outpouring of Blessings," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2006, 11).

How might understanding that "the new and everlasting covenant of … marriage is the gate to exaltation" (Marion G. Romney, 17) influence a person's preparation for marriage? How might it influence a person who is already married in the new and everlasting covenant?

Doctrine and Covenants 131:2. "The new and everlasting covenant of marriage"

Soon after teaching about the doctrine of eternal marriage in Ramus, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, were sealed by the power of the priesthood on May 28, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois, in the upper room of Joseph's Red Brick Store. Through their participation in this marriage ordinance, they entered into "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2). This covenant is described as "new" because it was revealed once again through the Prophet Joseph Smith in the dispensation of the fulness of times. It is called "everlasting" because it will endure through eternity for those who enter into it and are faithful to its terms and conditions.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) emphasized the importance of entering into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage:

"There is no ordinance connected with the Gospel of Jesus Christ of greater importance, of more solemn and sacred nature, and more necessary to [our] eternal joy … than marriage.

"The fullness and blessings of the Priesthood and Gospel grow out of Celestial marriage. This is the crowning ordinance of the Gospel and crowning ordinance of the temple" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 194).

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the new and everlasting covenant of marriage necessarily includes a man and a woman: "Men and women receive the highest ordinance in the house of the Lord together and equally, or not at all. (See D&C 131:1–3.)" ("Woman—Of Infinite Worth," *Ensign,* Nov. 1989, 20).

President Nelson further testified that the divinely appointed pattern of marriage between a man and a woman is essential to Heavenly Father's plan of happiness:

"Marriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the Lord's doctrine and crucial to God's eternal plan. Marriage between a man and a woman is God's pattern for a fulness of life on earth and in heaven. God's marriage pattern cannot be abused, misunderstood, or misconstrued [see Matthew 19:4–6; Mosiah 29:26–27; Helaman 5:2]. Not if you want true joy. …

"In our day civil governments have a vested interest in protecting marriage because strong families constitute the best way of providing for the health, education, welfare, and prosperity of rising generations. But civil governments are heavily influenced by social trends and secular philosophies as they write, rewrite, and enforce laws. Regardless of what civil legislation may be enacted, the doctrine of

the Lord regarding marriage and morality *cannot be changed*" ("Decisions for Eternity," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2013, 108).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 131:3–4, looking for some of the consequences of those who choose not to enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:3. "And if he does not, he cannot obtain it"

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "in order to obtain the highest [degree of the celestial kingdom], a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other [degrees of the celestial kingdom], but that is the end of his kingdom" (D&C 131:2–4). The person therefore forfeits the full blessings of exaltation and the opportunity to become like God.

"Some members of the Church remain single through no fault of their own, even though they want to marry. … [Those who] remain worthy … will someday, in this life or the next, be given all the blessings of an eternal family relationship. The Lord has made this promise repeatedly through His latter-day prophets" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 99). **President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency testified: "The brief span of this life is nothing in comparison with eternity. And if only we can hope and exercise faith, and joyfully endure to the end, … there, in that great heavenly future, we will have the fulfillment of the righteous desires of our heart, and so very much more that we can scarcely comprehend now" ("The Reflection in the Water" [Church Educational System fireside, Nov. 1, 2009], lds.org/media-library).

Doctrine and Covenants 131:4. "He cannot have an increase"

On May 16, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "in order to obtain the highest [degree of the celestial kingdom], a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, … he cannot have an increase" (D&C 131:2–4). As part of his teachings given to Church members in Ramus, Illinois, the Prophet clarified what it means to "have an increase": "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation; by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood; they will cease to increase when they die, that is, that they will not have any children after the resurrection; but those who are married by the power and authority of the Priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1551, josephsmithpapers.org).



The sealing is an ordinance performed in the temple, eternally uniting a husband and wife or children and their parents.

The Prophet Joseph Smith's teachings about eternal marriage in the early 1840s expanded the Saints' understanding of that important relationship between husband and wife. **Elder Parley P. Pratt** (1807–1857) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles contrasted his prior incorrect beliefs about marriage with the truths he learned from the Prophet:

"I had learned to esteem kindred affections and sympathies as appertaining solely to this transitory state [our temporal life on earth], as something from which the heart must be entirely weaned, in order to be fitted for its heavenly state. …

"It was from [Joseph Smith] that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity. … It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore. …

"I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling" (*The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* 297).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 131:5–8, looking for doctrine the Prophet Joseph Smith taught while preaching to Church members at Ramus, Illinois.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:5. "The more sure word of prophecy"

The doctrine taught by the Apostle Peter regarding God's promise of exaltation (see 2 Peter 1) was the subject of at least two sermons given by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The first of these sermons was given on May 14, 1843, to Church members in the Morley Settlement in Illinois, also known as Yelrome. In his sermon the Prophet recounted the Apostle Peter's counsel to the early Christian Saints to "give diligence to make [their] calling and election sure" (see 2 Peter 1:10). (See Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1549, josephsmithpapers.org.) **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "To have one's calling and election made sure is to be sealed up unto eternal life; it is to have the unconditional guarantee of exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world; it is to receive the assurance of godhood; it is, in effect, to have the day of judgment advanced, so that an inheritance of all the glory and honor of the Father's kingdom is assured prior to the day when the faithful actually enter into the divine presence to sit with Christ in his throne, even as he is 'set down' with his 'Father in his throne.' (Rev. 3:21.)" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* [1973], 3:330–31; see also the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 132:49–50 in this manual).

During his sermon at Yelrome, the Prophet Joseph Smith also spoke about the "more sure word of prophecy" mentioned in 2 Peter 1:19. He taught the Saints in that settlement that a "more sure word of prophecy" is a confirmation from the Spirit that allows a person to know that his or her calling and election has been made sure; it is reassurance given to faithful followers of Jesus Christ "that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God." He explained that this knowledge would be "as an anchor to the Soul sure and stedfast, though the thunders might roll, and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation." He also counseled the Saints to seek for this gift: "I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God, until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it." (Reported by Wilford Woodruff, in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, pages 1549–50, josephsmithpapers.org.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith used the Apostle Peter's teachings again on May 17, 1843, when he was visiting Ramus, Illinois. The Prophet again preached a sermon on 2 Peter 1. During this sermon he explained, "The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood" (D&C 131:5).

Doctrine and Covenants 131:6. "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance"

On April 10, 1842, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) preached a sermon in Nauvoo, Illinois, rebuking the wicked and teaching the Saints that "without knowledge we cannot be saved." He also taught: "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power, than many men who are on the earth. Hence [we need] revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 265–66).

In his May 17, 1843, sermon to Church members in Ramus, Illinois, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that "knowledge is power, and the man who has the most knowledge, has the greatest power." He also taught that "it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (In Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, pages 1551–52, josephsmithpapers.org; see also D&C 131:6).

President Marion G. Romney explained what type of knowledge is needed in order for a person to be saved:

"By receiving the Savior's message and accepting him for what he was and is, the Apostles obtained eternal life [see John 17:1–2, 6–8].

"This knowledge of 'the only true God, and Jesus Christ' (John 17:3) is the most important knowledge in the universe; it is the knowledge without which the Prophet Joseph Smith said no man could be saved. The lack of it is the ignorance referred to in the revelation wherein it is written: 'It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.' (D&C 131:6.)" ("Except a Man Be Born Again," *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 14).

What can you do to better come to know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8. "All spirit is matter"

On the evening of May 17, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith and others listened to a sermon given by Samuel A. Prior, a Methodist preacher. When Reverend Prior finished his sermon, the Prophet asked if he could offer a few corrections. (See Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1552, josephsmithpapers.org.) Reverend Prior wrote about that incident in a letter of appreciation about his visit among the Saints: "After I had closed, [Joseph] Smith, who had attended, arose and begged leave to differ from me in some few points of doctrine, and this he did mildly, politely, and affectingly; like one who was more desirous to disseminate truth and expose error, than to love the malicious triumph of debate over me. I was truly edified with his remarks, and felt less prejudiced against the Mormons than ever. He invited me to call upon him, and I promised to do so" ("A Visit to Nauvoo," *Times and Seasons,* May 15, 1843, 198; note that the date of this issue does not reflect the actual date of its publication; the article before Reverend Prior's letter is dated May 19 and the article after it is dated May 22). On that occasion, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "there is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine and pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes" (D&C 131:7; see also Manuscript History of the Church, vol. D-1, page 1552, josephsmithpapers.org).

A little over a year earlier, on April 1, 1842, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** had taught the following about the nature of the spirit: "We shall find a very material difference between the body and the Spirit:—the body is supposed to be organized matter, and the Spirit by many is thought to be immaterial, without substance. With this latter statement we should beg leave to differ—and state that Spirit is a substance; that it is material, but that it is more pure, elastic, and refined matter than the body;—that it existed before the body, can exist in the body, and will exist separate from the body, when the body will be mouldering in the dust; and will in the resurrection be again united with it" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. C-1, page 1307, josephsmithpapers.org).

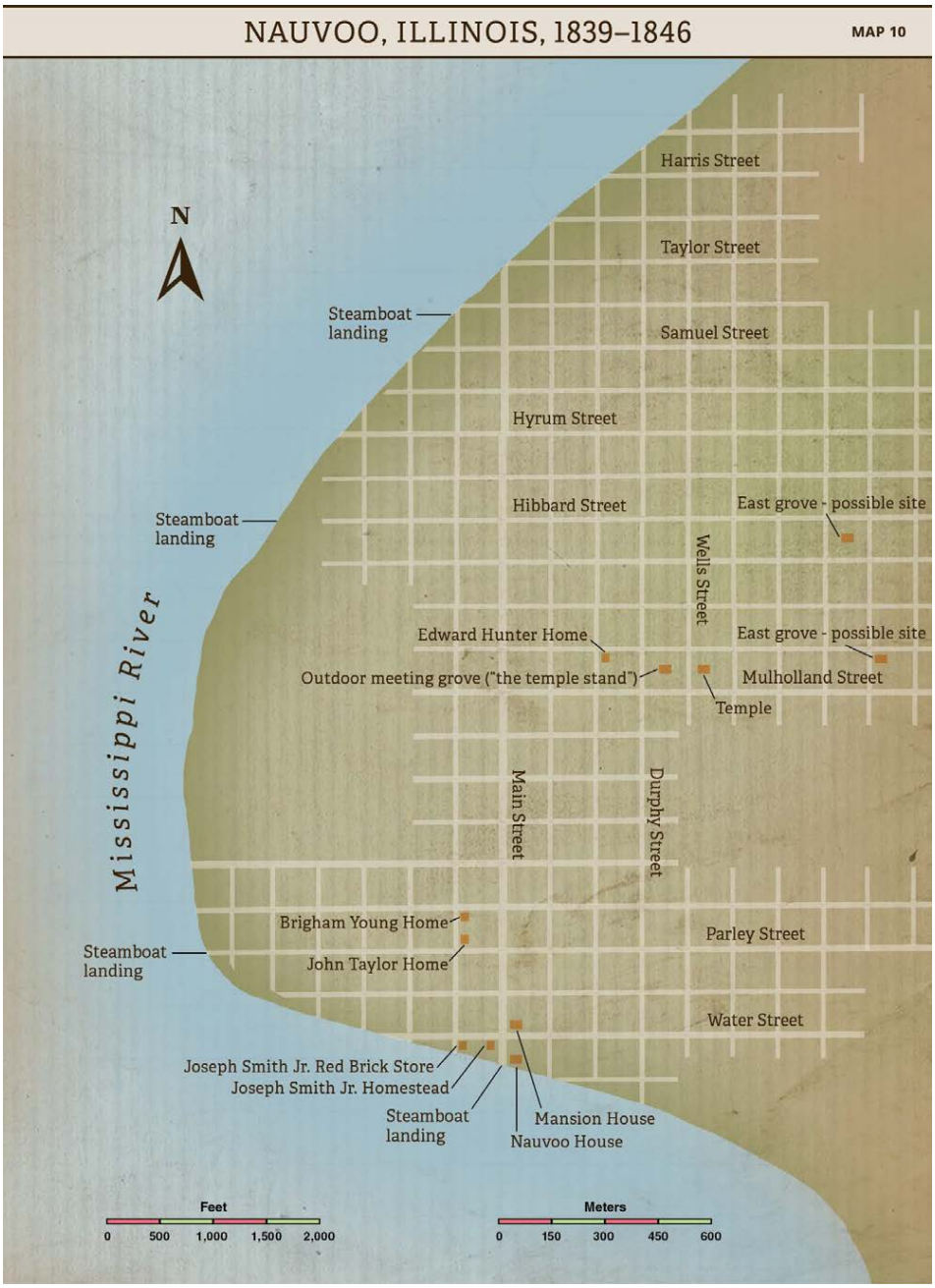
Doctrine and Covenants 132: Additional Historical Background

In February and March 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith was working in the book of Genesis as part of the inspired translation of the Old Testament. As he worked on the translation, the Prophet inquired of the Lord about the plural marriages of ancient patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others. In response, the Lord revealed principles about plural marriage. Joseph Smith was eventually commanded to live that principle. (See "Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org.)

In 1840, a year after the Saints relocated to Nauvoo, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith began privately teaching the principle of eternal marriage. The importance of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in God's plan was emphasized in the Prophet's May 1843 revelation received in Ramus, Illinois (see D&C 131:1–4).

Additional information about the new and everlasting covenant of marriage came again in July 1843 when the Prophet Joseph Smith dictated a lengthy revelation that included principles about eternal marriage as well as plural marriage.

This chapter of the student manual addresses Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–33, which primarily discusses the doctrine of "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2). Chapter 52 of this manual addresses Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–66, which primarily discusses the principle of plural marriage.



Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–20

The Lord explains the conditions and blessings of "the new and everlasting covenant"

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–2, looking for the question the Prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord regarding the Old Testament practice of plural marriage.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–2. "Inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand"

While working on the inspired translation of the Old Testament, the Prophet Joseph Smith read about ancient patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob "having many wives and concubines" (D&C 132:1; see also Genesis 16:1–3; 25:6; 30:1–13; 2 Samuel 5:13; 1 Kings 11:1–6). This prompted the Prophet to ask the Lord about this practice. Such marriages were not only contrary to the cultural and legal standards of Joseph Smith's day but also to the Lord's standard of marriage as taught by the prophet Jacob in the Book of Mormon: "There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none" (Jacob 2:27; see also D&C 49:15–16). The Lord expressly forbade plural marriage unless He commanded His people otherwise (see Jacob 2:30; D&C 132:34–35).

In response to the Prophet's question, the Lord first provided an explanation of the principle of eternal marriage, known as "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2; see D&C 132:3–33). Then, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:34, the Lord returned to Joseph Smith's question about the ancient practice of plural marriage.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:1. What are concubines?

In ancient times, a concubine was a woman legally married to a man but who, because of the time and culture in which she lived, had a lower social status and fewer rights than a wife (see Genesis 25:5–6; 2 Samuel 5:13). Concubines were not part of plural marriage as practiced by the early Saints in this dispensation. (See Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 154–55.)

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:3–14, looking for what the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith about making and keeping the covenants of the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:3–6. "A new and everlasting covenant" and "the new and everlasting covenant"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, the Lord revealed a law He called "a new and an everlasting covenant" (D&C 132:4) and told the Prophet Joseph Smith that he and all those who received this law must obey it. This newly revealed law is part of "the new and everlasting covenant" (D&C 132:6) restored in this dispensation of the fulness of times (see also D&C 66:2).



Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois, where the some of the Saints learned about being sealed for eternity

Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy explained the difference between "*a* new and … everlasting covenant" (D&C 132:4; italics added) and "*the* new and everlasting covenant" (D&C 132:6; italics added):

"The new and everlasting covenant 'is the sum total of all gospel covenants and obligations' [Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie (1955), 1:156] given anciently [see Jeremiah 32:40; D&C 22:1] and again restored to the earth in these latter days. … Because the covenant has been restored in the last dispensation of time, it is 'new,' and because it spans all eternity [see D&C 132:7], it is 'everlasting.'

"In the scriptures the Lord speaks of both 'the' new and everlasting covenant and 'a' new and everlasting covenant. For example, in Doctrine and Covenants 22:1, He refers to baptism as '*a* new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning.' In Doctrine and Covenants 132:4, He likewise refers to eternal marriage as '*a* new and an everlasting covenant.' When He speaks of 'a' new and everlasting covenant, He is speaking of one of the many covenants encompassed by His gospel.

"When the Lord speaks generally of 'the' new and everlasting covenant, He is speaking of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which embraces all ordinances and covenants necessary for the salvation and exaltation of mankind. Neither baptism nor eternal marriage is 'the' new and everlasting covenant; rather, they are each parts of the whole" ("The New and Everlasting Covenant," *Ensign,* Dec. 2015, 42–43).

The Lord taught, "As pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must abide and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned" (D&C 132:6). To "be

damned" is "the state of being stopped in one's progress and denied access to the presence of God and His glory. Damnation exists in varying degrees. All who do not obtain the fulness of celestial exaltation will to some degree be limited in their progress and privileges, and they will be damned to that extent" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Damnation," scriptures.lds.org). Those who choose not to enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage are "damned" because they cannot receive exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom and "cannot have an increase" (see D&C 131:2–4).

Elder Marcus B. Nash clarified that the doctrine of eternal marriage taught in Doctrine and Covenants 132:4 is not plural marriage: "Some people, including some Church members, inaccurately read Doctrine and Covenants 132:4 to mean that plural marriage is necessary for exaltation, leading them to believe that plural marriage is a necessary prerequisite for exaltation in the eternal realm. This, however, is not supported in the revelations. As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 131 and 132, the Lord introduced the law of eternal marriage by expressly referring to the sealing of one man and one woman (see Doctrine and Covenants 132:4–7, 15–25). By setting forth the law of eternal marriage in the context of a monogamous marriage, the Lord makes plain that the blessings of exaltation, extended to each man and each woman who worthily enters into the covenant of eternal marriage performed by proper priesthood authority, are independent of whether that marriage is plural or monogamous [see D&C 132:15–25]" ("The New and Everlasting Covenant," 44).

Based on the Lord's teachings recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:3–6, why is it important that we make and keep covenants with God?

Doctrine and Covenants 132:7. What conditions must be met in order for covenants to be binding eternally?

In contrast to earthly contracts, which "have an end when men are dead" (D&C 132:7), covenants that we make with the Lord can be binding forever. A covenant is "an agreement between God and man, but they do not act as equals in the agreement. God gives the conditions for the covenant, and men agree to do what He asks them to do. God then promises men certain blessings for their obedience" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Covenant," scriptures.lds.org). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, the Lord gave the conditions necessary for any covenant to be binding in eternity: "All covenants … that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, … both as well for time and for all eternity, … through the medium of mine anointed whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power … are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead" (D&C 132:7). Therefore, in order to be eternally binding, covenants must be "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise," made "for time and for all eternity," and made under the direction of the person who holds and is authorized to use all priesthood keys (D&C 132:7).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what it means to be "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" (D&C 132:7): "The Holy Spirit of Promise is the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost. When sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, an ordinance, vow, or covenant is binding on earth and in heaven. (See D&C 132:7.) Receiving this 'stamp of approval' from the Holy Ghost is the result of faithfulness, integrity, and steadfastness in honoring gospel covenants 'in [the] process of time' (Moses 7:21). However, this sealing can be forfeited through unrighteousness and transgression" ("Ye Must Be Born Again," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2007, 22).



After receiving the sealing ordinance and making sacred covenants in the temple, a husband and wife must continue in faithfulness in order to receive the blessings of eternal marriage and exaltation.

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that the person who holds the sealing power and "the keys of this priesthood" (D&C 132:7) is the President of the Church:

"The keys of the priesthood are the right to preside and direct the affairs of the Church within a jurisdiction. All priesthood keys are within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and no keys exist outside the Church on earth.

"All men who are ordained Apostles and sustained as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have all priesthood keys conferred upon them. (See D&C 27:13; D&C 110:11–16; D&C 112:30.)

"The President of the Church is the only person on earth who has the right to exercise all the keys in their fulness. (See D&C 132:7.)" ("What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government," *Ensign,* Feb. 1993, 8).

Although all of the Lord's Apostles receive all the keys that pertain to the kingdom of God on earth, they exercise those keys only as directed by the President of the Church (see D&C 107:65–67, 91–92; 112:30–32). **Elder Gary E. Stevenson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified: "The keys are safely in the possession of prophets, seers, and revelators. They are conferred, delegated, and assigned to others in accordance with the Lord's will, under the direction of the President of the Church" ("Where Are the Keys and Authority of the Priesthood?" *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2016, 32). Priesthood keys are delegated to presiding priesthood leaders, such as temple presidents, mission presidents, stake presidents, and bishops, who in turn may authorize individuals to participate in the ordinances of salvation and enter the associated covenants.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–20, looking for what will happen to those who choose not to enter into and honor the covenant of eternal marriage and the blessings promised to those who do.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–18. "If a man marry him a wife"

The Lord provided two examples of marriage to illustrate the importance of complying with the conditions essential for covenants to be binding in the eternities. These examples illustrate what happens to those who choose not to comply with the Lord's conditions for eternal marriage (see D&C 132:7). First, the Lord described a marriage in which a man and a woman covenant to be married for this life only (see D&C 132:15–17). Under such an agreement, when one of the spouses dies, the marriage ends. These spouses will "remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever" (see D&C 132:17). Next, the Lord described a marriage in which a man and a woman "make a covenant with [each other] for time and for all eternity," but because "that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, … then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word" (D&C 132:18). This could refer to those who promise or are promised as a part of their marriage ceremony that they will be married forever but who have not been sealed by proper priesthood authority. This could also refer to those who receive the marriage sealing ordinance in the temple but who do not honor their covenants and thus are not sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"To qualify for eternal life, we must make an eternal and everlasting covenant with our Heavenly Father [see D&C 132:19]. This means that a temple marriage is not only between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God [see Matthew 19:6].

"… When a family is sealed in the temple, that family may become as eternal as the kingdom of God itself [see D&C 132:19–20].

"Such a reward requires more than a hopeful wish. On occasion, I read in a newspaper obituary of an expectation that a recent death has reunited that person with a deceased spouse, when, in fact, they did *not* choose the eternal option. Instead, they opted for a marriage that was valid only as long as they both should live. Heavenly Father had offered them a supernal gift, but they refused it. And in rejecting the gift, they rejected the Giver of the gift [see D&C 88:33]" ("Celestial Marriage," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 93).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–17. "When they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage"

When the Sadducees, who rejected "the doctrines of Resurrection and eternal life" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Sadducees," scriptures.lds.org), asked Jesus Christ which man out of seven brothers who had all married the same woman would be married to her after the Resurrection, He responded, "In the resurrection they neither

marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels of God in heaven" (see Matthew 22:23–30; see also Luke 20:27–35). Some have mistakenly interpreted this teaching to mean that marriage does not last beyond this life or that those who do not have the opportunity to marry in this life will never receive that blessing. However, the Lord's words recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–17 clarify that His teachings recorded in the New Testament refer to those who choose not to enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage or abide by the conditions of the covenant. Those who choose not to enter into or honor the new and everlasting covenant of marriage will "remain separately and singly, without exaltation" (D&C 132:17; see also the commentary for D&C 131:3 in this chapter of the manual).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20. "If ye abide in my covenant"

To receive the blessings of exaltation, Heavenly Father's children must enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage by being sealed in the temple. While temple marriage is an important beginning, it is not enough to receive exaltation. The Lord clarified that a man and a woman can only receive the blessings of exaltation if they "abide in [His] covenant" after entering into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage (D&C 132:19). To "abide in [His] covenant" implies accepting and living God's law. **Elder Cree-L Kofford** of the Seventy explained that eternal marriage requires commitment and obedience to God's laws:

"Being married in the Lord's way does not necessarily mean there won't be disagreements, arguments, moments of despair, and times of trial. Being sealed in the temple is a great start, but it only works as long as you're both totally obedient to the covenants you make. …

"Your marriage, even though started in the sealing room of the temple, will still require dedicated effort. It will require understanding, love, forgiveness, patience, and every other virtue of which you can possibly think. There may be days when you cry, and there may be disagreements. But remember this—you are working and building a relationship that will live through eternity. That can and will occur so long as you both love your Heavenly Father and live His teachings" ("Marriage in the Lord's Way, Part Two," *Ensign,* July 1998, 22–23).

How do the Lord's teachings recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–20 help you understand the differences between marriages performed under man's authority and those that comply with the conditions of the new and everlasting covenant?

Doctrine and Covenants 132:20. "Then shall they be gods, because they have no end"

All human beings are children of Heavenly Parents and have within them the potential to become like God. The Bible contains several passages that refer to the potential of God's children to become like Him (see Genesis 1:26–27; 3:22; Psalm 82:6; Matthew 5:48; John 10:33–34; Acts 17:29; Romans 8:16–17; 2 Peter 1:4; Revelation 3:21).

Through a series of revelations, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that those who receive exaltation "are gods, even the sons of God" (D&C 76:58), will "be made

equal with [the Lamb of God]" (see D&C 88:106–7), and will "receive of [the Father's] fulness" (D&C 93:20). The revelation that the Prophet dictated on July 12, 1843, explained that eternal marriage is necessary in order to obtain exaltation and godhood. The Lord taught, "If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, … then shall they be gods" (D&C 132:19–20).

In an April 1844 Church conference, "Joseph Smith spoke about the nature of God and the future of humankind to the Saints. … He used the occasion in part to reflect upon the death of a Church member named King Follett, who had died unexpectedly a month earlier," and then taught that God established laws whereby His children could have the opportunity to advance like He has and to be exalted with Him ("Becoming Like God," topics.lds.org; see also Joseph Smith, Discourse, Nauvoo, Illinois, Apr. 7 1844; in *Times and Seasons,* Aug. 15, 1844, pages 612–17, josephsmithpapers.org). It is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and by keeping God's laws, including entering into and keeping the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, that a person can attain exaltation.

One of the blessings of becoming like God is the ability to have children in the eternities. **President Lorenzo Snow** (1814–1901) described this blessing: "Think of the promises that are made to you in the beautiful and glorious ceremony that is used in the marriage covenant in the temple. When two Latter-day Saints are united together in marriage, promises are made to them concerning their offspring, that reach from eternity to eternity. They are promised that they shall have the power and the right to govern and control and administer salvation and exaltation and glory to their offspring worlds without end. And what offspring they do not have here, undoubtedly there will be opportunities to have them hereafter" (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow,* ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 138).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:21–33

The Lord explains how to know the Father and the Son

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:21–27, looking for the imagery the Lord used to describe the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:21–25. "This is eternal lives"

The Lord emphasized the importance of accepting His law of eternal marriage in order to be exalted when He said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it" (D&C 132:22). The phrase "continuation of the lives" means more than the promise of resurrection. It refers to the ability of those who obtain exaltation to create their own eternal families through bearing and rearing spirit children. They will receive the blessings of Abraham, which include having a posterity as numerous "as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Genesis 22:17; see also D&C 132:30).

To inherit these blessings and live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ eternally, we must "receive [the Lord] in the world" and come to know God our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (see D&C 132:23–24). We come to know Them as we receive and abide by their laws, including the law of eternal marriage (see D&C 132:24–25). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: "To know God is to think what He thinks, to feel what he feels, to have the power he possesses, to comprehend the truths he understands, and to do what he does. Those who know God become like him, and have his kind of life, which is eternal life" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary,* 1:762).

Those who choose not to enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage cannot come to know God. The Lord said, "Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths; and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law" (D&C 132:25). Referring to Doctrine and Covenants 132:25, **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught: "The term 'deaths' mentioned here has reference to the cutting off of all those who reject this eternal covenant of marriage and therefore they are denied the power of exaltation and the continuation of posterity. To be denied posterity and the family organization, leads to the 'deaths,' or the end of increase in the life to come" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 2:360).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:26–27. "If … he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, the Lord included a warning to those who enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and whose covenants are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. The Lord clarified that even if a person has entered into the covenant of eternal marriage and the Holy Spirit of Promise has sealed that covenant, that person is still accountable for his or her sins if "he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever" (D&C 132:26). **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught the following regarding this verse: "The Lord has never promised any soul that he may be taken into exaltation without the spirit of repentance. While repentance is not stated in this passage, yet it is, and must be, implied" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 2:95).

The "innocent blood" mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 132:27 is the innocent blood of Jesus Christ and is what the phrase "and assent unto my death" refers to in that verse. This is a description of a person who has become a son of perdition. (See Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 232–33.)

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:28–33, looking for ways in which Abraham was an example to all who seek the blessings of exaltation.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:28–33. "Abraham received all things … by revelation and commandment"

Because Abraham willingly received and obeyed all the laws the Lord revealed to him, including eternal marriage, he obtained exaltation. Those who "do the works of Abraham" (D&C 132:32) by entering into and keeping the new and everlasting covenant will receive the same blessings Abraham received, including posterity in the next life.



The Old Testament prophet Abraham was promised that his posterity would continue as innumerable as the stars or as the sand on the seashore (see D&C 132:30).

Think about the blessings that you can receive by entering into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. What will you do to prepare yourself to receive those blessings? If you have been married in the temple, what will you do to keep the covenants you have made?

CHAPTER 52

Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–66; Official Declaration 1

Introduction and Timeline

While the Prophet Joseph Smith was working on the inspired translation of the Bible in 1831, he asked the Lord why some of the ancient patriarchs and Israelite kings had more than one wife. At that time, the Prophet began to receive revelation regarding plural marriage. In subsequent years the Lord commanded the Prophet and several other Church members to live the principle of plural marriage. On July 12, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Prophet dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, in which the Lord revealed truths regarding "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2). This lesson addresses Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–66, which includes the Lord's teachings about plural marriage and His counsel to Joseph and Emma Smith.

After the Saints migrated to the Salt Lake Valley in the western United States, they began to practice plural marriage openly. From the 1860s to the 1880s, the United States government passed laws against plural marriage. After seeking the Lord's guidance and receiving His direction, President Wilford Woodruff prepared the Manifesto on September 23–24, 1890, which ultimately led to the end of the practice of plural marriage by members of the Church. The Manifesto, recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants as Official Declaration 1, was issued publicaly on September 25, 1890.

May–July 1843

Emma Smith consented to several of Joseph Smith's plural marriages but struggled to accept the practice.

July 12, 1843

The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132 was dictated.

June 27, 1844

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were martyred in Carthage Jail in Carthage, Illinois.

July 24, 1847

President Brigham Young and other Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.

August 29, 1852

Under the direction of President Brigham Young, Elder Orson Pratt publicly taught the principle of plural marriage.

1860s–1880s

The United States government passed laws to prohibit plural marriage.

September 25, 1890

President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto, now contained in Official Declaration 1.

October 6, 1890

During a general conference of the Church, the Manifesto was accepted by Church members as authoritative and binding.

Think of some examples of particularly challenging commandments that the Lord has given to prophets and other individuals, and consider why these commandments were especially difficult to obey. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–66 and Official Declaration 1, look for truths that will help increase your faith to obey the Lord's commandments.

Doctrine and Covenants 132: Additional Historical Background

Although the revelation on plural marriage was not written down until 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith received portions of the revelation as early as 1831, while he was studying the Old Testament. The revelation states that the Prophet prayed to know why God justified ancient patriarchs and Israelite kings in having many wives. Accounts from those close to Joseph Smith report that an angel of God appeared to the Prophet as many as three times between 1834 and 1842, commanding him to obey the principle of plural marriage. (See "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org.) Eliza R. Snow, who was sealed in marriage to Joseph Smith, recorded teachings on plural marriage that the Prophet gave to her brother Lorenzo Snow: "The Prophet Joseph … described the trying mental ordeal he experienced in overcoming the repugnance of his feelings, the natural result of the force of education and social custom, relative to the introduction of plural marriage. … He knew that he had not only his own prejudices and prepossessions to combat and to overcome, but those of the whole Christian world stared him in the face; but God, who is above all, had given the commandment, and He must be obeyed. Yet the Prophet hesitated and deferred from time to time, until an angel of God stood by him with a drawn sword, and told him that, unless he moved forward and established plural marriage, his Priesthood would be taken from him and he should be destroyed [or cut off from God]!" (Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* [1884], 69–70).

"Fragmentary evidence suggests that Joseph Smith acted on the angel's first command by marrying a plural wife, Fanny Alger, in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s. Several Latter-day Saints who had lived in Kirtland reported decades later that Joseph Smith had married Alger, who lived and worked in the Smith household, after he had obtained her consent and that of her parents. Little is known about this marriage, and nothing is known about the conversations between Joseph and Emma regarding Alger. After the marriage with Alger ended in separation, Joseph seems to have set the subject of plural marriage aside until after the Church moved to Nauvoo, Illinois" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org).

In 1841 the Prophet Joseph Smith married additional women in accordance with the Lord's commandment and introduced the principle of plural marriage to a limited number of other Church members. "This principle was among the most challenging aspects of the Restoration—for Joseph personally and for other Church members. Plural marriage tested faith and provoked controversy and opposition. Few Latter-day Saints initially welcomed the restoration of a biblical practice entirely foreign to their sensibilities. …

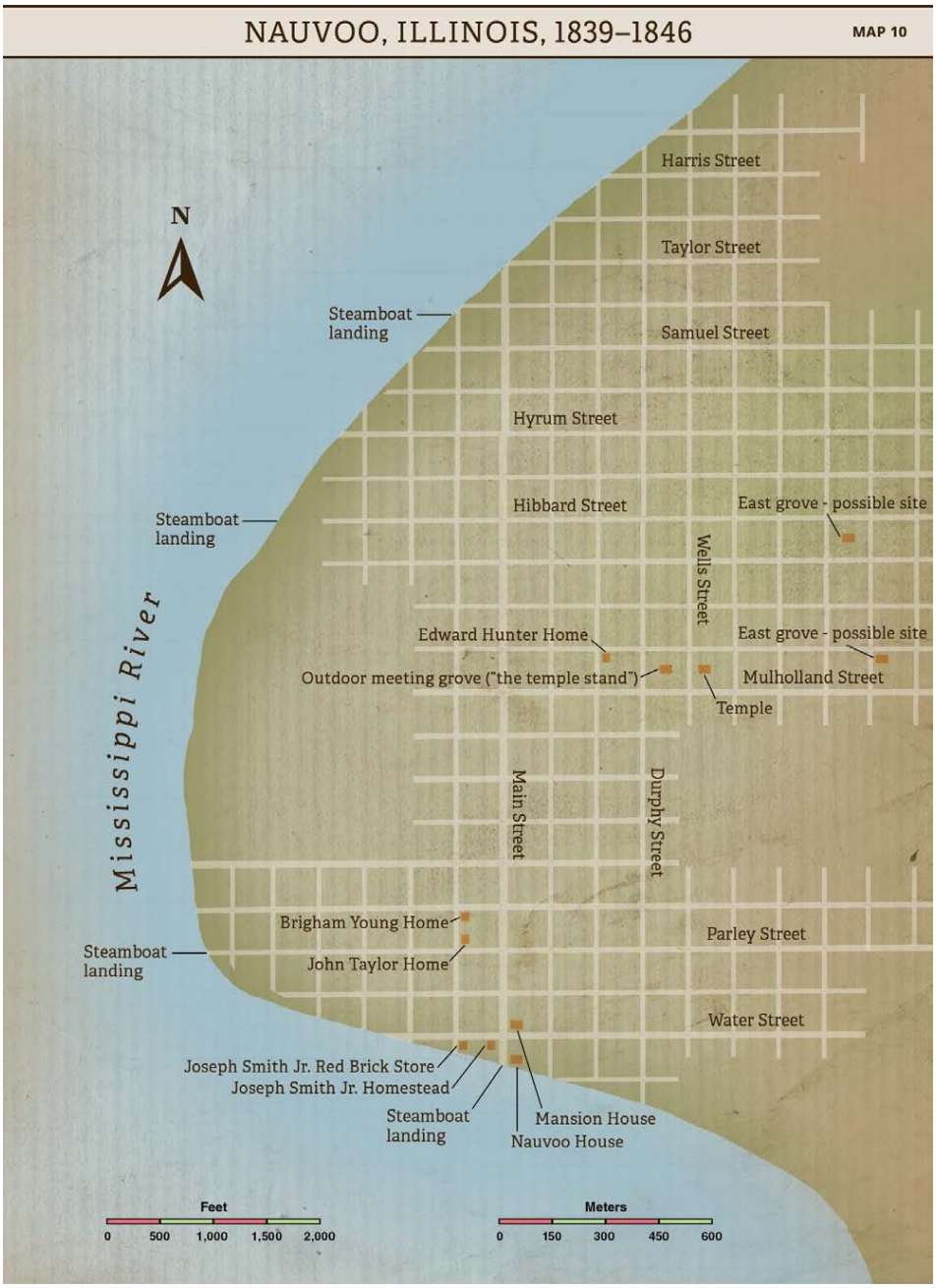
"… For Joseph Smith's wife Emma, it was an excruciating ordeal. …

"… She vacillated in her view of plural marriage, at some points supporting it and at other times denouncing it" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org).

On the morning of July 12, 1843, the Prophet and his brother Hyrum were discussing the doctrine of plural marriage in the Prophet's office above the Red

Brick Store in Nauvoo. The Prophet's scribe William Clayton later recounted: "Hyrum said to Joseph, 'If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take it and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.' Joseph smiled and remarked, 'You do not know Emma as well as I do.' Hyrum repeated his opinion, and further remarked, 'The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity and heavenly origin,' or words to that effect" (in *History of the Church,* 5:xxxii).

The Prophet consented and instructed William Clayton to get paper and prepare to write. After Joseph had dictated the revelation, he asked William Clayton "to read it through, slowly and carefully, which [he] did, and [Joseph] pronounced it correct. He then remarked that there was much more that he could write on the same subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present" (William Clayton, in *History of the Church,* 5:xxxii–xxxiii).



Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–50

The Lord teaches about the sealing power given to the Prophet Joseph Smith

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–39, looking for what the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith about the practice of plural marriage in ancient times.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–39. "I, the Lord, commanded it"

The Lord promised the Old Testament prophet Abraham: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; … and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal" (Abraham 2:9, 11).



Abraham on the Plains of Mamre, **by Harry Anderson. The Old Testament prophet Abraham and his wife Sarah lived in faithfulness and did all that the Lord commanded them.**

According to the Lord's promises, Abraham's posterity would be as numerous "as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Genesis 22:17; see also Genesis 15:5; D&C 132:30). However, Abraham's wife Sarah was unable to have children. In keeping with the law and custom of the time, Sarah gave her handmaid Hagar to Abraham as a plural wife in hopes of having children by her (see Genesis 16:1–2). The Lord clarified in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132 that He commanded Abraham to marry Hagar and Sarah obeyed the Lord's will and "gave Hagar to Abraham to wife" (D&C 132:34). The Lord then asked, "Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily, I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it" (D&C 132:35).

The Lord explained to the Prophet Joseph Smith that He commanded others in Old Testament times to have more than one wife. Only in those instances in which His servants had wives and concubines who had not been authorized by the Lord did they commit sin (see D&C 132:38). The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob

condemned the unauthorized practice of plural marriage among his people (see Jacob 2:22–30). Apparently, some Nephites used the scriptural examples of King David and Solomon to justify sexual immorality. Through Jacob, the Lord declared that "David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me" (Jacob 2:24). The Lord clarified in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132 that when King David took additional wives, "in none of these things did [David] sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife" (D&C 132:39). Thus, David's sin was in coveting another man's wife, committing adultery with her, arranging for Uriah to be killed, and taking Uriah's wife to be his own wife (see 2 Samuel 12:9). Solomon's sin was in loving and marrying "many strange women" not of the house of Israel, who "turn[ed] away [his] heart after their gods" and away from the Lord (1 Kings 11:1–2; see also Deuteronomy 17:14–17). We learn from the teachings of Jacob and the Lord's revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith that plural marriage is acceptable only when the Lord commands it. Otherwise, those who engage in its practice commit sin and are under serious condemnation.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:36. "Abraham … did not refuse"

The Lord's commandment to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac is one of the most severe tests of obedience found in scripture (see Genesis 22:1–14). Isaac was the only son born to Abraham's wife Sarah, miraculously in their old age (see Genesis 18:9–14; 21:1–5). Before Isaac's birth the Lord had promised Abraham that through his posterity he would become "a father of many nations" (see Genesis 17:1–8) and Sarah would become "a mother of nations" (see Genesis 17:15–16). The command to sacrifice his son Isaac, for whom he and Sarah had waited so long and whom they loved dearly, must have severely tested Abraham's faith. Early in Abraham's life, his "fathers, having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them" had given him to an idolatrous priest to be offered as a human sacrifice, and Abraham had barely escaped being sacrificed when the Lord sent an angel to save him (see Abraham 1:7, 15–16). This experience likely made the Lord's command to sacrifice Isaac even more repulsive and agonizing to Abraham. He must have wondered why the Lord would command him to sacrifice his son in what seemed to be a direct contradiction of His law forbidding human sacrifice and murder (see Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 9:12–13 [in the Bible appendix]). The Lord acknowledged this contradiction in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, yet He explained that even though Abraham was not ultimately required to take the life of his son, Abraham's willingness to obey "was accounted unto him for righteousness" (D&C 132:36). Similarly, the Lord explained that Abraham's marriage to more than one woman "was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law" (D&C 132:37).

President Thomas S. Monson taught, "At times the wisdom of God appears as being foolish or just too difficult, but one of the greatest and most valuable lessons we can learn in mortality is that when God speaks and a man obeys, that man will always be right" ("Willing and Worthy to Serve," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 67).

It is important to remember that if God were to command His people to do something contrary to current commandments, such direction would come through

His living prophet. **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) taught: "When there is to be anything different from that which the Lord has told us already, He will reveal it to His prophet and no one else. Do you suppose that when the Lord has a prophet on the earth, He is going to take some round-about means of revealing things to His children? That is what He has a prophet for, and when He has something to give to this church, He will give it to the president, and the president will see that the presidents of stakes and missions get it, along with the General Authorities, and they in turn will see that the people are advised of any change" (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 159).

The early Latter-day Saints who were directed to practice plural marriage experienced a test of their faith. The principle ran counter not only to prevailing marriage practices and laws in the United States, but also to the moral standards of Latter-day Saint men and women. Lucy Walker, who was one of the Prophet Joseph Smith's plural wives, spoke about her struggle to accept this principle: "When the Prophet Joseph Smith first mentioned the principle of plural marriage to me I felt indignant and so expressed myself to him, because my feelings and education were averse to [against] anything of that nature. But he assured me that this doctrine had been revealed to him of the Lord, and that I was entitled to receive a testimony of its divine origin for myself" (Lucy Walker Kimball, affidavit, December 17, 1902, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah).

Lucy agonized over this decision. As recorded in a biographical sketch, she later told Joseph, "I have tried to pray but received no comfort, no light." She then explained:

"He … said, 'God Almighty bless you. You shall have a manifestation of the will of God concerning you; a testimony that you can never deny. I will tell you what it shall be. It shall be that peace and joy that you never knew.' Oh, how earnestly I prayed for these words to be fulfilled. It was near dawn after another sleepless night. While on my knees in fervent supplication, my room became filled with a hol[y] influence. To me it was in comparison like the brilliant sunshine bursting through the darkest cloud.

"The words of the Prophet were indeed fulfilled. My soul was filled with a calm sweet peace that I never knew. Supreme happiness took possession of my whole being and I received a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truth of … plural marriage. Which has been like an anchor to the soul through all the temptations and trials of life" (Lucy Walker Kimball, biographical sketch, pages 10–11, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling and punctuation standardized).

Bishop Newel K. Whitney and his wife Elizabeth also struggled initially to accept the principle of plural marriage before gaining their own confirming witness. "Bishop Whitney was not a man that readily accepted of every doctrine, and would question the Prophet very closely upon principles if not made clear to his understanding. When Joseph saw that he was doubtful concerning the righteousness of this celestial order [plural marriage] he told him to go and enquire of the Lord concerning it, and he should receive a testimony for himself" (Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo after the Martyrdom of the Prophet and Patriarch," *Woman's Exponent,* March 1, 1883, 146). Elizabeth Whitney recounted: "Joseph had the most implicit confidence in my husband's uprightness and

integrity of character. … He therefore confided to him, and a few others, the principles set forth in that revelation [D&C 132]. … My husband revealed these things to me; we had always been united, and had the utmost faith and confidence in each other. We pondered upon them continually, and our prayers were unceasing that the Lord would grant us some special manifestation concerning this new and strange doctrine. The Lord was very merciful to us; He revealed unto us His power and glory. We were seemingly wrapt in a heavenly vision, a halo of light encircled us, and we were convinced in our own minds that God heard and approved our prayers and intercedings before Him." Elizabeth testified that their "hearts were comforted" and their faith "made … perfect" concerning the principle of plural marriage (Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "A Leaf from an Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent,* December 15, 1878, 105).

"Not all [Church members] had such experiences. Some Latter-day Saints rejected the principle of plural marriage and left the Church, while others declined to enter the practice but remained faithful. Nevertheless, for many women and men, initial revulsion and anguish was followed by struggle, resolution, and ultimately, light and peace. Sacred experiences enabled the Saints to move forward in faith" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org).

What can you learn about obedience to the Lord's commandments from the examples of Abraham and Sarah and the early Saints who obeyed the principle of plural marriage?

Doctrine and Covenants 132:37. "They have entered into their exaltation"

"Eternal life, or exaltation, is to inherit a place in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, where we will live in God's presence and continue as families" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 52). Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4 teaches that the "highest" degree in the celestial kingdom is obtained by those who "enter into … the new and everlasting covenant of marriage." Because Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob "abode in [the Lord's] law," or entered into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, and "did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation" (D&C 132:37).

While speaking about Doctrine and Covenants 132:37, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pointed out that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received exaltation with their wives: "What we say for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob we say also for Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, the wives who stood at their sides and who with them were true and faithful in all things. Men are not saved alone, and women do not gain an eternal fullness except in and through the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Salvation is a family affair" ("Mothers in Israel and Daughters of Zion," *New Era,* May 1978, 37).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:39–40, 45–48, looking for what the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith about the keys of the sealing power.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:39–40, 45. "The keys of this power"

The Lord taught that King David was justified in having additional wives and concubines when authorized to do so by the prophet Nathan "and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power" (D&C 132:39). The keys of the priesthood held by the Lord's prophet include the power to seal or bind on earth and in heaven all ordinances pertaining to salvation, that they may remain in force and have validity "in and after the resurrection" (D&C 132:7; see also D&C 132:46).

Because the Prophet Joseph Smith held the keys of the priesthood, the Lord "restore[d] all things" through him (D&C 132:40, 45), including the practice of plural marriage. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught: "All the ordinances and duties that ever have been required by the Priesthood, under the directions and commandments of the Almighty in any of the dispensations, shall all be had in the last dispensation, therefore all things had under the authority of the Priesthood at any former period, shall be had again, bringing to pass the restoration spoken of by the mouth of all the Holy Prophets" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 511).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:41–44, looking for the Lord's teachings about adultery.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:41–44, 48. "As ye have asked concerning adultery"

The text of Doctrine and Covenants 132:41 suggests that the Prophet Joseph Smith had a question or concern about adultery in connection with plural marriage. In response, the Lord explained that adultery is committed when a married man or woman has a sexual relationship outside the bonds of marriage (see D&C 132:41–43). The Lord also told the Prophet that if a spouse committed adultery and thereby broke a marriage vow or covenant, the Prophet would "have power, by the power of my Holy Priesthood" to seal the righteous spouse in marriage to someone else who "[had] not committed adultery but [had] been faithful" (D&C 132:44). Thus, an unfaithful spouse cannot prevent a righteous spouse from receiving the blessings of exaltation.

The Lord reassured the Prophet that all marriages, including plural marriages, performed according to His law and the sealing power of the priesthood would "be visited with blessings and not cursings, … and shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven" (D&C 132:48; see also D&C 132:45–47, 59–62).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:49–50, looking for the blessings the Lord promised the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:49–50. "I seal upon you your exaltation"

The Lord gave the Prophet Joseph Smith His assurance of exaltation or eternal life as a result of Joseph's "sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you" (see D&C 132:49–50). Like Abraham, the Prophet Joseph Smith proved faithful no matter the difficulty or sacrifices required to serve and obey the Lord.

For further explanation of what it means for a person to have exaltation sealed upon him or her, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 131:5 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:51–66

The Lord counsels Emma Smith and gives instructions regarding plural marriage

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:51–58, looking for the Lord's counsel and promises to Emma Smith.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:51. "A commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith"



Plural marriage was a difficult ordeal for both Joseph Smith and his wife Emma.

While the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132 contains doctrine and principles of general interest and worth to all Latter-day Saints, the more personal instructions to Emma and Joseph Smith were likely not originally intended for the entire Church. In 1877, a year after section 132 was added to the Doctrine and Covenants, **President Joseph F. Smith** (1838–1918) explained: "When the revelation was written, in 1843, it was for a special purpose, by the request of the Patriarch Hyrum Smith, and was not then designed to go forth to the church or to the world. It is most probable that had it been then written with a view to its going out as a doctrine of the church, it would have been presented in a somewhat different form. There are personalities [instructions to individuals] contained in a part of it which are not relevant to the principle itself, but rather to the circumstances which necessitated its being written at that time" ("Discourse," *Deseret News,* Sept. 11, 1878, 498).

Because Joseph and Emma Smith's personal circumstances are not fully known or understood, the meaning of some verses is not clear. For example, the Lord commanded Emma to "stay herself and partake not of that which [the Lord] commanded [Joseph] to offer unto her" (D&C 132:51). We do not know what the Lord had commanded Joseph to offer Emma. However, the revelation suggests that the Lord intended the "offer"—whatever it was—to serve as an Abrahamic test of faith for both Joseph and Emma: "For I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice" (D&C 132:51).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:52–56. "Abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph"

For a time, Emma Smith accepted the principle of plural marriage and gave her consent for Joseph to marry additional women (see "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org). However, by the summer of 1843, when the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132 was written, Emma struggled to accept these plural marriages. In the revelation the Lord instructed Emma to "receive all those [women] that have been given unto my servant Joseph" and to "cleave" unto her husband (D&C 132:52, 54). The Lord warned that if she did not obey His commandments, she would be "destroyed" (D&C 132:54)—meaning she would be cut off or separated from God (compare Acts 3:22–23; 1 Nephi 22:20; 3 Nephi 21:11). This warning is similar to the one the Lord gave Emma in a July 1830 revelation when He said, "Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come" (D&C 25:15). The Prophet Joseph Smith had received a similar warning when "an angel of God stood by him with a drawn sword, and told him that, unless he moved forward and established plural marriage, his Priesthood would be taken from him and he should be destroyed!" (Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow,* 69–70).

In contrast to the warnings the Lord gave Emma as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:52, 54, the Lord also promised that if she would accept this commandment and also "forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; … then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice" (D&C 132: 56).

After the Prophet dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, his brother Hyrum took it to Emma to read, believing he could "convince her of its truth" and help her accept the principle of plural marriage (William Clayton, in *History of the Church,* 5:xxxii). When he returned to the Prophet's office in the Red Brick Store, "Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger.

"Joseph quietly remarked, 'I told you you did not know Emma as well as I did'" (Clayton, in *History of the Church,* 5:xxxiii).

"Joseph and Emma loved and respected each other deeply," which made the Prophet's obedience to plural marriage all the more difficult for Emma. "She vacillated in her view of plural marriage, at some points supporting it and at other times denouncing it" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org). An account by Maria Jane Woodward, who worked in the Smith home, reflects both Emma's conflicted feelings over plural marriage and her efforts to believe and accept the practice. Maria recalled a conversation Emma had with her the morning after Maria overheard an emotional exchange between Emma and Joseph regarding plural marriage: "[Emma] told me to sit down on the bed by her and we both sat down on the bed that I was making. She looked very sad and cast down, and there she said to me, 'The principle of plural marriage is right, but I am like other women, I am naturally jealous hearted and can talk back to Joseph as long as any

wife can talk back to her husband, but what I want to say to you is this. You heard me finding fault with the principle. I want to say that that principle is right, it is from our Father in Heaven', and then she again spoke of her jealousy. Then she continued, 'What I said I have got to repent of. The principle is right but I am jealous hearted. Now never tell anybody that you heard me find fault with Joseph of that principle. The principle is right and if I or you or anyone else finds fault with that principle we have got to humble ourselves and repent of it" ("Statement of Sister Maria Jane Woodward of Huntington, Emery County, Utah, Maiden Name, Maria J. Johnston," enclosed with letter from George H. Brimhall to Joseph F. Smith, Apr. 21, 1902, 2–3, in Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah).

On or before September 28, 1843, Emma received her temple endowment, after which "she administered [temple ordinances] under Joseph's direction to many other women" (see Gracia N. Jones, "My Great-Great-Grandmother Emma Hale Smith," *Ensign,* Aug. 1992, 34, 37).

Shortly before the Prophet's martyrdom, in June 1844, Emma wrote the blessings she desired most from her Heavenly Father. Among her list of blessings, she wrote the following:

"I desire the Spirit of God to know and understand myself, that I might be able to overcome whatever of tradition or nature that would not tend to my exaltation in the eternal worlds. I desire a fruitful, active mind, that I may be able to comprehend the designs of God, when revealed through his servants without doubting. …

"I desire with all my heart to honor and respect my husband as my head, ever to live in his confidence and by acting in unison with him retain the place which God has given me by his side" ("Emma Hale Smith Blessing," 1844, typescript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah).



Emma Hale Smith, 1804–1879

Until her death in 1879, Emma continued to share her testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and the prophetic mission of her husband Joseph Smith (see Jones, "My Great-Great-Great-Grandmother," 36).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:52. "Those that have been given unto my servant Joseph"

The Lord instructed Emma Smith to "receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph" (D&C 132:52), meaning that she should be accepting of her

husband's plural marriages. Some of these marriages were for time and eternity, while others were for eternity only.

"During the era in which plural marriage was practiced, Latter-day Saints distinguished between sealings for time and eternity and sealings for eternity only. Sealings for time and eternity included commitments and relationships during this life, generally including the possibility of sexual relations. Eternity-only sealings indicated relationships in the next life alone.

"Evidence indicates that Joseph Smith participated in both types of sealings. The exact number of women to whom he was sealed in his lifetime is unknown because the evidence is fragmentary. Some of the women who were sealed to Joseph Smith later testified that their marriages were for time and eternity, while others indicated that their relationships were for eternity alone.

"Most of those sealed to Joseph Smith were between 20 and 40 years of age at the time of their sealing to him. The oldest, Fanny Young, was 56 years old. The youngest was Helen Mar Kimball, … who was sealed to Joseph several months before her 15th birthday. Marriage at such an age, inappropriate by today's standards, was legal in that era, and some women married in their mid-teens. Helen Mar Kimball spoke of her sealing to Joseph as being 'for eternity alone,' suggesting that the relationship did not involve sexual relations. …

"… Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were already married. Neither these women nor Joseph explained much about these sealings, though several women said they were for eternity alone. Other women left no records, making it unknown whether their sealings were for time and eternity or were for eternity alone.

"There are several possible explanations for this practice. These sealings may have provided a way to create an eternal bond or link between Joseph's family and other families within the Church. These ties extended both vertically, from parent to child, and horizontally, from one family to another. Today such eternal bonds are achieved through the temple marriages of individuals who are also sealed to their own birth families, in this way linking families together. …

"These sealings may also be explained by Joseph's reluctance to enter plural marriage because of the sorrow it would bring to his wife Emma. He may have believed that sealings to married women would comply with the Lord's command without requiring him to have normal marriage relationships. This could explain why, according to Lorenzo Snow, the angel reprimanded Joseph for having 'demurred' on plural marriage even after he had entered into the practice. After this rebuke, according to this interpretation, Joseph returned primarily to sealings with single women.

"Another possibility is that, in an era when life spans were shorter than they are today, faithful women felt an urgency to be sealed by priesthood authority. Several of these women were married either to non-Mormons or former Mormons, and more than one of the women later expressed unhappiness in their present marriages. Living in a time when divorce was difficult to obtain, these women may have believed a sealing to Joseph Smith would give them blessings they might not otherwise receive in the next life.

"… After Joseph's death, most of the women sealed to him moved to Utah with the Saints, remained faithful Church members, and defended both plural marriage and Joseph" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:58–66, looking for the some of the Lord's laws governing the practice of plural marriage.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:58–63. "If he have ten virgins given unto him by this law"

The word *virgin* can refer to any unmarried woman who is chaste. This definition corresponds with what **President John Taylor** (1808–1887) taught when he said that "none but the more pure, virtuous, honorable and upright" were to practice plural marriage ("Discourse," *Deseret News,* Apr. 26, 1882, 212). Though it is not clear why or how the word *virgin* is being used in Doctrine and Covenants 132:61–63, plural marriage as practiced by the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early Saints did not exclude widows or women who had previously been married. The passage seems to illustrate that plural marriages performed according to God's law and by His authority and direction were acceptable to Him.

It is important to remember that the Lord gives revelations "unto [His] servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language" (D&C 1:24). Doctrine and Covenants 132 contains traditional marriage language used during the Prophet Joseph Smith's time. For example, it was common in the Prophet's day to say that a bride was "given" in marriage. When the revelation states that wives are "given" to a man (D&C 132:61) or that they "belong" to him (D&C 132:62), this does not mean that women were to be considered as property or that they were to have little or no say regarding whom they married. "Women [in the Church] were free to choose their spouses, whether to enter into a polygamous or monogamous union, or whether to marry at all" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org). In the context of this revelation, wives "given" unto a man refer to marriages authorized of the Lord and sealed by His priesthood authority (see D&C 132:61; see also D&C 132:39).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:63. "To multiply and replenish the earth"

"Latter-day Saints do not understand all of God's purposes for instituting, through His prophets, the practice of plural marriage during the 19th century" ("Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah," topics.lds.org). However, in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that one of the purposes of plural marriage is "to multiply and replenish the earth" (D&C 132:63; see also Genesis 1:28). The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob explained that the Lord sometimes commands His people to practice plural marriage so that they can "raise up seed unto [Him]" (Jacob 2:30). To "raise up seed unto [the Lord]" means to "bring up … children in [the] light and truth" of the gospel (see D&C 93:40). Thus, the Lord has at times established the practice of plural marriage to provide His people with further opportunities to raise children in the gospel covenant. The practice of plural marriage in the Church in the 19th century "did

result in the birth of large numbers of children within faithful Latter-day Saint homes" ("Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah," topics.lds.org).

The practice of plural marriage "also shaped 19th-century Mormon society in other ways: marriage became available to virtually all who desired it; per-capita inequality of wealth was diminished as economically disadvantaged women married into more financially stable households; and ethnic intermarriages were increased, which helped to unite a diverse immigrant population" ("Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah," topics.lds.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:63. "For their exaltation in the eternal worlds"

Many of the early Church leaders and members did not distinguish between celestial marriage and plural marriage when discussing the requirements for exaltation. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, the Lord taught that "if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed," they will receive "exaltation and glory in all things," and "then shall they be gods" (D&C 132:19–20). Thus, "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2) is the eternal, or celestial, marriage of one man and one woman. The Lord extended the same promised blessings of "exaltation in the eternal worlds" to faithful Saints who lived the principle of plural marriage (D&C 132:63; see also D&C 132:55), but celestial marriage—not plural marriage—is required for exaltation.

In 1933, **President Heber J. Grant and his counselors in the First Presidency** explained that the term "celestial marriage" does not imply plural marriage: "Celestial marriage—that is, marriage for time and eternity—and polygamous or plural marriage are not synonymous terms. Monogamous marriages for time and eternity, solemnized in our temples in accordance with the word of the Lord and the laws of the Church, are Celestial marriages" (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1971], 5:329).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that monogamous marriage—marriage between one man and one woman—is the Lord's standard for celestial marriage: "Plural marriage is not essential to salvation or exaltation. Nephi and his people were denied the power to have more than one wife and yet they could gain every blessing in eternity that the Lord ever offered to any people. In our day, the Lord summarized by revelation the whole doctrine of exaltation and predicated it upon the marriage of one man to one woman. (D. & C. 132:1–28.) Thereafter he added the principles relative to plurality of wives with the express stipulation that any such marriages would be valid only if authorized by the President of the Church. (D. & C. 132:7, 29–66.)" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 578–79).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:64–66. "The law of Sarah"

The instructions recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132:64–66 apparently related to Joseph and Emma Smith's specific circumstances. The Lord refers to a man "who holds the keys of this power" and the man's wife (D&C 132:64; see also D&C 132:7 and the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 132:7 in this manual). The Lord explained that after the Prophet Joseph Smith had taught Emma "the law of my priesthood" regarding plural marriage, she had an obligation to "believe" and

support Joseph as he obeyed the Lord's commandment to marry additional women (D&C 132:64). In so doing, Emma would follow the example of Sarah, "who administered unto Abraham according to the law when [the Lord] commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife" (D&C 132:65; see also D&C 132:34).

Official Declaration 1: Additional Historical Background

When the Prophet Joseph Smith established plural marriage according to the Lord's commandment, relatively few Church members knew of the practice. "Plural marriage was introduced among the early Saints incrementally, and participants were asked to keep their actions confidential" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," topics.lds.org). After the Saints moved to the Salt Lake Valley and other areas in the western United States, more Church members openly practiced plural marriage, and obedience to the principle became widespread. During a Church conference held in Salt Lake City on August 29, 1852, Elder Orson Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, acting under the direction of President Brigham Young, taught about the principle of plural marriage and stated that "the Latter-day Saints have embraced the doctrine of [plural marriage] as part of their religious faith" (in "Minutes of a Special Conference of Elders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Assembled in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, August 28, 1852," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star,* Supplement, 1853, 18). In the years that followed, religious and political leaders in the United States opposed the practice, calling it immoral and uncivilized. However, Church members defended plural marriage, testifying that God had commanded it through revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

"Beginning in 1862, the [United States] government passed a series of laws designed to force Latter-day Saints to relinquish [cease] plural marriage. …

"This government opposition strengthened the Saints' resolve to resist what they deemed to be unjust laws. Polygamous men went into hiding, sometimes for years at a time, moving from house to house and staying with friends and relatives. …

"This antipolygamy campaign created great disruption in Mormon communities. The departure of husbands left wives and children to tend farms and businesses, causing incomes to drop and economic recession to set in. The campaign also strained families. New plural wives had to live apart from their husbands, their confidential marriages known only to a few. Pregnant women often chose to go into hiding, at times in remote locales, rather than risk being subpoenaed to testify in court against their husbands. Children lived in fear that their families would be broken up or that they would be forced to testify against their parents. Some children went into hiding and lived under assumed names" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," topics.lds.org).

The laws that were created to deter plural marriage denied men who practiced plural marriage the right to vote and hold political office; repealed, or canceled, the right of women to vote in the Utah Territory; dissolved the Church as a legal institution; and authorized the government to seize all Church properties valued at $50,000 or more, including the temples. The Church challenged this law as being unconstitutional, but it was eventually upheld by the United States Supreme Court.

(See *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* [1992], "History of the Church: c. 1878–1898, Late Pioneer Utah Period," 2:625–27, eom.byu.edu.)



Antipolygamy actions taken by the United States federal government threatened the loss of the Church's temples, including the Manti Utah Temple, which was dedicated in 1888.

In August 1890, Church leaders learned that the United States government intended to seize the Logan, Manti, and St. George Temples (see Abraham H. Cannon, *Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889–1895,* ed. Edward Leo Lyman [2010], 124; see also *In the Whirlpool: The Pre-Manifesto Letters of President Wilford Woodruff to the William Atkin Family, 1885–1890,* ed. Reid L. Neilson [2011], 91). This led President Wilford Woodruff to counsel with other Church leaders and earnestly seek the Lord's will regarding the practice of plural marriage. On September 25, 1890, he recorded the following in his journal: "I have arrived at a point in the history of my life as the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where I am under the necessity of acting for the temporal salvation of the church. The United States government has taken a stand and passed laws to destroy the Latter-day Saints on the subject of polygamy, or patriarchal order of marriage; and after praying to the Lord and feeling inspired, I have issued the following proclamation which is sustained by my counselors and the twelve apostles" (in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* [1966], 3:192). President Woodruff's proclamation, recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants as Official Declaration 1, "was released to the public on September 25, and became known as the Manifesto" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," topics.lds.org). It "was accepted by the Church as authoritative and binding on October 6, 1890" (Official Declaration 1, heading).

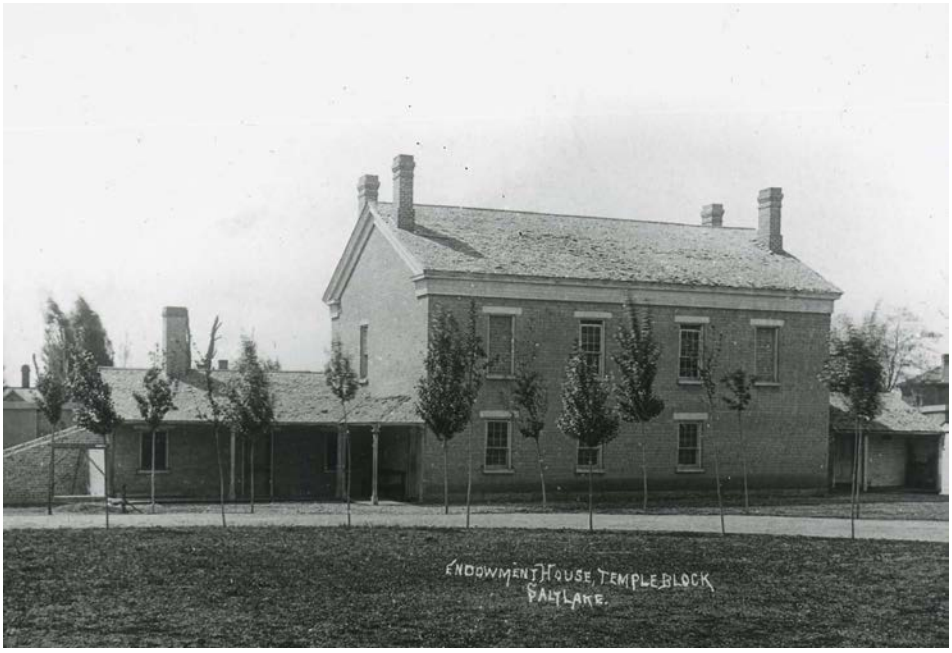
Official Declaration 1

President Wilford Woodruff issues the Manifesto, which leads to the end of the practice of plural marriage in the Church

Read the first five paragraphs of Official Declaration 1, which is President Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto, looking for why President Woodruff issued the Manifesto and what he instructed Church members to do.

Official Declaration 1, paragraphs 1–3. "We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice"

In the years leading up to the issuing of the Manifesto, Church leaders prayerfully made changes in the practice of plural marriage in hopes of reducing hostilities against the Latter-day Saints. They counseled men in plural marriages "to live openly with only one of their wives, and advocated that plural marriage not be taught publicly. In 1889, Church authorities prohibited the performance of new plural marriages in Utah" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," topics.lds.org). President Wilford Woodruff also had the Endowment House, in Salt Lake City, taken down after hearing of a plural marriage performed there without his knowledge (Official Declaration 1, paragraph 3). For over 30 years, the Endowment House had served as a temporary temple where Church members performed temple ordinances, including marriage sealings. In June 1890 the First Presidency instructed Church leaders not to perform any new plural marriages in the United States, while still allowing for it on a limited basis in Latter-day Saint colonies in Mexico and Canada (see Thomas G. Alexander, "The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto of 1890," in *Banner of the Gospel: Wilford Woodruff,* ed. Alexander L. Baugh and Susan Easton Black [2007], 301). When President Woodruff declared that the Church no longer officially taught the principle of plural marriage, "nor [permitted] any person to enter into its practice," he was referring specifically to reports of new plural marriages contracted in the Utah Territory (Official Declaration 1, paragraph 2).



The Endowment House served as a "temporary temple" from 1855 until 1889. It was located on the northwest corner of Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah.

How did Church members react to the Manifesto?

For half a century, Church members had practiced plural marriage because they firmly believed God had commanded it. Many who had sacrificed so much to obey this commandment reacted to the Manifesto with astonishment and some uneasiness. Lorena Washburn Larsen recounted the wrestle she had after learning of the Manifesto and the confirmation she subsequently received:

"I had gone into that order of marriage … because I believed God had commanded his people to do so, and it had been such a sacrifice to enter it, and live it as I thought God wanted me to. And as I thought about it, it seemed impossible that the Lord would go back on a principle which had caused so much sacrifice, heartache, and trial. …

"My anguish was inexpressible, and a dense darkness took hold of my mind. … I fancied I could see myself and my children, and many other splendid women and their families turned adrift, and our only purpose in entering [plural marriage], had been to more fully serve the Lord. I sank down on our bedding and wished in my anguish that the earth would open and take me and my children in. The darkness seemed impenetrable.

"All at once I heard a voice and felt a most powerful presence. …

"There was a light whose brightness cannot be described which filled my soul, and I was so filled with joy and peace, and happiness that I felt that no matter whatever should come to me in all my future life, I could never feel sad again. If the people of the whole world had been gathered together trying with all their power to comfort me, they could not compare with the powerful unseen Presence which came to me on that occasion. …

"In the trying years which followed, often a glimmer of that same light came to me again" (*Autobiography of Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larsen* [1962], 105–6).

When the Manifesto was first announced, Elder Brigham H. Roberts, who was then serving as a member of the Quorum of the Seventy, was on a train heading to Salt Lake City along with several members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. During their journey Elder John W. Taylor of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came across a copy of the *Deseret News Weekly,* the headlines of which announced the Manifesto, and showed it to Elder Roberts. Elder Roberts later recalled:

"I read [the newspaper headlines] with astonishment. But no sooner had I read them, than like a flash of light all through my soul the spirit said—'That is all right,' so it passed. Then I began to reflect upon the matter. I thought of all the Saints had suffered to sustain that doctrine; I remembered my own exile [to England], my own imprisonment; I thought of that of others. I remembered what sacrifices my wives had made for it; what others had made for it. We had preached it, sustained its divinity from the pulpit, in the press, from the lecture platform. Our community had endured every kind of reproach from the world for the sake of it—and was this to be the end? I had learned to expect that God would sustain both that principle and his Saints who carried it out, and to lay it down like this was a kind of cowardly proceeding that the more I thought of it the less I liked it. … I was in quite an exasperated mood, and felt crushed and humiliated. …

"… This matter continued a trial to me through the year 1891, and plagued me much, but I said little about it; and by and by I began to remember the flash of light that came to me when first I heard of [the Manifesto], and at last my feelings became reconciled to it. Perhaps I had transgressed in pushing from me the first testimony I received in relation to it, and allowing my own prejudices, and my own short-sighted, human reason to stand against the inspiration of God and the testimony it bore that the Manifesto was alright. When this fact began to dawn on my mind I repented of my wrong and courted most earnestly the spirit of God for a testimony and gradually it came" (quoted in Ronald W. Walker, "B. H. Roberts and the Woodruff Manifesto," *BYU Studies Quarterly,* vol. 22, issue 3, article 10 [1982], 364–65, scholarsarchive.byu.edu).

While some Church members reacted with concern to the Manifesto, others were overjoyed and relieved by President Woodruff's announcement.

Did the practice of plural marriage end immediately with the Manifesto?

"Like the beginning of plural marriage in the Church, the end of the practice was a process rather than a single event. Revelation came 'line upon line, precept upon precept' [D&C 98:12]. …

"… Many practical matters had to be settled. The Manifesto was silent on what existing plural families should do. On their own initiative, some couples separated or divorced as a result of the Manifesto; other husbands stopped [living] with all but one of their wives but continued to provide financial and emotional support to all dependents. In closed-door meetings with local leaders, the First Presidency condemned men who left their wives by using the Manifesto as an excuse. 'I did not, could not and would not promise that you would desert your wives and

children,' President Woodruff told the men. 'This you cannot do in honor' [in Abraham H. Cannon diary, Oct. 7, 1890, Nov. 12, 1891].

"Believing that the covenants they made with God and their spouses had to be honored above all else, many husbands, including Church leaders, continued to [live] with their plural wives and fathered children with them well into the 20th century. …

"… Under exceptional circumstances, a smaller number of new plural marriages were performed in the United States between 1890 and 1904, though whether the marriages were authorized to have been performed within the states is unclear.

"The precise number of new plural marriages performed during these years, inside and outside the United States, is unknown. …

"… Overall, the record shows that plural marriage was a declining practice and that Church leaders were acting in good conscience to abide by the terms of the Manifesto as they understood them" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," topics.lds.org).

While speaking about the complex choices the Saints had to make regarding the practice of polygamy and its discontinuance, **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated:

"It is … clear that during the federal prosecutions of the 1880s, numerous Church leaders and faithful members were pursued, arrested, prosecuted, and jailed for violations of various laws forbidding polygamy or cohabitation. Some wives were even sent to prison for refusing to testify against their husbands, my grandfather's oldest sister being one of them.

"It is also clear that polygamy did not end suddenly with the 1890 Manifesto. Polygamous relationships sealed before that revelation was announced continued for a generation. The performance of polygamous marriages also continued for a time outside the United States, where the application of the Manifesto was uncertain for a season. It appears that polygamous marriages also continued for about a decade in some other areas among leaders and members who took license from the ambiguities and pressures created by this high-level collision between resented laws and revered doctrines" ("Gospel Teachings about Lying," *Clark Memorandum* [Brigham Young University J. Reuben Clark Law School periodical], Spring 1994, 16).

In April 1904, **President Joseph F. Smith** issued a statement, known as the Second Manifesto, declaring that all new plural marriages "are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1904, 75).

"Church members who rejected the Second Manifesto and continued to publicly advocate plural marriage or undertake new plural marriages were summoned to Church disciplinary councils. Some who were excommunicated coalesced into [became members of] independent movements and are sometimes called fundamentalists. These groups are not affiliated with or supported by The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since the administration of Joseph F. Smith, Church Presidents have repeatedly emphasized that the Church and its members are no longer authorized to enter into plural marriage and have underscored the sincerity of their words by urging local leaders to bring noncompliant members before Church disciplinary councils" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," topics.lds.org).

While speaking about the Church's position on polygamy, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) declared:

"There is no such thing as a 'Mormon Fundamentalist.' It is a contradiction to use the two words together.

"More than a century ago God clearly revealed unto His prophet Wilford Woodruff that the practice of plural marriage should be discontinued, which means that it is now against the law of God. Even in countries where civil or religious law allows polygamy, the Church teaches that marriage must be monogamous and does not accept into its membership those practicing plural marriage" ("What Are People Asking about Us?" *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 71–72).

Read Official Declaration 1, paragraph 6—the statement by President Lorenzo Snow, who was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when the Manifesto was issued. Look for what President Snow said about why President Woodruff was "fully authorized" to issue the Manifesto.

Official Declaration 1, paragraph 6. "We consider [President Woodruff] fully authorized by virtue of his position to issue the Manifesto"

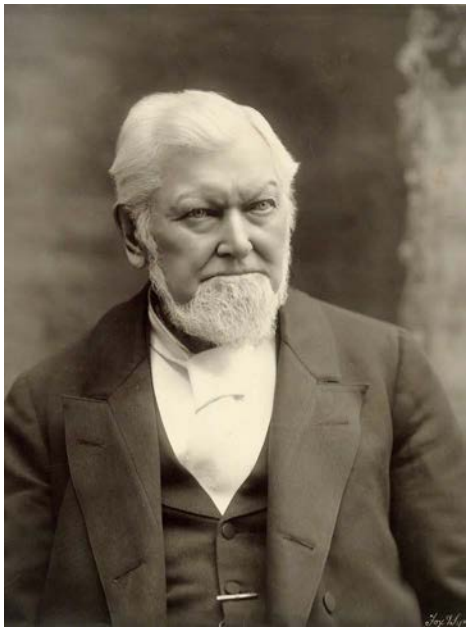
Plural marriage can only be authorized through the priesthood keys held by the President of the Church (see D&C 132:39, 45–48). **President Joseph F. Smith** taught: "[The] President is the mouthpiece of God, the revelator, the translator, the seer, and the Prophet of God to the whole Church. It is he who holds the keys of this Holy Priesthood—the keys which unlock the doors of the Temples of God and of the ordinances of His house for the salvation of the living and the redemption of the dead" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 141). As President of the Church, Wilford Woodruff was "fully authorized" to receive the Lord's will for the Church to end the practice of plural marriage (Official Declaration 1, paragraph 6).

For additional explanation regarding how the practice of plural marriage was governed by the priesthood keys held by the President of the Church, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 132:39–40, 45 in this chapter.

Read "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto" (in Official Declaration 1), looking for principles President Woodruff taught Church members.

Official Declaration 1, "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto," paragraph 1. "The Lord will never permit … [the] President of this Church to lead you astray"

Some Church members struggled to accept the Manifesto as the Lord's will. In a general conference address given less than two weeks after issuing the Manifesto, **President Wilford Woodruff** testified to Church members: "The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles [revelations] of God and from their duty" (Official Declaration 1, "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto," paragraph 1).



President Wilford Woodruff, 1807–1898

President Woodruff's teachings should not be misunderstood to mean that prophets are perfect or infallible. For example, on several occasions the Lord acknowledged the Prophet Joseph Smith's weaknesses and imperfections (see D&C 3:1–10; 64:3–7; 124:1), but He also affirmed that the Prophet had successfully fulfilled his divinely appointed mission in spite of these imperfections (see D&C 136:37–39; see also D&C 135:3–7).

While speaking about the necessity of continuing revelation, **President James E. Faust** (1920–2007) of the First Presidency taught:

"We have been promised that the President of the Church will receive guidance for all of us as the revelator for the Church. Our safety lies in paying heed to that which he says and following his counsel. …

"How can we be so sure that, as promised, the prophets, seers, and revelators will never lead this people astray? (See Joseph Fielding Smith, ["Eternal Keys and the Right to Preside,"] *Ensign,* July 1972, p. 88.) One answer is contained in the grand principle found in the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: 'And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same' [D&C 107:27]. This requirement of unanimity provides a check on bias and personal idiosyncrasies. It ensures that God rules through the Spirit, not man through majority or compromise. It ensures that the best wisdom and experience is focused on an issue before the deep, unassailable impressions of revealed direction are received. It guards against the foibles of man" ("Continuous Revelation," *Ensign,* Nov. 1989, 10).

Church members have the privilege and responsibility of knowing for themselves that the Lord inspires and directs those called to lead the Church. After the

Manifesto had been presented in general conference for the sustaining vote of Church members, **President George Q. Cannon** (1827–1901) of the First Presidency addressed the Saints. During his remarks he extended the following invitation to those with questions concerning the Manifesto: "Go unto God yourselves, if you are tried over this and cannot see its purpose; go to your secret chambers and ask God and plead with Him, in the name of Jesus, to give you a testimony as He has given it to us, and I promise that you will not come away empty, nor dissatisfied; you will have a testimony, and light will be poured out upon you, and you will see things that perhaps you cannot see and understand at the present time" (in *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others,* comp. Brian H. Stuy [1988], 2:133).

Official Declaration 1, "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto," paragraphs 4–7. "The God of heaven commanded me to do what I did"

A year after issuing the Manifesto, President Wilford W. Woodruff spoke to Church members gathered at a stake conference in Logan, Utah. He said, "The Lord has told me by revelation that there are many members of the Church throughout Zion who are sorely tried in their hearts because of [the Manifesto]" ("Remarks Made by President Wilford Woodruff," *Deseret Evening News,* Nov. 7, 1891, 4). He invited the Saints to reflect on the same question he had pondered, discussed with other Church leaders, and then taken to the Lord in fervent prayer: "Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage, with the laws of this nation against it … or, after doing and suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the practice and submit to the law, and through doing so leave the Prophets, Apostles and fathers at home, so that they can instruct the people and attend to the duties of the Church, and also leave the Temples in the hands of the Saints, so that they can attend to the ordinances of the Gospel, both for the living and the dead?" (Official Declaration 1, "Excerpts from Three Addresses," paragraph 5). He then testified: "The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for … any of the men in this temple at Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners." Yet, he declared his willingness to continue the practice of plural marriage, despite the consequences, "had not the God of heaven commanded [him] to do what [he] did" (Official Declaration 1, "Excerpts from Three Addresses," paragraphs 6–7).

One truth that we can learn from President Woodruff's teachings is that the Lord gives continuing revelation to His prophets according to the needs and circumstances of His Church and people. **President John Taylor** taught:

"From the time that Adam first received a communication from God, to the time that John, on the Isle of Patmos, received his communication, or Joseph Smith had the heavens opened to him, it always required new revelations, adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which the churches or individuals were placed.

"Adam's revelation did not instruct Noah to build his ark; nor did Noah's revelation tell Lot to forsake Sodom; nor did either of these speak of the departure of the

children of Israel from Egypt. These all had revelations for themselves, and so had Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, Peter, Paul, John, and Joseph. And so must we" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* [2001], 158).

Thus, new and changing circumstances require additional revelation from God. While external events, such as intense opposition against plural marriage, can create the need for new revelation, ultimately it is the Lord who directs the Church and its members through revelation.

Ponder how the principles taught by President Wilford Woodruff in Official Declaration 1 can help you have faith to follow the counsel and leadership of the Lord's prophets.

CHAPTER 53

Doctrine and Covenants 133

Introduction and Timeline

Following a two-day conference held November 1–2, 1831, in Hiram, Ohio, which focused on the publication of the Book of Commandments, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133. This revelation came in answer to questions "the Elders desired to know relative to preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants of the earth, and concerning the gathering [of Israel]" (D&C 133, section heading). In the revelation, the Lord commanded Church members and all people to "go ye out of Babylon" and to "go ye forth unto the land of Zion" (D&C 133:7, 9) in preparation for His Second Coming. He also revealed some of the events that would attend His Second Coming and millennial reign, and He taught that His restored gospel would prepare the earth for His Second Coming.

November 1–2, 1831

At a conference of the Church held in Hiram, Ohio, Joseph Smith and a group of elders decided to publish the revelations received to that point and call it the Book of Commandments.

November 1, 1831

Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 1, which the Lord identified as the "preface" to the Book of Commandments.

Early November 1831

Joseph Smith received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 67, in which the Lord testified of the truthfulness of the Book of Commandments.

November 3, 1831

Doctrine and Covenants 133 was received.

The Lord taught Church members, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). Consider how this might relate to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Why do you think those who are prepared for the Savior's Second Coming "shall not fear"? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 133, look for principles that can help you prepare for the Savior's Second Coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 133: Additional Historical Background

On November 1–2, 1831, a conference of the Church was held in Hiram, Ohio. The Prophet Joseph Smith had received many revelations from the Lord before that time, and the conference focused on the publication of these revelations (see the "Additional Historical Background" for Doctrine and Covenants 1 in this manual). It appears that the Prophet dictated the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133 on November 3, 1831, the day after the conference concluded. A later history of Joseph Smith described the context for receiving this revelation: "At this time there were many things which the elders desired to know relative to preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth, and concerning the gathering: and, in order to walk by the true light, and be instructed from on high, … I enquired of the Lord and received the following Revelation, which from its importance, and for distinction has Since been added to the Book of Doctrine and

Covenants, and called the Appendix" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, page 166, josephsmithpapers.org).

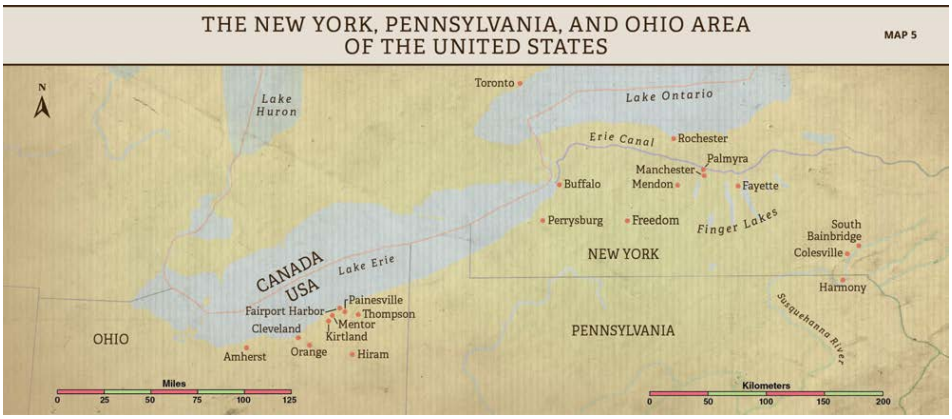
Because this revelation was originally designated as an appendix to the Doctrine and Covenants, it is out of chronological order with the other sections. This revelation and the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 1, which "constitutes the Lord's preface to the doctrines, covenants, and commandments given in this dispensation" (D&C 1, section heading), form bookends for the revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants. Early editions of the Doctrine and Covenants have the revelations to Joseph Smith grouped between the designated preface (D&C 1) and appendix (D&C 133).

Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how Doctrine and Covenants 133 functions as an appendix to the revelations the Prophet Joseph Smith had received:

"The 'Appendix,' [Doctrine and Covenants 133] supplements the introduction [Doctrine and Covenants 1]. The two sections together encompass the contents of the book in a condensed form. …

"An appendix is something which the writer thinks should be added to amplify that which is in the book, to emphasize it, to make it stronger or to explain the contents a little more completely. The Appendix, divinely given, Section 133, serves this purpose" (*The Message of the Doctrine and Covenants,* ed. G. Homer Durham [1969], 17).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) also spoke about Doctrine and Covenants 133 and its relationship to Doctrine and Covenants 1: "The tenor of this section is very similar to that of [Doctrine and Covenants 1], in fact, is largely a continuation of the same theme" (*Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 1:263).



Doctrine and Covenants 133:1–16

The Lord commands His people to prepare for His Second Coming

Read Doctrine and Covenants 133:1–16, looking for what the Lord instructed Church members to do to prepare themselves and others for His Second Coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:1–2. "The Lord … shall suddenly come to his temple"

Speaking of latter-day events, the Old Testament prophet Malachi prophesied, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple" (Malachi 3:1). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133, the Savior reaffirmed this prophecy (see D&C 133:2). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that "his temple" in this prophecy could refer to a number of temples: "This sudden latter-day appearance in the temple does not have reference to his appearance at the great and dreadful day, for that coming will be when he sets his foot upon the Mount of Olivet in the midst of the final great war. The temple appearance was fulfilled, in part at least, by his return to the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836; and it may well be that he will come again, suddenly, to others of his temples, more particularly that which will be erected in Jackson County, Missouri" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 693–94; see also D&C 84:1–5; 97:15–16; 110:1–4).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:2–3. "He shall make bare his holy arm"

When the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133 speaks of the Lord "com[ing] down upon the world with a curse to judgment" (D&C 133:2), it is referring to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. At His Second Coming the Savior will pour out His judgments and justice not only "upon all the nations that forget God" but also "upon all the ungodly among [the Saints]" (D&C 133:2).

Using imagery from the writings of the prophet Isaiah, the Lord stated that He would "make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations" (D&C 133:3; see also Isaiah 52:10). In scripture the arm can be a symbol of strength and power. To "make bare his holy arm" is to reveal His strength and power. While this prophecy may refer to the power and glory that will be manifested at Jesus Christ's Second Coming, it may also refer to the Lord's great latter-day work of gathering Israel in preparation for His Second Coming. Referring to Isaiah's prophecy recorded in Isaiah 52:10, the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi taught that in the latter days "the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel" (1 Nephi 22:11; see 1 Nephi 22:8–11). Through the Restoration of the gospel, the Lord will bring His people "again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel" (1 Nephi 22:12). Thus, through the Restoration and preaching of the gospel, "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of their God" (D&C 133:3).



The John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, where a conference of elders met in November 1831 and where the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133 was received

Doctrine and Covenants 133:4. "Sanctify yourselves; gather ye together … upon the land of Zion"

The Lord commanded Church members to prepare for His Second Coming: "Prepare ye, prepare ye, O my people; sanctify yourselves; gather ye together, O ye people of my church, upon the land of Zion" (D&C 133:4). To become sanctified is to become "free from sin, pure, clean, and holy through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (Moses 6:59–60)" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Sanctification," scriptures.lds.org; see also D&C 20:30–31). Sanctification is a lifelong process that requires faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. The scriptures teach that Zion can be built up only among those who are striving to become sanctified and "pure in heart" (D&C 97:21).

Speaking of our duty to help gather scattered Israel, **President Russell M. Nelson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"The choice to come unto Christ is not a matter of physical location; it is a matter of individual commitment. People can be 'brought to the knowledge of the Lord' [3 Nephi 20:13] without leaving their homelands. True, in the early days of the Church, conversion often meant emigration as well. But now the gathering takes place in each nation. The Lord has decreed the establishment of Zion [see D&C 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6] in each realm where He has given His Saints their birth and nationality. Scripture foretells that the people 'shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise' [2 Nephi 9:2]. 'Every nation is the gathering place for its own people' [Bruce R. McConkie, in Conference Report, Mexico City Mexico Area Conference 1972, 45]. The place of gathering for Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; the place of gathering for Nigerian Saints is in Nigeria; the place of gathering for Korean Saints is in Korea; and so forth. Zion

is 'the pure in heart' [D&C 97:21]. Zion is wherever righteous Saints are. Publications, communications, and congregations are now such that nearly all members have access to the doctrines, keys, ordinances, and blessings of the gospel, regardless of their location.

"Spiritual security will always depend upon *how* one lives, not *where* one lives. Saints in every land have equal claim upon the blessings of the Lord" ("The Gathering of Scattered Israel," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2006, 81).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:5–14. "Go ye out from Babylon"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133, the Lord alluded to the Old Testament account of the ancient Jews leaving Babylonian captivity when He instructed Church members to "go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon" (D&C 133:14; see also D&C 1:16). In Doctrine and Covenants 133, Babylon symbolizes the wickedness of the world. The Lord also instructed "the elders of [His] Church" to raise a similar voice of warning "unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; … unto foreign lands" (D&C 133:8). He commanded these elders to tell all people, "Gather ye out from among the nations" and "go ye forth unto the land of Zion" (D&C 133:7, 9). Speaking of what it means in our day to leave Babylon and gather to Zion, **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Zion is both a place and a people. Zion was the name given to the ancient city of Enoch in the days before the Flood. … Later, Jerusalem and its temple were called Mount Zion, and the scriptures prophesy of a future New Jerusalem where Christ shall reign as 'King of Zion,' when 'for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest' (Moses 7:53, 64). …

"The antithesis and antagonist of Zion is Babylon. The city of Babylon was originally Babel, of Tower of Babel fame, and later became the capital of the Babylonian empire. Its principal edifice was the temple of Bel, or Baal, the idol referred to by Old Testament prophets as 'The Shame,' given the sexual perversions that were associated with its worship. (See Bible Dictionary, 'Assyria and Babylonia,' 615–16; 'Baal,' 617–18; 'Babylon, or Babel,' 618.) Its worldliness, its worship of evil, and the captivity of Judah there following the conquest of 587 B.C. all combine to make Babylon the symbol of decadent societies and spiritual bondage.

"It is with this backdrop that the Lord said to the members of His Church, 'Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other' (D&C 133:7). He called for the elders of His Church to be sent forth across the world to accomplish this gathering, commencing an effort that continues in full vigor today. …

"And so today the Lord's people are gathering 'out from among the nations' as they gather into the congregations and stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that are scattered throughout the nations" ("Come to Zion," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2008, 37).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:5. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"

For more information regarding the meaning of the phrase "be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 133:5), see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 38:42 in this manual.



"Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 133:5).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:6. "Call your solemn assemblies"

For an explanation of solemn assemblies, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 88:70–76 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:8–9. "Send forth the elders of my church"

Just as the Lord instructed His ancient Apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19), He also commanded Church leaders in our dispensation to send missionaries to carry the gospel message "unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; … unto foreign lands" (D&C 133:8). In New Testament times the gospel of Jesus Christ was first taught to the Jews, and then it was taken to the Gentiles (see Acts 10; 13:45–46; Romans 1:16). In our dispensation the Lord commanded Church members to "call upon all nations, first upon the Gentiles, and then upon the Jews" (D&C 133:8; see also 1 Nephi 13:42). "As used in the scriptures, *Gentiles* has several meanings. Sometimes it designates people of non-Israelite lineage, sometimes people of non-Jewish lineage, and sometimes nations that are without the gospel, even though there may be some Israelite blood among the people" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Gentiles," scriptures.lds.org). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133, *Gentiles* refers to nations that are without the gospel.

By preaching the gospel to both Gentiles and Jews, Church members help prepare the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. **Elder Neil L. Andersen** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:

"The priesthood of God has been restored to the earth, and the Lord has set His hand to prepare the world for His glorious return. These are days of great opportunity and important responsibilities. These are your days. …

"Your mission will be a sacred opportunity to bring others to Christ and help prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior. …

"… The world is being prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior in large measure because of the Lord's work through His missionaries" ("Preparing the World for the Second Coming," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2011, 49–51).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:10–11. "Go forth to meet the Bridegroom"

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133, the Lord used language and imagery from the parable of the ten virgins (see Matthew 25:1–13) as He instructed His servants to warn others about His Second Coming (see D&C 133:10). According to Jewish wedding custom in Jesus Christ's day, the bridegroom, accompanied by close family and friends, went at night to the bride's home for the marriage ceremony. Afterward, the wedding party proceeded to the groom's home for a feast. Other guests joined them along the way. Those joining the wedding procession were expected to carry their own light, such as a torch or lamp.



"Go forth to meet the Bridegroom" (D&C 133:10).

In the parable of the ten virgins, ten women waited for the bridegroom and his party to pass so that they could accompany the procession to the marriage feast. But because "the bridegroom tarried," or was delayed, "they all slumbered and slept" (Matthew 25:5). They awoke "at midnight [when] there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matthew 25:6). However, only five of the women were prepared with enough oil for their lamps so that they could join the wedding procession and participate in the marriage feast. The other five had to go buy more oil and were shut out of the feast (see Matthew 25:7–12).

Commenting on the meaning of the parable of the ten virgins, **Elder James E. Talmage** (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "The Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus; the marriage feast symbolizes His coming in glory, to receive unto Himself the Church on earth as His bride" (*Jesus the Christ* [1916], 578). Since no one knows "the day nor the hour" of the Savior's coming, the warning to all people is to "awake and arise" from their spiritual slumber and to be vigilant in preparing and watching for His return (see D&C 133:10–11).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:14–15. "Let him not look back"

Just as Zion is both a place and a spiritual condition (see Moses 7:18–21), the same is true of Babylon. Though there was an ancient city known as Babylon, in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133 the Lord described the condition of wickedness as "spiritual Babylon" (D&C 133:14). The Lord warned those fleeing "spiritual Babylon" and gathering to Zion to "not look back lest sudden destruction shall come upon [them]" (D&C 133:15). This instruction alluded to the Old Testament account of Lot and his family fleeing the wicked city of Sodom. Though warned not to look back, Lot's wife did, and she turned into a pillar of salt (see Genesis 19:17–26). The description of her turning to salt may suggest that not only did she look back, but she also remained where it was not safe and was destroyed with the city and its people (see Luke 17:30–33). **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what we can learn from the account of Lot's wife:

"Just what did Lot's wife do that was so wrong? As a student of history, I have thought about that and offer a partial answer. Apparently, what was wrong with Lot's wife was that she wasn't just *looking* back; in her heart she wanted to *go* back. It would appear that even before she was past the city limits, she was already missing what Sodom and Gomorrah had offered her. …

"It is possible that Lot's wife looked back with resentment toward the Lord for what He was asking her to leave behind. … So it isn't just that she looked back; she looked back *longingly.* In short, her attachment to the past outweighed her confidence in the future. That, apparently, was at least part of her sin" ("The Best Is Yet to Be," *Ensign,* Jan. 2010, 24).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:17–35

The Savior describes some events that will attend His Second Coming and millennial reign

Read Doctrine and Covenants 133:17–35, looking for some of the significant events that will occur before, during, and after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:16–17. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord"

The phrase "prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight" in Doctrine and Covenants 133:17 comes from the writings of the prophet Isaiah, who said, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3). Isaiah's words were also used to describe the ministry of John the Baptist: "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Luke 3:4; see also John 1:23). John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord and made His paths straight by preaching the gospel of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. In this way he prepared people for the ministry and teachings of the Savior.

The restored gospel is also a messenger sent to prepare the way for the Savior's Second Coming. In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith on March 7, 1831, the Lord taught, "I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, … and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me" (D&C 45:9). Church members can "prepare … the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight" (D&C 133:17) by repenting, obeying His commandments, seeking to do His will, and sharing the gospel with others so they can repent and receive the covenants and saving ordinances of the gospel (see D&C 133:16). In this way we help prepare ourselves and others for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

For an explanation of the angel referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 133:17, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 133:36–39 in this chapter.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:18–21. "The Lamb shall stand upon Mount Zion. … He shall stand upon the mount of Olivet"

The scriptures refer to several appearances Jesus Christ will make before He appears to all people at His Second Coming. The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133 mentions two "mounts" upon which the Savior will appear when He comes again. The first is "Mount Zion" (D&C 133:18), which refers to the city of New Jerusalem that will be built in Jackson County, Missouri (see D&C 84:2). The second is "the mount of Olivet" (D&C 133:20), or "the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zechariah 14:4; see Zechariah 14:2–5), where the Savior will come to deliver the Jewish people from their enemies (see D&C 45:48–53).

As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133, the Lord also reaffirmed the prophecy of Isaiah that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3) when He said, "And he shall utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people" (D&C 133:21). Referring to this prophecy, **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught, "These two cities, one in the land of Zion and one in Palestine, are to become capitals for the kingdom of God during the millennium" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1956], 3:71).

In addition to "stand[ing] upon Mount Zion" and "upon the mount of Olivet," (D&C 133:18, 20), the Savior will also "stand … upon the mighty ocean, even the great deep, and upon the islands of the sea" (D&C 133:20). Speaking of the many appearances the Savior will make at His Second Coming, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught:

"The second coming of the Son of Man consists not of one but of many appearances. Our blessed Lord will come—attended by all the hosts of heaven, and in all the glory of his Father's kingdom—not to one but to many places. He will stand on one continent after another, speak to one great assemblage after another, and work his will among succeeding groups of mortals. …

"… His feet will stand on Olivet on the east of Jerusalem, and he will come with the 144,000 high priests to Mount Zion in America. And where else? Upon the oceans and the islands and the continents, in the land of Zion and elsewhere. The clear meaning is that there will be many appearances, in many places, to many people" (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [1982], 575, 578).



A view of Jerusalem from the Orson Hyde Park, on the Mount of Olives

Doctrine and Covenants 133:18. "A hundred and forty-four thousand"

For an explanation regarding the "hundred and forty-four thousand" mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 133:18, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 77:11 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:22–25. "The Lord, even the Savior, shall stand in the midst of his people"

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be accompanied by great upheaval and transformations of the earth (see D&C 133:22–24, 41, 44). This will likely be part of the earth's renewal when it receives its "paradisiacal glory" in preparation for the Savior's millennial reign (see Articles of Faith 1:10). The revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133 states that during this period "the Lord … shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh" (D&C 133:25).

Speaking of the Lord's millennial reign, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) taught: "That Jesus will be a resident on the earth a thousand [years] with the Saints is not the case, but will reign over the Saints and come down and instruct, as he did the five hundred brethren [see 1 Corinthians 15:6], and those of the first resurrection will also reign with him over the Saints" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 258).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:26–32. "They who are in the north countries"

The phrase "they who are in the north countries" (D&C 133:26) has reference to the ten lost tribes of Israel. Anciently, these "ten tribes … made up the northern kingdom of Israel and were carried away captive into Assyria in 721 B.C. At that time, they went to the 'north countries' and became lost to the knowledge of others" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Israel," scriptures.lds.org). The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi explained: "There are many who are … lost from the knowledge of

those who are at Jerusalem. Yea, the more part of all the tribes [of Israel] have been led away; and they are scattered to and fro upon the isles of the sea; and whither they are none of us knoweth, save that we know that they have been led away" (1 Nephi 22:4). Thus, the ten lost tribes of Israel have been scattered throughout the earth.

On April 3, 1836, the prophet Moses appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple and "committed unto [them] the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north" (D&C 110:11). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** cited this passage and suggested how the ten lost tribes of Israel will be gathered and led "from the land of the north":

"Two things are involved in this commission. First, Israel—all Israel, the Ten Tribes included—is to be gathered 'from the four parts of the earth,' out of every nation and from among every people. They are to be gathered into the true church and fold of the God of Israel. This gathering is primarily spiritual, but it is also temporal in that the gathered sheep are assembled into the stakes of Zion where the living waters flow. But next, this commission directs the one who holds the keys of the gathering, meaning the President of the Church, to lead the Ten Tribes from the land of the north to their destined … homeland. They will be led to their promised inheritances after they join the Church, after they return unto the Lord, after they believe in Christ and accept his gospel, after they receive, individually and collectively, the Abrahamic covenant again. This part of the gathering of Israel is Millennial, for that is the assigned period in which the Ten Tribes are to come forth; that is the day in which the kingdom will be restored to Israel in the political as well as the ecclesiastical sense. …

"… After the Lord returns, a highway shall be cast up—Isaiah calls it the way of holiness where none of the unclean can pass, meaning that it is the strait and narrow path leading to eternal life—and upon this highway the Ten Tribes shall return. They shall once again believe the gospel and receive the blessings of baptism, even as these were theirs in the day when the Risen Lord ministered among them [see 3 Nephi 16:1–3]. These blessings and the blessings of the temple will be administered to them by the hands of Ephraim [the servants of the Lord who are descendants of Ephraim]. And then, at the appointed time and at the direction of the President of the Church, who holds the keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the Ten Tribes from the land of the north, at least representative and appointed portions of the Kingdom of Israel shall go from the lands north of Palestine back to their ancient inheritance, to the very soil promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as an everlasting inheritance" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 529–30, 642).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:30–34. "By the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim"

One of Jacob's, or Israel's, twelve sons was named Joseph, the same Joseph who was sold by his brothers as a slave into Egypt. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Although Ephraim was the younger son, he received the birthright blessing from Jacob in place of his older brother Manasseh (see Genesis 46:20; 48:13–20). "In the last days it has been the tribe of Ephraim's privilege first to bear

the message of the Restoration of the gospel to the world and to gather scattered Israel (Deut. 33:13–17; D&C 64:36; 133:26–34)" (Bible Dictionary, "Ephraim"). Many latter-day Saints have learned through receiving their patriarchal blessings that they are of the tribe of Ephraim and are responsible to help gather Israel.

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: "The Lord called upon the descendants of Ephraim to commence his work in the earth in these last days. … The keys are with Ephraim. It is Ephraim who is to be endowed with power to bless and give to the other tribes … their blessings" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 2:250–51; see also D&C 113:5–6).



***Israel Blesses Ephraim with Birthright,* by D. Keith Larson. Israel (Jacob) blessed Ephraim, a son of Joseph, with the birthright blessing (see Genesis 48:13–20).**

An Old Testament account foreshadowed the latter-day work of Ephraim. Years after Joseph's brothers sold him into Egypt, the land of Canaan suffered a serious drought. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to purchase food for their survival (see Genesis 41:56–42:3). Joseph had become a ruler in Egypt, and he oversaw the distribution of grain to the people. At one point in the biblical account, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. Seeing their "troubled" reaction (Genesis 45:3), he comforted them with these words: "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. … And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Genesis 45:5, 7). In the last days the descendants of Joseph, primarily those through his son Ephraim, will once again help bring salvation to members of the other tribes of Israel (see Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 48:10–11 [in the Bible appendix]; 2 Nephi 3:4–8, 11–15).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:35. "And they also of the tribe of Judah … shall be sanctified in holiness"

Because of their rejection of "the Holy One of Israel," the tribe of Judah has repeatedly been scattered and abused as a people and has become "a hiss and a byword, and … hated among all nations" (1 Nephi 19:14; see also 3 Nephi 16:9). In the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith pleaded with the Lord "to have mercy upon the children of Jacob, that Jerusalem, from this hour, may begin to be redeemed; and the yoke of bondage may begin to be broken off from the house of David; and the children of Judah may begin to return to the lands which thou didst give to Abraham, their father" (D&C 109:62–64). Little by little this prophetic prayer is being fulfilled. The fulness of the gospel will be taught to the descendants of Judah and, in time, many Jews "shall be persuaded to believe

in Christ, the Son of God" (2 Nephi 25:16; see also 3 Nephi 20:30–31). As they accept the Savior and His gospel, "they also of the tribe of Judah, after their pain, shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord, to dwell in his presence day and night, forever and ever" (D&C 133:35; see also D&C 45:51–53).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:36–56

The Lord reveals that the restored gospel will be preached to all the world and describes His Second Coming

Read Doctrine and Covenants 133:36–45, looking for evidence that the Savior desires all people to be prepared for His Second Coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:36–39. "I have sent forth mine angel … having the everlasting gospel"

In his vision of the last days, the Apostle John "saw [an] angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133, the Lord affirmed that John's vision or prophecy had been fulfilled: "I have sent forth mine angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, who hath appeared unto some and hath committed it unto man" (D&C 133:36). After quoting Revelation 14:6, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) taught: "That angel has come. His name is Moroni" ("Stay the Course—Keep the Faith," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 70). The angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and delivered to him an ancient record containing "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ," from which the Prophet translated the Book of Mormon (see D&C 20:6–12).

Speaking of the role of the Book of Mormon in preaching the gospel and gathering Israel, **President Russell M. Nelson** taught:

"The Book of Mormon declares the advent of the gathering and is God's instrument to bring about that gathering. Without the Book of Mormon, there would be no gathering of Israel.



"This gospel shall be preached unto every nation" (D&C 133:37).

"The Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the gospel. Without the Book of Mormon, we would know little about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Because it teaches of the Atonement, the Book of Mormon helps us to repent, make and keep sacred covenants, and merit the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. It leads us to the temple, where we can qualify for eternal life" ("The Book of Mormon, the Gathering of Israel, and the Second Coming," *Ensign,* July 2014, 31).

The angel Moroni helped restore the fulness of the gospel as recorded in the Book of Mormon. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** explained: "The angel Moroni brought the message, that is, the word; but other angels brought the keys and priesthood, the power. And in the final analysis the fulness of the everlasting gospel consists of all of the truths and powers needed to enable men to gain a fulness of salvation in the celestial heaven" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* [1973], 3:530). Thus, the angel referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 133:36 may also represent a composite of the many angels, including Moroni, who assisted in the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



"I have sent forth mine angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel" (D&C 133:36).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:40–45. "How great things thou hast prepared for him that waiteth for thee"

The Lord's words recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133:40–45 reiterate the teachings of the ancient prophet Isaiah, who taught that the Lord's people will pray for His Second Coming and for the salvation that will be theirs when He comes again (see Isaiah 64:1–4). The imagery of "melting fire," "fire which causeth the waters to boil," and "mountains flow[ing] down" (D&C 133:41, 44; see also Isaiah 64:2–3) may illustrate the tremendous changes that will occur to the earth when the Savior comes in glory. At that time "every corruptible thing … that dwells upon all the face of the earth, shall be consumed; and also that of element shall melt with fervent heat." The earth will be cleansed by fire, "and all things shall become new" (D&C 101:24–25). The phrase "terrible things" in Doctrine and Covenants 133:43 has reference to mighty works and wonders, similar perhaps to those the Lord performed when delivering the children of Israel from Egypt (see Exodus 34:10; Deuteronomy 10:21–22). For the wicked, such demonstrations of divine power may seem "terrible," or horrifying. While the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be a "dreadful day" for the wicked, it will be a blessed day for the righteous (see Malachi 4:5). When He comes again, the Savior will "meet [those] who rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, who remembereth [Him] in [His] ways" (D&C 133:44). And those who have faithfully "wait[ed] for [Him]" will experience "great things" that have not been "heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath any eye seen" (D&C 133:45). These "great things" include the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, celestial glory, and exaltation.

To wait for the Lord means more than merely passing the time until He comes. It means to be vigilant in watching and preparing for His coming. **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** suggested what we can do to faithfully prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

"We should watch for the signs and read the meaning of the seasons, we should live as faithfully as we possibly can, and we should share the gospel with everyone so that blessings and protections will be available to all. But we cannot and must not be paralyzed just because [the Second Coming] and the events surrounding it are out there ahead of us somewhere. We cannot stop living life. Indeed, we should live life more fully than we have ever lived it before. After all, this is the dispensation of the *fulness* of times. …

"God expects you to have enough faith and determination and enough trust in Him to keep moving, keep living, keep rejoicing. In fact, He expects you not simply to *face* the future (that sounds pretty grim and stoic); He expects you to embrace and *shape* the future—to love it and rejoice in it and delight in your opportunities.

"God is anxiously waiting for the chance to answer your prayers and fulfill your dreams, just as He always has. But He can't if you don't pray, and He can't if you don't dream. In short, He can't if you don't believe" ("Terror, Triumph, and a Wedding Feast" [Brigham Young University fireside, Sept. 12, 2004], 2–3, speeches.byu.edu).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 133:46–56, looking for descriptions of the Savior's appearance at His Second Coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:46–51. "The Lord shall be red in his apparel"

The Lord's words recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 133:46–51 reaffirm the teachings of Isaiah, who prophesied that when Jesus Christ comes again, He will be "red in [His] apparel," or clothing, "hav[ing] trodden the winepress alone" (Isaiah 63:2–3; see also Revelation 19:13). Anciently, a winepress or wine vat was a large basin that was filled with grapes. To extract the grape juice, several laborers would stand in the basin and stomp on the grapes. The juices released from the grapes would stain their feet and clothing a deep red color. The Savior's red clothing at His Second Coming will have several meanings. It will represent "God's judgments upon the wicked and the destruction that will come upon them when they, like grapes on the vine, are fully ripe in iniquity and are trodden in the 'winepress of the wrath of God' [Revelation 14:19]" at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (*New Testament Student Manual* [Church Educational System manual, 2014], 556).

The Savior's being clothed in red will also "[call] to mind the Savior's suffering in Gethsemane, when His atoning blood was pressed from His body just as juice is pressed from grapes in a winepress" (*New Testament Student Manual,* 563). While speaking of the Savior's suffering in Gethsemane, **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the Savior's red clothing at His Second Coming will remind the righteous of the blood He shed on their behalf:

"Having bled at every pore, how red [the Savior's] raiment must have been in Gethsemane, how crimson that cloak!

"No wonder, when Christ comes in power and glory, that He will come in reminding red attire (see D&C 133:48), signifying not only the winepress of wrath,

but also to bring to our remembrance how He suffered for each of us in Gethsemane and on Calvary!" ("Overcome … Even As I Also Overcame," *Ensign,* May 1987, 72).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:52–53. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted"

"The day of [the Lord's] vengeance" (D&C 133:51)—which refers to the destruction of the wicked at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—will usher in "the year of [the Lord's] redeemed" (D&C 133:52). These phrases "may refer to the jubilee year" celebrated in ancient Israel, when all Israelites in bondage or slavery were redeemed, or set free (Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* [1998], 555; see also Exodus 21:2; Leviticus 25:9–10, 39–40). Similarly, at the Lord's Second Coming "we will be freed from all the bonds of our enemies and oppressors" (Parry, Parry, and Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah,* 555). At that day the righteous will praise the Lord for "all that he has bestowed upon them according to his goodness, and according to his loving kindness, forever and ever" (D&C 133:52). They will remember that "in all their afflictions He was afflicted" and that "in his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and bore them, and carried them" through the trials of mortality (D&C 133:53; see also Alma 7:11–13).

Speaking of the Savior's atoning sacrifice, **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified: "The Savior has suffered not just for our iniquities but also for the inequality, the unfairness, the pain, the anguish, and the emotional distresses that so frequently beset us. There is no physical pain, no anguish of soul, no suffering of spirit, no infirmity or weakness that you or I ever experience during our mortal journey that the Savior did not experience first. … And because He paid the ultimate price and bore that burden, He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy in so many phases of our life. He can reach out, touch, succor—literally run to us—and strengthen us to be more than we could ever be and help us to do that which we could never do through relying only upon our own power" ("The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality," *Ensign,* Apr. 2012, 47).

In what ways have you experienced "the loving kindness" (D&C 133:52) and mercy of the Savior, Jesus Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 133:57–74

The gospel is preached to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Read Doctrine and Covenants 133:57–74, looking for what will happen to those who will not follow the Lord and repent.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:57–59. "By the weak things of the earth the Lord shall thresh the nations"

For an explanation of "the weak things of the earth" and the meaning of the phrase "the Lord shall thresh the nations by the power of his Spirit" (D&C 133:59), see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 35:13 in this manual.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:62–64. "It shall leave them neither root nor branch"

Those who "repenteth and sanctifieth [themselves] before the Lord shall be given eternal life" (D&C 133:62), which the scriptures teach "is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). **President Henry B. Eyring** of the First Presidency explained what it means to receive eternal life: "That gift is to live in the presence of God the Father and His Beloved Son forever in families. Only in the highest of the kingdoms of God, the celestial, will the loving bonds of family life continue" ("The Hope of Eternal Family Love," *Ensign,* Aug. 2016, 4).

In contrast to those who will receive this gift of eternal life, those who refuse to obey the voice of the Lord will "be cut off from among the [Lord's covenant] people" (D&C 133:63). Those who are "cut off," or separated, from the Lord's people through disobedience and wickedness "shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (D&C 133:64; see also Malachi 4:1). **Elder Theodore M. Burton** (1907–1989) of the Seventy explained the meaning of the phrase "that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" in Malachi 4:1: "This expression simply means that wicked and indifferent persons who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ will have no family inheritance or patriarchal lineage—neither root (ancestors or progenitors) nor branch (children or posterity). Such persons cannot be received into the celestial kingdom of glory of resurrected beings, but must be content with a lesser blessing" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 81).

Ponder what you have learned about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ from your study of Doctrine and Covenants 133. What can you do to better prepare yourself and others for the Savior's Second Coming?

CHAPTER 54

Doctrine and Covenants 134–36

Introduction and Timeline

On August 17, 1835, Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, held a special meeting to approve the upcoming publication of the Doctrine and Covenants. Because the Prophet Joseph Smith was away visiting Church members in Michigan Territory, Oliver Cowdery presided at this meeting. During the meeting, Church members voted to include in the Doctrine and Covenants "a declaration of belief regarding governments and laws" (D&C 134, section heading). This statement is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 134.

On June 27, 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, who was the Assistant President of the Church as well as Patriarch of the Church, were martyred at Carthage, Illinois. An announcement of the martyrdom was included in the 1844 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants and was based on the eyewitness accounts of Elder John Taylor and Elder Willard Richards, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. This announcement is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 135.

In February 1846, Church members began leaving Nauvoo, Illinois, and traveling west across Iowa Territory. President Brigham Young received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136 at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, in January 1847. In it the Lord counseled the Saints to organize themselves and prepare for their journey west.

August 17, 1835

Doctrine and Covenants 134 was approved for inclusion in the Doctrine and Covenants by Church members in Kirtland, Ohio.

June 27, 1844

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith were martyred in Carthage Jail in Carthage, Illinois.

July–August 1844

Doctrine and Covenants 135 was written.

February 4, 1846

The first company of Saints left Nauvoo, Illinois, on their trek west.

June 1846

Brigham Young's company of Saints arrived at the Missouri River, where Kanesville, Iowa; Winter Quarters, Nebraska; and other settlements were eventually established.

January 14, 1847

Doctrine and Covenants 136 was received.

July 24, 1847

Brigham Young's pioneer company arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.

Think about people you know who "sustain and uphold" (D&C 134:5) their government and the law. In what ways are they good citizens? As you study Doctrine and Covenants 134–36, look for principles that can guide you as you strive to "sustain and uphold" the government and laws in your country.

Doctrine and Covenants 134: Additional Historical Background

After Church members were illegally driven from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri, in late 1833, Church leaders asked state and federal government officials for help in protecting the Saints' civil rights and reclaiming their lost property, but the Church's appeals for help repeatedly failed. In some cases Church members were "accused by their bitter enemies, both in Missouri and in other places, as being opposed to law and order" and were falsely "portrayed as setting up laws in

conflict with the laws of the country" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* [1953], 2:30–31).

In July 1833 very few printed copies of the Book of Commandments survived the mob violence in Independence, Missouri. Therefore, a new book containing the revelations that the Prophet Joseph Smith had received was prepared for publication in 1835 in Kirtland, Ohio. On August 17, 1835, a general assembly of Church members gathered to approve the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants prior to its publication. During that meeting Oliver Cowdery read aloud an additional document titled "Of Governments and Laws in General." Those in attendance unanimously approved the document's inclusion in the Doctrine and Covenants, and the document was added after the appendix, which is now Doctrine and Covenants 133, at the end of the 1835 edition. This document, now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 134, was not a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith but was possibly prepared by Oliver Cowdery, with the help of William W. Phelps, as a declaration clarifying Church members' beliefs regarding their relationship to government and the law. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835,* ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others [2016], 479–82.)

Doctrine and Covenants 134

The responsibilities of governments and their citizens are outlined

Read Doctrine and Covenants 134, looking for what the declaration says regarding the role of government, the exercise of religion, and citizens' responsibilities.

Doctrine and Covenants 134:1–3. "The free exercise of conscience"

The persecution the Saints experienced in Missouri in 1833 and their failure to obtain help from government leaders intensified their belief that governments should protect citizens' rights, including "the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life" (D&C 134:2). Laws that allow citizens to act according to their conscience protect religious liberty. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that governments have the responsibility to protect "the free exercise of conscience" (D&C 134:2) and their citizens' religious freedom:

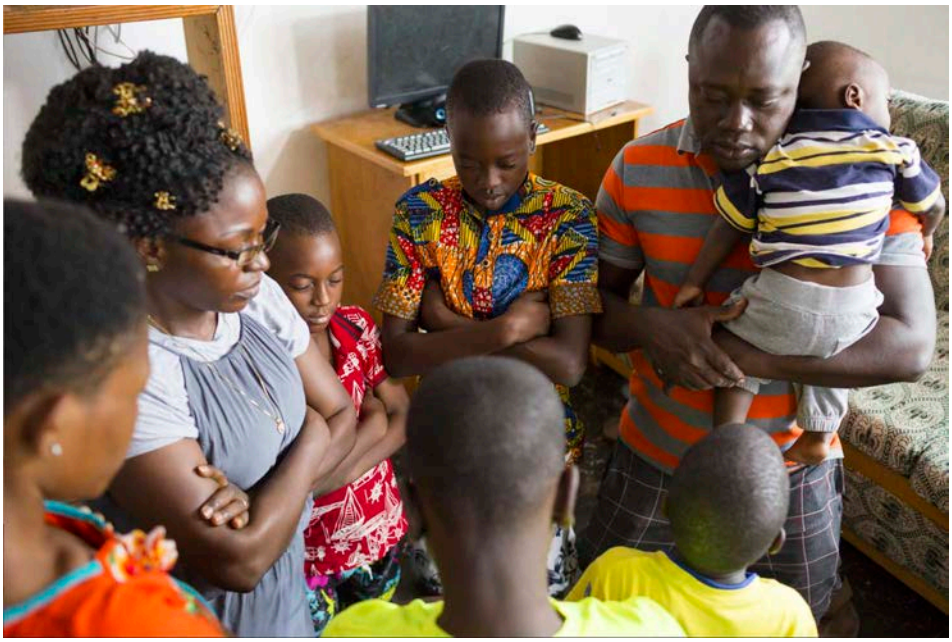
"Today … none of us can ignore the importance of religion globally—in politics, conflict resolution, economic development, humanitarian relief, and more. … Understanding religion and its relationship to global concerns and to governments is essential to seeking to improve the world in which we live. …

"Consequently, a government should secure religious freedom for its citizens. As stated in article 18 of the United Nation's influential Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance' [Universal

Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nation's General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948, un.org]" ("Religion's Vital Global Role," *Ensign,* June 2017, 28).

Doctrine and Covenants 134:4, 7. "The free exercise of their religious belief"

In 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith emphasized the principle of religious freedom described in Doctrine and Covenants 134 when he wrote Articles of Faith 1:11, which states, "We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may." Religious freedom, however, does not mean that all religious practices should be protected by law. According to Doctrine and Covenants 134:4, citizens should be able to practice religion "unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe on the rights and liberties of others." Therefore, limits on religious activities are appropriate where necessary to protect compelling interests, such as the life, property, health, or safety of others.



"We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may" (Articles of Faith 1:11).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) made the following statements regarding the importance of protecting religious freedom:

"We deem it a just principle, and it is one the force of which we believe ought to be duly considered by every individual, that all men are created equal, and that all have the privilege of thinking for themselves upon all matters relative to conscience. Consequently, then, we are not disposed, had we the power, to deprive any one of exercising that free independence of mind which heaven has so graciously bestowed upon the human family as one of its choicest gifts."

"I have the most liberal sentiments, and feelings of charity toward all sects, parties, and denominations; and the rights and liberties of conscience, I hold most sacred and dear, and despise no man for differing with me in matters of opinion."

"The Saints can testify whether I am willing to lay down my life for my brethren. If it has been demonstrated that I have been willing to die for a 'Mormon,' I am bold to declare before Heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a good man of any other denomination; for the same principle which would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights … of any other denomination who may be unpopular and too weak to defend themselves.

"It is a love of liberty which inspires my soul—civil and religious liberty to the whole of the human race" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 344–45).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught the basic principles of religious freedom that we should all seek to promote and support:

"There are four cornerstones of religious freedom that we as Latter-day Saints must rely upon and protect.

"The first is freedom to believe. No one should be criticized, persecuted, or attacked by individuals, or governments either, for what he or she believes about God. It is very personal and very important. …

"The second cornerstone of religious liberty is the freedom to share our faith and our beliefs with others. … As parents, full-time missionaries, and member missionaries, we rely on religious freedom in order to teach the Lord's doctrine in our families and throughout the world.

"The third cornerstone of religious liberty is the freedom to form a religious organization, a church, to worship peacefully with others. … International human rights documents and many national constitutions support this principle.

"The fourth cornerstone of religious liberty is the freedom to live our faith—free exercise of faith not just in the home and chapel but also in public places" ("Preserving Agency, Protecting Religious Freedom," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2015, 112).

Study the materials found on religiousfreedom.lds.org to learn more about the importance of religious freedom. What can you do to respectfully share your beliefs about religious freedom with others?

Doctrine and Covenants 134:5–6. "All men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside"

Latter-day Saints believe that they should "sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside" (D&C 134:5). The Prophet Joseph Smith summarized this principle when he wrote Articles of Faith 1:12, which reads, "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." Church members live this principle when they

obey their country's laws and encourage others to obey the law, serve in the community, show respect for government officials, and vote.

At times, laws of the land may conflict with Church members' beliefs. While speaking at a conference attended by judicial and religious leaders, **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** taught what we can do when this dilemma occurs:

"While all believers revere divine law, most also acknowledge that civil law is also ordained of God. The Lord Jesus Christ directed, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's' (Matthew 22:21). So taught, we must, to the extent possible, obey *both* systems of law. When there are apparent conflicts, we must seek to harmonize them. When they are truly irreconcilable, we should join with others of like mind in striving to change the civil law to accommodate the divine. In all events, we must be very measured before ever deciding—in the rarest of circumstances—to disregard one in favor of the other.

"In that context, I say to my fellow believers that we should not assert the free exercise of religion to override every law and government action that could possibly be interpreted to infringe on institutional or personal religious freedom. As I have often said, the free exercise of religion obviously involves both the right to choose religious beliefs and affiliations and the right to *exercise* or practice those beliefs. But in a nation with citizens of many different religious beliefs, the right of some to act upon their religious principles must be circumscribed by the government's responsibility to protect the health and safety of all" ("The Boundary Between Church and State" [address at the Second Annual Sacramento Court/Clergy Conference, Oct. 20, 2015], mormonnewsroom.org).

Doctrine and Covenants 134:12. "We do not believe it right to interfere with bond-servants"

In 1821, Missouri was admitted into the United States as a slave state, meaning that the institution of slavery was legal there. While speaking at a conference on religious freedom, **Elder Quentin L. Cook** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that the Missouri Saints were persecuted in part because of their anti-slavery beliefs:

"In Missouri in 1833, our Latter-day Saint values were in direct conflict with the Missouri settlers not of our faith. Many Missourians considered American Indians a relentless enemy and wanted them removed from the land. In addition, many of the Missouri settlers were slave owners and felt threatened by those who were opposed to slavery. …

"In contrast, our doctrine respected the American Indians and our desire was to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ. With respect to slavery our scriptures are clear that no man should be in bondage to another. Our relatively few early black members worshipped together with white members. … Other Missouri settlers felt threatened as large numbers of Latter-day Saints, following the Lord's revelations, moved to Missouri.

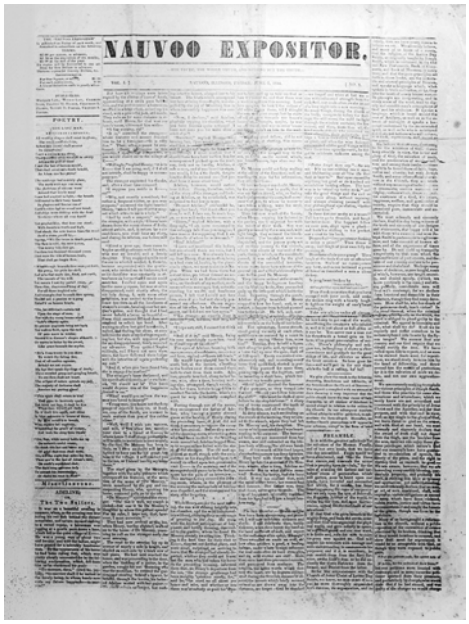
"This resulted in immense conflict and persecution for members of the Church" ("Accountability to God: Religious Freedom and Fairness" [address at the Seymour Institute Seminar on Religious Freedom, July 26, 2017], mormonnewsroom.org).

Some of the Missouri settlers were upset because they interpreted an editorial that appeared in the Latter-day Saint publication *The Evening and the Morning Star* to advocate the migration of free blacks into the state (see Manuscript History of the Church, vol. A-1, pages 332–33, josephsmithpapers.org). Oliver Cowdery witnessed the harsh persecution the Missouri Saints suffered, and he may have written the statement that "we do not believe it right to interfere with bondservants" (D&C 134:12) to defend the Church against that accusation. His statement clarified that the Church did not advocate violating established law in order to "preach the gospel to, nor baptize" those living as slaves "contrary to the will and wish of their masters" (D&C 134:12).

"The Church was established in 1830, during an era of great racial division in the United States. At the time, many people of African descent lived in slavery, and racial distinctions and prejudice were not just common but customary among white Americans. Those realities, though unfamiliar and disturbing today, influenced all aspects of people's lives, including their religion. Many Christian churches of that era, for instance, were segregated along racial lines. From the beginnings of the Church, people of every race and ethnicity could be baptized and received as members. Toward the end of his life, Church founder Joseph Smith openly opposed slavery" ("Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org).

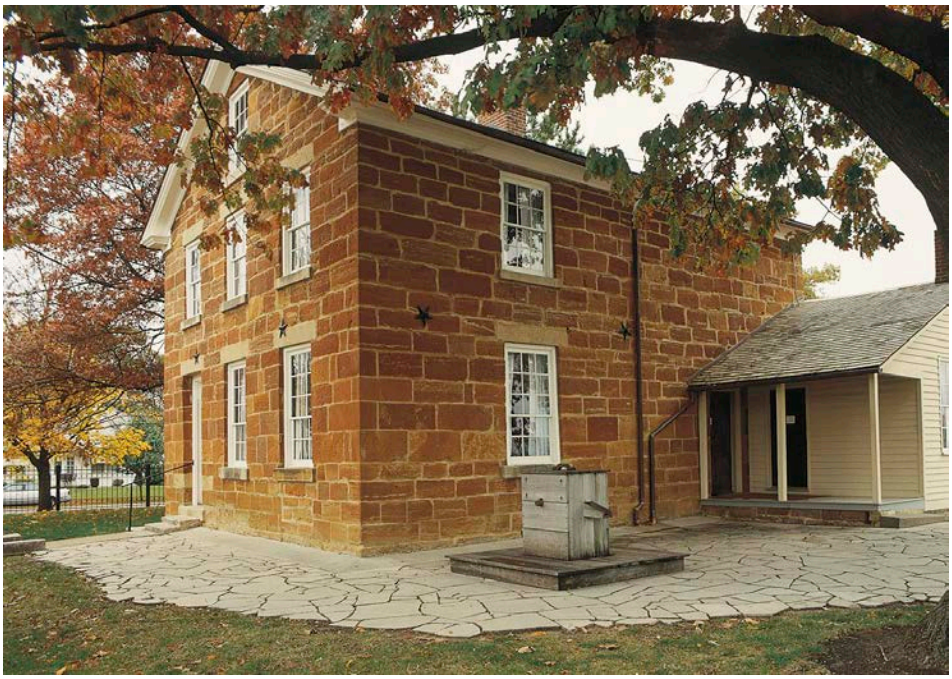
Doctrine and Covenants 135: Additional Historical Background

In early 1844 a group of apostates in Nauvoo, Illinois, declared the Prophet Joseph Smith to be a fallen prophet and tried to start a rival church. Some even held secret meetings, during which they plotted to kill him. (See Glen L. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* [2002], 357–62.) On June 7, 1844, some of these dissenters printed and distributed the first, and what would be the only, issue of a newspaper they called the *Nauvoo Expositor.* It attacked the leadership of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was serving as mayor of Nauvoo, accusing him of teaching false doctrine, of overstepping his political and religious authority, and of secretly practicing polygamy. It also called for the repeal of the Nauvoo Charter. (See Leonard, *Nauvoo,* 362–64.) During a meeting of the Nauvoo City Council on June 10, 1844, "the Council passed an ordinance declaring the Nauvoo Expositor a nuisance, and also issued an order to [Joseph Smith] to [stop] the said nuisance." At that meeting, the Prophet Joseph Smith observed that "the conduct of such men, and such [news]papers, are calculated to destroy the peace of the city; and it is not safe that such things should exist, on account of the mob spirit which they tend to produce." He also stated that the newspaper "was exciting the spirit of mobocracy among the people, and bringing death and destruction upon us." (In Manuscript History of the Church, vol. F-1, pages 74, 77–78, 80, josephsmithpapers.org.)


NAUVOO EXPOSITOR.

The front page of the June 7, 1844, edition of the *Nauvoo Expositor,* a newspaper published to rally anti-Mormon feelings against the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois

The Nauvoo City Council ordered the city marshall to destroy the printing press. Subsequently, the owners of the *Nauvoo Expositor* filed charges against Joseph Smith and other Nauvoo city officials for rioting. Fueled by the accusations of the Prophet's enemies, citizens in the nearby communities of Warsaw and Carthage gave speeches and wrote newspaper articles calling for an armed force to expel all Latter-day Saints from the state of Illinois if Joseph Smith and others did not surrender to authorities. As mayor of Nauvoo, Joseph Smith declared martial law to protect residents of the city from possible attacks. The Prophet also appealed to state authorities for help in resolving the legal issue. As tensions grew in the state, Thomas Ford, the governor of Illinois, issued an order for Joseph Smith and other Nauvoo city officials to go to Carthage, Illinois, to stand trial on the rioting charges. With Nauvoo under the threat of attack, and having received Governor Ford's assurance that they would receive a safe and fair trial, the Prophet Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and other Nauvoo officials traveled to Carthage. After a hearing, Joseph and the other defendants were allowed to post bail. At this point the Prophet's enemies charged Joseph and Hyrum Smith with treason based on Joseph's declaration of martial law in Nauvoo. Treason was a nonbailable offense, so Joseph and Hyrum would have to remain in jail until their trial. The Prophet and his brother were placed in custody and taken from the Hamilton Hotel, where they had been staying, to Carthage Jail to await trial. (See Leonard, *Nauvoo,* 365–72, 376, 381, 384.)

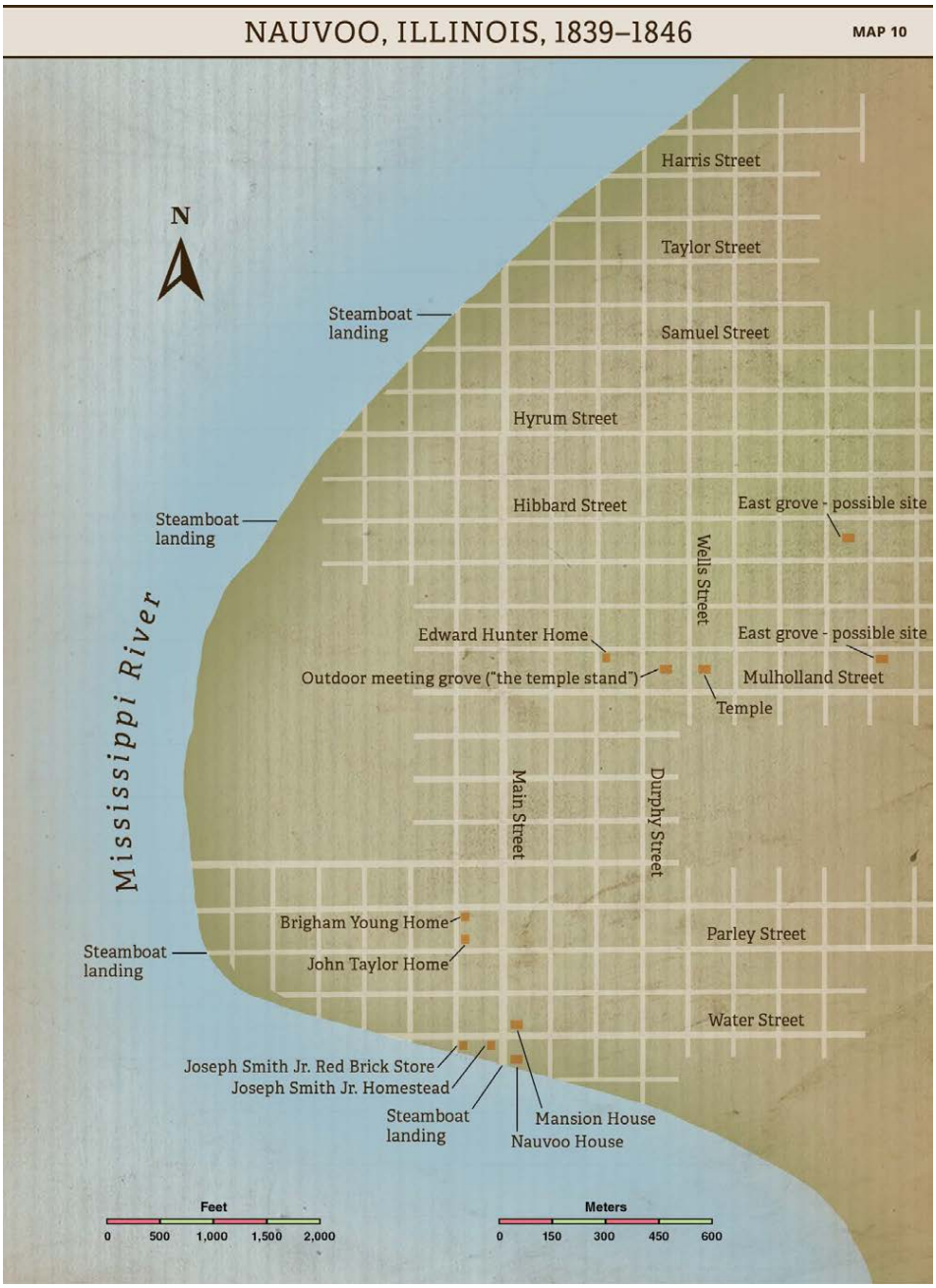


Carthage Jail, where the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum Smith were martyred on June 27, 1844

On the afternoon of June 27, 1844, a hostile mob attacked the jailor's second-floor bedroom in Carthage Jail, where the prisoners were staying, and murdered the Prophet Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith. Two others, Elder John Taylor and Elder Willard Richards, who were members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, were also in the room with the Prophet and his brother. John Taylor was seriously wounded, while Willard Richards escaped without any injury.

In July and August 1844, a written announcement of the martyrdom was prepared based on the eye-witness accounts of Elder John Taylor and Elder Willard Richards. The Church included this announcement and tribute to the Prophet Joseph Smith at the end of the 1844 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. (See Jeffrey Mahas, "Remembering the Martyrdom," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 304–5, or history.lds.org.) That announcement is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 135.





Doctrine and Covenants 135

The Church announces the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith

Read Doctrine and Covenants 135, looking for some of the contributions of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Doctrine and Covenants 135:1–3. "[Joseph] has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum"

Just as many ancient prophets were persecuted and even killed while fulfilling their God-given missions (see Acts 7:54–60; 1 Nephi 1:19–20; Mosiah 17:9–13; Alma 33:14–17; Helaman 8:17–19), the Prophet Joseph Smith was also criticized, persecuted, and eventually killed, thus "seal[ing] his mission and his works with his own blood" (D&C 135:3). In a revelation given to President Brigham Young, the Lord confirmed that "it was needful that [Joseph Smith] should seal his testimony with his blood, that he might be honored and the wicked might be condemned" (D&C 136:39). **Elder Robert D. Hales** taught: "Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his own blood. The Prophet's martyrdom was a voluntary acceptance of death to seal the testimony of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 135:1) and to bear holy witness of Jesus Christ and his gospel in this dispensation" ("The Importance of Receiving a Personal Testimony," *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 21).

For more information on the Prophet Joseph Smith sealing his testimony with his blood, see the commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 136:39 in this chapter.



The jailer's bedroom, upstairs in the Carthage Jail, where the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were killed. John Taylor and Willard Richards survived the attack.

Doctrine and Covenants 135:3. "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man"

The Prophet Joseph Smith was a mortal man who was called by God to assist in the Restoration of the gospel (see D&C 1:17–23; 136:37–39). As a result of his calling as a prophet of God, Joseph Smith "has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (D&C 135:3). Church members today have access to rich blessings because of the Prophet Joseph Smith's work. While speaking of these blessings, **President Gordon B. Hinckley**

(1910–2008) provided this witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "During the brief 38 and one-half years of his life, there came through him an incomparable outpouring of knowledge, gifts, and doctrine. Looked at objectively, there is nothing to compare with it. Subjectively, it is the substance of the personal testimony of millions of Latter-day Saints across the earth" ("The Great Things Which God Has Revealed," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2005, 83).

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) explained that the influence of the Prophet Joseph Smith's ministry extends to all people, regardless of when they have lived or will live upon the earth: "The work in which Joseph Smith was engaged was not confined to this life alone, but it pertains as well to the life to come, and to the life that has been. In other words, it relates to those who have lived upon the earth, to those who are living and to those who shall come after us. It is not something which relates to man only while he tabernacles in the flesh, but to the whole human family from eternity to eternity" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 13–14).

All those who desire to know for themselves that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God can receive a spiritual witness of this truth. **Elder Neil L. Andersen** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that each Church member should prayerfully seek this witness:

"Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration. His spiritual work began with the appearance of the Father and the Son, followed by numerous heavenly visitations. He was the instrument in God's hands in bringing forth sacred scripture, lost doctrine, and the restoration of the priesthood. The importance of Joseph's work requires more than intellectual consideration; it requires that we, like Joseph, 'ask of God' [James 1:5; see also Joseph Smith—History 1:11–13]. Spiritual questions deserve spiritual answers from God. …

"Each believer needs a spiritual confirmation of the divine mission and character of the Prophet Joseph Smith. This is true for every generation. …

"A testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith can come differently to each of us. It may come as you kneel in prayer, asking God to confirm that he was a true prophet. It may come as you read the Prophet's account of the First Vision. A testimony may distill upon your soul as you read the Book of Mormon again and again. It may come as you bear your own testimony of the Prophet or as you stand in the temple and realize that through Joseph Smith the holy sealing power was restored to the earth. With faith and real intent, your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith will strengthen. …

"To the youth listening today or reading these words in the days ahead, I give a specific challenge: Gain a personal witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith" ("Joseph Smith," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2014, 28–30).

How has your life been influenced and blessed because Joseph Smith fulfilled his prophetic mission?

Doctrine and Covenants 135:4–5. "I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men"

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum sensed their impending deaths as they prepared to leave their homes in Nauvoo to travel to Carthage, Illinois. The Prophet described his feelings at that time, using the Messianic imagery of Isaiah: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter" (D&C 135:4; see also Isaiah 53:7). In spite of the obvious efforts of enemies who were conspiring to bring about his death, the Prophet told friends, "I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men" (D&C 135:4).



Joseph and Hyrum Smith bade farewell to their families before going to Carthage, Illinois.

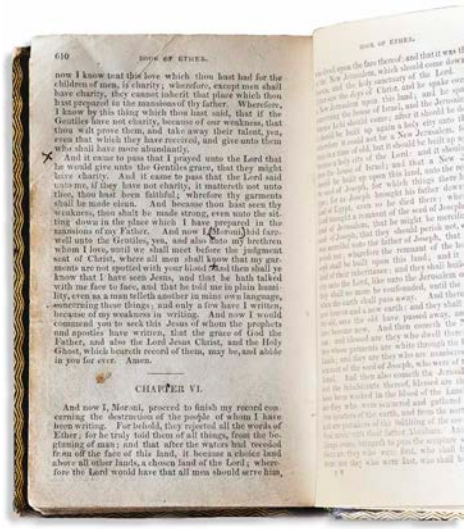
Early on the day that he would be murdered in Carthage Jail, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following in a hasty letter to his wife Emma: "I am very much resigned to my lot, knowing I am justified and have done the best that could be done. Give my love to the children and all my friends … ; and as for treason, I know that I have not committed any, and they cannot prove one appearance of anything of the kind, so you need not have any fears that any harm can happen to us on that score. May God bless you all. Amen" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 531).



Joseph and Emma Smith moved into the Mansion House in Nauvoo, Illinois, in August 1843.

Earlier, in a discourse he gave in Nauvoo on June 18, 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "I do not regard my own life. I am ready to be offered a sacrifice for this people; for what can our enemies do? Only kill the body, and their power is then at an end. Stand firm, my friends; never flinch. Do not seek to save your lives, for he that is afraid to die for the truth, will lose eternal life. Hold out to the end, and we shall be resurrected and become like Gods, and reign in celestial kingdoms, principalities, and eternal dominions" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 531).

On the morning of June 24, 1844, when the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions left Nauvoo for Carthage Jail, "after Hyrum made ready to go … he read [Moroni's farewell], near the close of the twelfth chapter of Ether, in the Book of Mormon, and turned down the leaf upon it" (D&C 135:4; see also Ether 12:36–38). After describing the events that took place on that morning, **Elder Jeffery R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:



610 BOOK OF ETHER.

now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men, is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity, they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy father. Wherefore, I know by this thing which thou hast said, that if the Gentiles have not charity, because of our weakness, that thou wilt prove them, and take away their talent, yea, even that which they have received, and give unto them who shall have more abundantly.

And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me, if they have not charity, it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness, thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father. And now I, [Moroni] bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood. And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning those things, and only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing. And now I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be, and abide in you for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

And now I, Moroni, proceed to finish my record concerning the destruction of the people of whom I have been writing. For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land, it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him,

The copy of the Book of Mormon that once belonged to Hyrum Smith. This page was folded down on the day that Hyrum left for Carthage with his brother Joseph.

"Later, when actually incarcerated in the jail, Joseph the Prophet turned to the guards who held him captive and bore a powerful testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon [see *History of the Church,* 6:600]. Shortly thereafter pistol and ball would take the lives of these two testators.

"As one of a thousand elements of my own testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon, I submit this as yet one more evidence of its truthfulness. In this their greatest—and last—hour of need, I ask you: would these men blaspheme before God by continuing to fix their lives, their honor, and their own search for eternal salvation on a book (and by implication a church and a ministry) they had fictitiously created out of whole cloth?

"… Tell me whether in this hour of death these two men would enter the presence of their Eternal Judge quoting from and finding solace in a book which, if *not* the very word of God, would brand them as imposters and charlatans until the end of time? *They would not do that!* They were willing to die rather than deny the divine origin and the eternal truthfulness of the Book of Mormon" ("Safety for the Soul," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 89).

Doctrine and Covenants 135:3, 6. "In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!"

Hyrum Smith was the Prophet's older brother, and he was also one of Joseph Smith's most trusted and devoted friends and followers. **President Heber J. Grant** (1856–1945) described Hyrum's great loyalty to his brother: "There is no better example of an older brother's love than that exhibited in the life of Hyrum Smith for the Prophet Joseph Smith. … They were as united and as affectionate and as loving as mortal men could be. … There was no place for jealousy in the heart of Hyrum Smith. No mortal man could have been more loyal, more true, more faithful in life or in death than was Hyrum Smith to the Prophet of the living God" ("Hyrum Smith and His Distinguished Posterity," *Improvement Era,* Aug. 1918, 854–55).



When the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum left Nauvoo for Carthage, they paused near the temple. The Prophet remarked, "This is the loveliest place and the best people under the heavens; little do they know the trials that await them" (in Manuscript History of the Church, vol. F-1, page 151, josephsmithpapers.org).

How can knowing that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith "sealed" their witness of the truthfulness of the restored gospel "with [their] own blood" (D&C 135:3) strengthen your testimony of the restored gospel?

Doctrine and Covenants 136: Additional Historical Background

Since at least 1844, Church leaders had been actively planning for a possible move west. The Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders sensed the growing hostility toward the Church in Illinois and recognized that they might have to leave the state. Under Joseph's direction, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in February 1844, began secretly planning for an expedition to western North America to look for possible gathering places. Shortly thereafter, the Prophet formed a new organization, known as the Council of Fifty, and charged it with finding a new home for the Saints in the West. (See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844,* ed. Andrew H. Hedges and others [2015], 179–80; *The Joseph Smith Papers, Administrative Records, Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 1844–January 1846,* ed. Matthew J. Grow and others [2016], 40, 464-65, 471–72.)

Near the end of his life, the Prophet Joseph Smith committed the priesthood keys of this dispensation to the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 534). After the Prophet's martyrdom, during a meeting held on August 8, 1844, many Church members received a spiritual manifestation confirming to them that Brigham Young, who was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was to lead the Church (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual,* 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 291–93).

Many enemies of the Church thought that once the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed, the Church would collapse. However, when the Church and the city of Nauvoo continued to grow and prosper, enemies of the Church increased their efforts to drive Church members from Illinois. In September 1845, Colonel Levi Williams, one of those indicted for the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith but later acquitted, led a mob of 300 men and "systematically burned outlying Mormon farms and homes. They … torched many unprotected homes, farm buildings, mills, and grain stacks" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times,* 301; see also *History of the Church,* 7:439–44). Many Illinois residents were afraid that the presence of the Latter-day Saints in their state would lead to a civil war and asked Church members to leave the state. On September 24, 1845, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles published a letter promising that the Church would leave the following spring (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times,* 301–2).

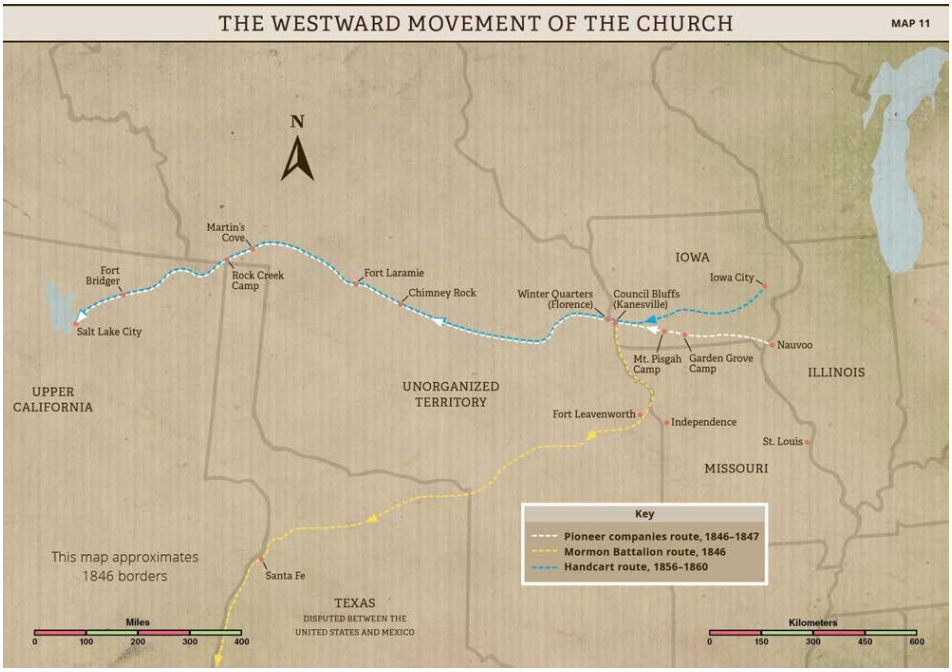
Under threats of violence from local mobs and the state militia, Church members began leaving Nauvoo in February 1846, journeying west across the state of Iowa. Because of excessive rain and insufficient supplies, Church members who left Nauvoo in February 1846 spent over three and a half months making the 300-mile journey across Iowa. During this time more than 500 Latter-day Saint men—who became known as the Mormon Battalion—heeded the call of President Brigham Young to enlist in the United States Army to serve during the Mexican War, which had begun in May 1846. Some of the men were joined by their wives and children.

Their service would earn money to help poor Church members make the journey west, but many families were left without husbands and fathers for part of their westward journey. For these reasons, Church leaders determined not to continue west to the Rocky Mountains until the spring of 1847 and counseled Church members to stay in temporary settlements for the winter. (See Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846–1848* [1997], 31–34, 40–47; *Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1996], 69–74.)



The Mormon Pioneer Cemetery in present-day Florence, Nebraska, where many Saints who died in Winter Quarters were buried.

"A number of settlements of Saints stretched along both sides of the Missouri River. The largest settlement, Winter Quarters, was on the west side, in Nebraska. It quickly became home to approximately 3,500 Church members, who lived in houses of logs and in dugouts of willows and dirt" (*Our Heritage,* 71). Many people were inadequately sheltered from the cold weather. Diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, tuberculosis, cholera, and scurvy resulted in widespread suffering and death. More than 700 Church members died that first winter. (See *Church History in the Fulness of Times,* 319–20.) In January 1847, Brigham Young prayed for the Lord's direction regarding the emigration to the West and then dictated the inspired counsel that is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136.



Doctrine and Covenants 136:1–33

The Lord organizes and counsels Church members in preparation for their journey west

Read Doctrine and Covenants 136:1–33, looking for the Lord's counsel regarding how Church members were to organize themselves and prepare to continue their journey west.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:1–33. "The Camp of Israel"

The exiled Latter-day Saints were referred to as "the Camp of Israel," the name used anciently for the children of Israel who were led by Moses out of Egypt (see D&C 136:1; see also Exodus 14:19–20; Joshua 6:23). The deliberate use of this name suggested that modern Israel could be blessed during its journey through the wilderness and eventually be led to a permanent home just as ancient Israel had been. To the Church members in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, the Lord declared Himself to be "the Lord your God, even the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob," the same God "who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt," and He promised that "[His] arm [would be] stretched out in the last days, to save [His] people Israel" (D&C 136:21–22). The inspired pattern by which the Saints were to organize themselves for the migration was similar to the organization and leadership implemented by ancient Israel (see Exodus 18:21–27; Deuteronomy 1:15).



***Entering Winter Quarters,* by Scott M. Snow. The Saints established dozens of settlements along the Missouri River in 1846–1847, including Winter Quarters.**

Doctrine and Covenants 136:7. "Go as pioneers"

Since not all Church members were able to begin the journey west at the same time, those who went on ahead were to "go to with their might, to prepare for those who [were] to tarry," or who would come later, by "putting in spring crops" and "prepar[ing] houses, and fields for raising grain" (see D&C 136:6–7, 9). The Lord called these Saints "pioneers" (D&C 136:7), meaning that they were to help others by going before them and preparing the way for them to follow.

After a few Church leaders left on April 5, 1847, the first company of pioneers left Winter Quarters on April 15. They traveled more than 1,000 miles and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in late July 1847. On July 24, 1847, President Brigham Young entered the valley and received confirmation that the Saints had found their new home (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times,* 331–33). More than 60,000 people eventually walked the same trail to gather with the Saints in the Utah area before the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869 (see Bennett, *We'll Find the Place,* 359).

President Thomas S. Monson explained how Church members today can be pioneers:

"To be a Latter-day Saint is to be a pioneer, for the definition of a pioneer is 'one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow' [*The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), 'pioneer']. And to be a pioneer is to become acquainted with sacrifice. Although members of the Church are no longer asked to leave their homes to make the journey to Zion, they often must leave behind old habits, longtime customs, and cherished friends. Some make the agonizing decision to leave behind family members who oppose their Church

membership. Latter-day Saints move forward, however, praying that precious ones will yet understand and accept.

"The path of a pioneer is not easy, but we follow in the footsteps of the ultimate Pioneer—even the Savior—who went before, showing us the way to follow" ("True to the Faith of Our Forefathers," *Ensign,* July 2016, 4–5).

Consider those who have sacrificed to prepare the way for you to enjoy the blessings of the restored gospel. What will you do to help others receive the blessings of the gospel? How do you think the principles taught by the Lord as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136:23–33 helped Church members on their journey west?

Doctrine and Covenants 136:34–42

The Lord reassures Church members and counsels them to be diligent in keeping all of His commandments

Read Doctrine and Covenants 136:34–42, looking for what the Lord said about the Prophet Joseph Smith's life and death.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:37–38. "He … was faithful; and I took him to myself"

The dissenters in Nauvoo, who contributed to events leading to the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith, proclaimed him to be a fallen prophet. However, in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136, the Lord testified of the Prophet Joseph Smith's divine calling and stated that he "was faithful; and I took him to myself" (see D&C 136:37–38). **President Joseph F. Smith** gave his witness that the Prophet Joseph Smith was faithful to the divine mission and calling he received from God:

"The greatest event that has ever occurred in the world since the resurrection of the Son of God from the tomb, and his ascension on high, was the coming of the Father and of the Son to that boy Joseph Smith, to prepare the way for the laying of the foundation of [God's] kingdom—not the kingdom of man—never more to cease nor to be overturned.

"Having accepted this truth, I find it easy to accept of every other truth that he enunciated and declared during his mission … in the world. He never taught a doctrine that was not true. He never practiced a doctrine that he was not commanded to practice. He never advocated error. He was not deceived. He saw; he heard; he did as he was commanded to do; and, therefore, God is responsible for the work accomplished by Joseph Smith—not Joseph Smith. The Lord is responsible for it, and not man" (in *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 545).

Doctrine and Covenants 136:39. "It was needful that he should seal his testimony with his blood"

Following the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, many Church members "marveled because of his death" (D&C 136:39), meaning that they were confused

as to why God permitted him to be killed. In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136, the Lord explained that the Prophet Joseph Smith died because "it was needful that he should seal his testimony with his blood, that he might be honored and the wicked might be condemned" (D&C 136:39). While expressing his feelings about the Prophet's martyrdom, **President Wilford Woodruff** (1807–1898) stated: "I used to have peculiar feelings about [the Prophet Joseph Smith's] death and the way in which his life was taken. I felt that if … Joseph could have had his desire, he would have pioneered the way to the Rocky Mountains. But since then I have been fully reconciled to the fact that it was according to the programme, that it was required of him, as the head of this dispensation, that he should seal his testimony with his blood, and go hence to the spirit world, holding the keys of this dispensation, to open up the mission that is now being performed by way of preaching the Gospel to the 'spirits in prison'" (in *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 537).

President Joseph F. Smith also spoke of the necessity of the deaths of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum and what we can learn from them:

"What does the martyrdom [of Joseph and Hyrum Smith] teach us? The great lesson that 'where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator' (Heb. 9:16) to make it of force. … The Lord permitted the sacrifice that the testimony of those virtuous and righteous men should stand as a witness against a perverse and unrighteous world. Then, again, they were examples of the wonderful love of which the Redeemer speaks: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' (John 15:13.) This wonderful love they manifested to the Saints and to the world; for both realized and expressed their conviction, before starting on the journey to Carthage, that they were going to their death. …

"This martyrdom has always been an inspiration to the people of the Lord. It has helped them in their individual trials; has given them courage to pursue a course in righteousness and to know and to live the truth, and must ever be held in sacred memory by the Latter-day Saints who have learned the great truths that God revealed through His servant, Joseph Smith" (in *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 537–38).

How can the doctrine and principles recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136 help you remain faithful during your own difficult experiences?

CHAPTER 55

Doctrine and Covenants 137–38

Introduction and Timeline

On January 21, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders held a special meeting in the nearly completed Kirtland Temple. On this occasion the Prophet saw a vision of the celestial kingdom, during which the Lord explained how He will judge those "who [die] without a knowledge of this gospel" (D&C 137:7). This revelation is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137.

On October 3, 1918, President Joseph F. Smith received the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 138, which further clarified the doctrine of salvation for the dead. In this vision President Smith learned that between the Savior's death and Resurrection, He ministered to the righteous in paradise who had been waiting for "redemption from the bands of death" (D&C 138:16). President Smith also witnessed the organization of missionary work in the spirit world.

November 19, 1823

Alvin Smith died in Palmyra, New York.

January 1836

The Kirtland Temple was almost completed.

January 21, 1836

Doctrine and Covenants 137 was received.

1918

A global influenza pandemic killed millions of people worldwide. In November, World War I ended, in which more than 17 million people died.

October 3, 1918

Doctrine and Covenants 138 was received.

April 3, 1976

Church members sustained and approved the Prophet Joseph Smith's vision of the celestial kingdom and President Joseph F. Smith's vision of the redemption of the dead as part of the standard works of the Church. They were added to the Pearl of Great Price.

June 1979

The First Presidency announced that Joseph Smith's vision of the celestial kingdom (now Doctrine and Covenants 137) and Joseph F. Smith's vision of the redemption of the dead (now Doctrine and Covenants 138) would be included in the 1981 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Most of Heavenly Father's children have lived and died on this earth without learning about the gospel of Jesus Christ and receiving saving ordinances. Some people mistakenly believe that those who die without this knowledge and these ordinances will not be saved. As you study Doctrine and Covenants 137–38, look for doctrine and principles that teach how salvation is made available to all of Heavenly Father's children.

Doctrine and Covenants 137: Additional Historical Background

"On the afternoon of 21 January 1836, [Joseph Smith] and the church presidency met in the council room above the printing office to take another step in preparation for the endowment. Following biblical precedent, these church leaders washed their bodies with water and perfumed themselves with a sweet-smelling wash." That evening Joseph Smith, his Counselors in the First Presidency, and other Church leaders gathered in an upper room of the nearly finished Kirtland Temple. "According to Oliver Cowdery, the members of the church presidency were

'annointed with the same kind of oil and in the man[ner] that were Moses and Aaron, and those who stood before the Lord in ancient days' [see Exodus 40:9–15]. The presidency first anointed church patriarch Joseph Smith Sr.'s head with consecrated oil and gave him a blessing. The patriarch then anointed the church's presidents in the order of their ages. When Joseph Smith Sr. anointed the head of [Joseph Smith], he 'sealed upon [him], the blessings, of Moses, to lead Israel in the latter days.'

"After the patriarch blessed his son, [Joseph Smith] received blessings and prophecies under the hands of 'all the presidency'" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838,* ed. Brent M. Rogers and others [2017], 157).

After the Prophet Joseph Smith was blessed, "the heavens were opened" and the Prophet and several of those present had visions and revelations. Joseph Smith recorded: "Many of my brethren who received this ordinance with me, saw glorious visions also,—angels ministered unto them, as well as my self, and the power of the highest rested upon us. The house was filled with the glory of God, and we shouted Hosanah to God and the Lamb." (In *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839,* ed. Dean C. Jesse and others [2008], 167–68, 170; punctuation and capitalization standardized.) On that occasion the Prophet had a vision of the celestial kingdom.

The Prophet Joseph Smith's vision of the celestial kingdom, which is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137, was not part of the standard works until 1976. During the April general conference of that year, the Church voted to accept this vision as scripture. While this revelation was originally placed in the Pearl of Great Price, it was determined in 1979 that it would become section 137 in the 1981 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. (See N. Eldon Tanner, "The Sustaining of Church Officers," *Ensign,* May 1976, 19; "Scriptural Text for Visions Added to Pearl of Great Price," *Ensign,* May 1976, 127; "Additions to D&C Approved," *Church News,* June 2, 1979, 3; "Three Additions to Be in Doctrine and Covenants," *Ensign,* Aug. 1979, 75.)



Doctrine and Covenants 137

The Prophet Joseph Smith has a vision of the celestial kingdom

Read Doctrine and Covenants 137:1–4, looking for words and phrases the Prophet Joseph Smith used to describe the celestial kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 137:1–4. "I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof"

The Prophet Joseph Smith described the glory and beauty of the celestial kingdom, saying that "the gate through which the heirs of [the celestial] kingdom will enter … was like unto circling flames of fire" and "the beautiful streets of that kingdom … had the appearance of being paved with gold" (D&C 137:2, 4). In the scriptures, fire is "a symbol for cleansing, purifying, or sanctifying. Fire can also serve as a symbol of God's presence" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Fire," scriptures.lds.org). The color gold and the metal gold are often associated with royalty, wealth, and power.

While these images can help describe the celestial kingdom, we cannot begin to comprehend its glory. On another occasion the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that

even "the glory of the telestial [kingdom] … surpasses all understanding" and "the glory of the celestial [kingdom] … excels in all things" (D&C 76:89, 92).

Doctrine and Covenants 137:1. "Whether in the body or out I cannot tell"

When the Prophet Joseph Smith described his vision of the celestial kingdom and said that he did not know "whether [he was] in the body or out" (D&C 137:1), he echoed the words the Apostle Paul used when he described being "caught up to the third heaven": "Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth" (2 Corinthians 12:2–3). When the Lord gives revelation to mortal men and women, He reveals truths by his Spirit to their spirits (see 1 Corinthians 2:9–14), and they become enveloped in the Spirit and filled with His glory to such an extent that they become oblivious to the things of the natural world. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–1844) explained this process of receiving spiritual communication: "All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit and proper to reveal to us, while we are dwelling in mortality, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract, and independent of affinity of [connection to] this mortal tabernacle, but are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 475).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 137:5–10, looking for doctrine that illustrates God's mercy and goodness.

Doctrine and Covenants 137:5–6. "I saw … my father and my mother; my brother Alvin"

In addition to seeing God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, the Prophet Joseph mentioned five specific individuals he saw in his vision of the celestial kingdom: "I saw Father Adam and Abraham; and my father and my mother; my brother Alvin, that has long since slept" (D&C 137:5). At the time of this vision, the Prophet's father and mother were living and his father was present in the room. Alvin had passed away 12 years earlier, on November 19, 1823, after he became ill with painful stomach cramps. He was the oldest of the Smith children and had believed Joseph's account of the angel Moroni's visit and of the existence of the Book of Mormon plates. Before he died he encouraged Joseph to be obedient and faithful and to "do everything that [lay] in [his] power to obtain the [Book of Mormon] records" (in *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 401).



Joseph Smith's older brother Alvin died in November 1823 and was buried here, in Palmyra, New York.

Alvin's death was "a great affliction" to the family (Joseph Smith—History 1:56), particularly to 17-year-old Joseph, who later wrote, "I remember well the pangs of sorrow that swelled my youthful bosom and almost burst my tender heart, when he died" (in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843,* ed. Andrew H. Hedges and others [2011], 116). "When Alvin died, the family asked a Presbyterian minister in Palmyra, New York, to officiate at his funeral. As Alvin had not been a member of the minister's congregation, the clergyman asserted in his sermon that Alvin could not be saved. William Smith, Joseph's younger brother, recalled: '[The minister] … intimated very strongly that [Alvin] had gone to hell, for Alvin was not a church member, but he was a good boy and my father did not like it' " (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 401, 403).

When the Prophet Joseph Smith saw Alvin in the celestial kingdom in the vision he received on January 21, 1836, he "marveled how it was that [Alvin] had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set his hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins" (D&C 137:6). The Prophet had learned through translating the Book of Mormon and through other revelations that "this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God" by accepting the gospel, repenting, and being baptized (see Alma 34:32–33; see also D&C 76:51). When the Prophet received the vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137, he did not yet understand vicarious work for the dead. However, four years later, on August 15, 1840, the Prophet Joseph Smith publicly taught the doctrine of baptism for the dead at a funeral. "One month after the funeral address, the Prophet visited his father, who was very ill and near death. The Prophet discussed with his father the doctrine of baptism for the dead, and Father Smith's thoughts turned to his beloved son Alvin. Father Smith asked that the work be done for Alvin 'immediately.' Just minutes before he died, he declared that he saw Alvin. In the latter part of 1840, the Smith family rejoiced as Hyrum received the ordinance of baptism for his brother Alvin" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 403).

Doctrine and Covenants 137:7–9. "All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel"

The Prophet's vision in the Kirtland Temple in 1836, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137, revealed that Heavenly Father's plan makes the blessings of salvation available to all of His children. **Elder Quentin L. Cook** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that the plan of salvation applies to every one of God's children: "At the time Joseph Smith received revelations and organized the Church, the vast majority of churches taught that the Savior's Atonement would *not* bring about the salvation of most of mankind. The common precept was that a few would be saved and the overwhelming majority would be doomed to endless tortures of the most awful and unspeakable intensity. The marvelous doctrine

revealed to the Prophet Joseph unveiled to us a plan of salvation that is applicable to all mankind, including those who do not hear of Christ in this life, children who die before the age of accountability, and those who have no understanding [see D&C 29:46–50; 137:7–10]" ("Our Father's Plan—Big Enough for All His Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2009, 36–37).

While the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137 did not explain how salvation would be available to those who die without a knowledge of the gospel or its essential saving ordinances, later revelations helped clarify this doctrine (see D&C 127; 128; 138).

Doctrine and Covenants 137:9. "I, the Lord, will judge all men … according to the desire of their hearts"

The Prophet Joseph Smith learned in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137 that Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is fair and merciful to all His children. For Alvin Smith and others like him who "[die] without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry" (D&C 137:7), there is hope of obtaining the celestial kingdom. This hope centers on the doctrine that God will judge all people "according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts" (D&C 137:9).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles provided additional understanding of this doctrine and explained how a person's righteous desires will allow him or her to receive the blessings of the gospel if that opportunity is not available in mortality:

"The desires of our hearts will be an important consideration in the final judgment. Alma taught that God 'granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; … according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction. Yea, … he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires.' (Alma 29:4–5.)

"That is a sobering teaching, but it is also a gratifying one. It means that when we have *done* all that we can, our *desires* will carry us the rest of the way. It also means that if our desires are right, we can be forgiven for the mistakes we will inevitably make as we try to carry those desires into effect. What a comfort for our feelings of inadequacy! …

"… We should not assume that the desires of our hearts can serve as a substitute for an ordinance of the gospel. Consider the words of the Lord in commanding two gospel ordinances: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' (John 3:5.) And in respect to the three degrees in the celestial glory, modern revelation states, 'In order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage].' (D&C 131:2.) No exception is implied in these commands or authorized elsewhere in the scriptures.

"In the justice and mercy of God, these rigid commands pertaining to essential ordinances are tempered by divine authorization to perform those ordinances by proxy for those who did not have them performed in this life. Thus, a person in the spirit world who so desires is credited with participating in the ordinance just as if

he or she had done so personally. In this manner, through the loving service of living proxies, departed spirits are also rewarded for the desires of their hearts" ("The Desires of Our Hearts," *Ensign,* June 1986, 67).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized the importance of learning to develop righteous desires:

"What we insistently desire, over time, is what we will eventually become and what we will receive in eternity. …

"… Only by educating and training our desires can they become our allies instead of our enemies!" ("According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts," *Ensign,* Nov. 1996, 21–22).

Think about the desires of your heart. What can you do to educate and train your desires so you will be better prepared to stand before the Lord to be judged? What desires might you need to remove from or develop within your heart?

Doctrine and Covenants 137:10. "All children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom"

The revelation that "all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (D&C 137:10) no doubt brought comfort to many Church members, including Emma and Joseph Smith, who had lost infant children to death. By the time this revelation was received, Joseph and Emma Smith had already lost four of their first six children. Of Joseph and Emma's eleven children—nine born to them and two adopted—only five lived to adulthood (see *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831,* ed. Michael Hubbard McKay and others [2013], 464).

At the time of this revelation, many churches taught that children who died before they were baptized were damned, meaning that they could not be saved by God. Several latter-day scriptures, including this revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137, reveal God's mercy to children who die before the age of accountability, which is eight years old (see Moroni 8:8–22; D&C 29:46–47; 68:25, 27).



***Joseph and Emma with Baby Alvin*, by Liz Lemon Swindle. Joseph and Emma Smith had eleven children (of whom two were adopted). Only five of their children lived to adulthood.**

President Thomas S. Monson provided comfort to those whose children have died before reaching the age of accountability:

"There is only one source of true peace. I am certain that the Lord, who notes the fall of a sparrow, looks with compassion upon those who have been called upon to part—even temporarily—from their precious children. The gifts of healing and of

peace are desperately needed, and Jesus, through His Atonement, has provided them for one and all.

"The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke inspired words of revelation and comfort:

"'All children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven' [D&C 137:10].

"'The mother [and father] who laid down [their] little child[ren], being deprived of the privilege, the joy, and the satisfaction of bringing [them] up to manhood or womanhood in this world, would, after the resurrection, have all the joy, satisfaction and pleasure, and even more than it would have been possible to have had in mortality, in seeing [their] child[ren] grow to the full measure of the stature of [their] spirit[s]' [quoted in Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine,* 5th ed. (1939), 453]. This is as the balm of Gilead to those who grieve, to those who have loved and lost precious children" ("Think to Thank," *Ensign,* Nov. 1998, 20).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught that children who die before the age of accountability will not only be "saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (D&C 137:10) but will also enjoy "the privilege of all the sealing blessings which pertain to … exaltation. …

"Children who die in childhood will not be deprived of any blessing. When they grow, after the resurrection, to the full maturity of the spirit, they will be entitled to all the blessings which they would have been entitled to had they been privileged to tarry here and receive them" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 2:54; see also Mosiah 15:25).

How might the doctrine taught in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 137 bring hope and comfort to those whose loved ones have died without being baptized?

Doctrine and Covenants 138: Additional Historical Background

On October 3, 1918, President Joseph F. Smith experienced a vision of the spirit world that revealed important truths about "the redemption of the dead" (D&C 138:54, 60). He received this revelation while "pondering over the scriptures; and reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God" (D&C 138:1–2). The death of Joseph F. Smith's father, Hyrum Smith, in 1844, when Joseph F. was only 5 years old, and the death of his mother, Mary Fielding Smith, in 1852, when Joseph F. was only 13 years old, aquainted him with loss at a young age. In addition, President Smith had also lost several of his own children and other family members throughout his life. This caused him significant pain and may have led to his pondering on the subject of the dead.

The year 1918 had been an especially difficult one for President Joseph F. Smith. "In January his beloved eldest son, Elder Hyrum Mack Smith, had died suddenly of a ruptured appendix. … In February a young son-in-law died after an accidental fall. And in September, Hyrum's wife, Ida, died just a few days after giving birth, leaving five orphaned children." At the time of this revelation, the devastation of World War I and a worldwide flu epidemic had taken millions of lives. President Smith's own poor health may have also been on his mind. (Lisa Olsen Tait, "Susa Young Gates and the Vision of the Redemption of the Dead," in *Revelations in Context,* ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 318.)



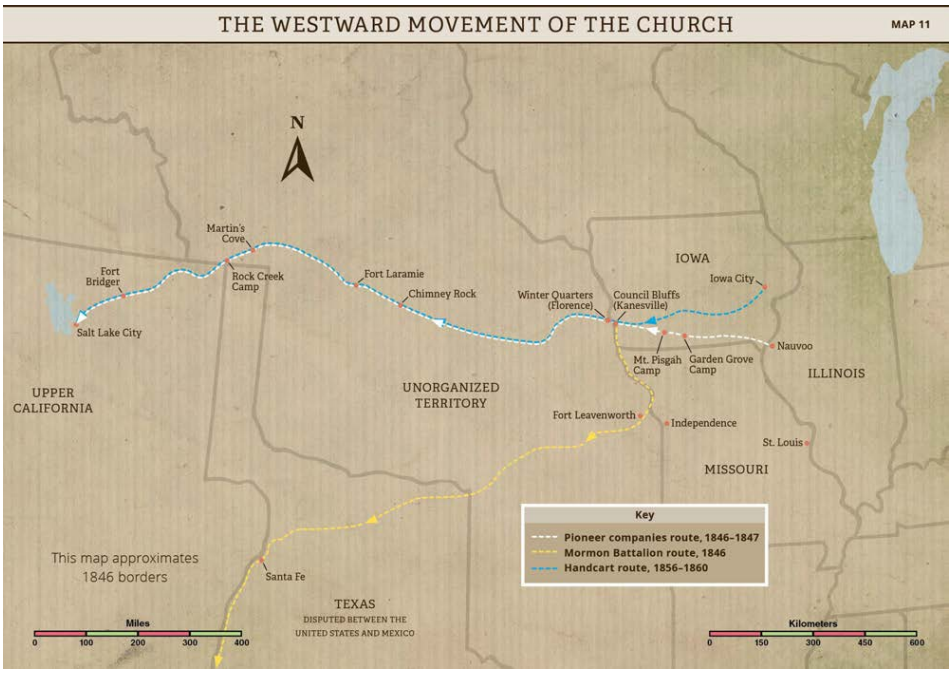
Hyrum Mack Smith was an Apostle and a son of President Joseph F. Smith. He died on January 23, 1918, at age 45.

The day after President Smith received his vision of the spirit world, he spoke during the opening session of the October 1918 general conference: "I will not, I dare not, attempt to enter upon many things that are resting upon my mind this morning, and I shall postpone until some future time, the Lord being willing, my attempt to tell you some of the things that are in my mind, and that dwell in my heart. I have not lived alone these five months. I have dwelt in the spirit of prayer, of supplication, of faith and of determination; and I have had my communications with the Spirit of the Lord continuously" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1918, 2).



President Joseph F. Smith received a vision of the spirit world in October 1918, while he was living in the Beehive House in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Ten days after the conference, President Smith dictated his vision of the spirit world to his son Joseph Fielding Smith, who was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. President Smith's counselors in the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Patriarch to the Church approved the vision as revelation on October 31, 1918. (See Tait, "Susa Young Gates," 319; D&C 138, section heading.) The written account of the vision was added to the Pearl of Great Price in 1976. In 1979 the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles announced that the vision would be added to the Doctrine and Covenants as section 138 in the 1981 edition of the scriptures (see "Additions to D&C Approved," *Church News,* June 2, 1979, 3).



Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–11

President Joseph F. Smith "ponder[s] over the scriptures" and has a vision of the spirit world

Read Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–11, looking for what President Joseph F. Smith did as he studied the scriptures.

Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–11. "As I pondered over these things"

President Joseph F. Smith's experience while "pondering over the scriptures; and reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God, for the redemption of the world" (D&C 138:1–2) illustrates that the Lord blesses those who seek to study and learn by pondering the scriptures. To *ponder* means "to meditate and think deeply, often upon the scriptures or other things of God. When combined with prayer, pondering the things of God may bring revelation and understanding" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Ponder," scriptures.lds.org).

Addressing the youth during general conference, **Elder D. Todd Christofferson** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described how to incorporate pondering during scripture study: "It is a good thing sometimes to read a book of scripture within a set period of time to get an overall sense of its message, but for conversion, you should care more about the amount of time you spend in the scriptures than about the amount you read in that time. I see you sometimes reading a few verses, stopping to ponder them, carefully reading the verses again, and as you think about what they mean, praying for understanding, asking questions in your mind, waiting for spiritual impressions, and writing down the impressions and insights that come so you can remember and learn more. Studying in this way, you may not read a lot of chapters or verses in a half hour, but you will be giving place in your heart for the

word of God, and He will be speaking to you" ("When Thou Art Converted," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2004, 11).

How can you incorporate more pondering into your scripture study?

Doctrine and Covenants 138:3–4. "Through his atonement … mankind might be saved"

In describing what led to his vision of the spirit world, President Joseph F. Smith taught that "the great and wonderful love" of "the Father and the Son" was "made manifest … in the coming of the Redeemer into the world" (D&C 138:3). He also taught that "through [the Savior's] atonement, and by obedience to the principles of the gospel, mankind might be saved" (D&C 138:4). This doctrine is a major message of President Smith's vision and applies to both the living and the dead.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that the Atonement of Jesus Christ offers Heavenly Father's children unconditional and conditional gifts, which both the living and the dead have access to:

"Some gifts coming from the Atonement [of Jesus Christ] are universal, infinite, and unconditional. These include His ransom for Adam's original transgression … [see Articles of Faith 1:2]. Another universal gift is the Resurrection from the dead of every man, woman, and child who lives, has ever lived, or ever will live on earth.

"Other aspects of Christ's atoning gift are conditional. They depend on one's diligence in keeping God's commandments. For example, while all members of the human family are freely given a reprieve from Adam's sin through no effort of their own, they are not given a reprieve from their own sins unless they pledge faith in Christ, repent of those sins, are baptized in His name, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and confirmation into Christ's Church, and press forward in faithful endurance the remainder of life's journey. …

"Of course neither the unconditional nor the conditional blessings of the Atonement are available except through the grace of Christ. Obviously the unconditional blessings of the Atonement are unearned, but the conditional ones are not fully merited either. By living faithfully and keeping the commandments of God, one can receive additional privileges; but they are still given freely, not technically earned. The Book of Mormon declares emphatically that 'there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah' [2 Nephi 2:8].

"By this same grace, God provides for the salvation of little children, the mentally impaired, those who lived without hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ, and so forth: these are redeemed by the universal power of the Atonement of Christ and will have the opportunity to receive the fulness of the gospel after death, in the spirit world, where spirits reside while awaiting the Resurrection [see Alma 40:11; D&C 138; compare Luke 23:43; John 5:25]" ("The Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Ensign,* Mar. 2008, 35–37).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:5–11. "I … read the third and fourth chapters of the first epistle of Peter"

President Joseph F. Smith's vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 138 clarified the meaning of Peter's words that Christ "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God" and that he "went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:18–19). "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (1 Peter 4:6). Additionally, **President Joseph Fielding Smith**, President Joseph F. Smith's son, provided the following interpretation of Peter's teachings: "The Savior inaugurated this great work [of the redemption of the dead] when he went and preached to the spirits held in prison, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh (or in other words, according to the principles of the gospel) and then live according to God in the spirit, through their repentance and acceptance of the mission of Jesus Christ who died for them" (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 2:132–33).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:12–24

President Joseph F. Smith sees the righteous in the spirit world waiting for the Savior to appear

Read Doctrine and Covenants 138:12–24, looking for how President Joseph F. Smith described the spirits visited by the Savior following His Crucifixion.

Doctrine and Covenants 138:12–19, 23–24. "Firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection"

President Joseph F. Smith saw "an innumerable company" and a "vast multitude" of righteous souls who had lived from the time of Adam to the time of Jesus Christ's death, who were gathered to meet the Savior (D&C 138:12, 18). These righteous men and women were "faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality" and "had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection" (D&C 138:12, 14). Nevertheless, these righteous spirits viewed themselves as bound by "the bands of death" or the "chains of death" and as "captives" (D&C 138:16, 18). These spirits "looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage" (D&C 138:50). Therefore, they viewed the moment when "the Son of God appeared" in the spirit world as "the hour of their deliverance" (D&C 138:18). As promised by the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, the Redeemer would "[declare] liberty to the captives who had been faithful" (D&C 138:18; see also Isaiah 61:1). This deliverance was made possible when Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, opening the way for all of Heavenly Father's children to also be resurrected.

Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy explained: "After resurrection, the spirit will never again be separated from the body because the Savior's Resurrection brought total victory over death. In order to obtain our eternal destiny, we need to have this immortal soul—a spirit and body—united forever. With spirit and immortal body inseparably connected, we can 'receive a fulness of joy' [D&C 93:33; 138:17]. In fact, without the Resurrection we could never receive a fulness of joy but would be

miserable forever [see 2 Nephi 9:8–9; D&C 93:34]. Even faithful, righteous people view the separation of their bodies from their spirits as captivity. We are released from this captivity through the Resurrection, which is redemption from the bands or chains of death [see D&C 138:14–19]. There is no salvation without both our spirit and our body" ("And There Shall Be No More Death," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2016, 122).

In what ways can the doctrine of the Resurrection help you feel hope and peace when you experience the loss of a family member or friend?

Doctrine and Covenants 138:12–17. "The spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided"



Jesus Christ visited the spirit world while His body lay in a tomb (see D&C 138:16–18).

While Jesus Christ's followers in Jerusalem experienced sorrow and confusion as they observed His Crucifixion (see Matthew 27:55–58; Mark 15:40–43; Luke 23:49; John 19:25–27), the Savior's appearance in the spirit world following His death was met with "rejoicing" (D&C 138:18). The spirits of the faithful Saints who were "awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world" knew that they would receive "redemption from the bands of death," which would bring about a reuniting of their physical bodies with their spirits, "never again to be divided" (D&C 138:16–17). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** stated: "We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists of having a body" (*Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 211).

President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "Eventually the time will come when each 'spirit and … body shall be reunited

again in … perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame' [Alma 11:43; see also Ecclesiastes 12:7; Alma 40:23; D&C 138:17], never to be separated again" ("Thanks Be to God," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* May 2012, 79).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:20–22. "But unto the wicked he did not go"

Relating his vision of Jesus Christ's visit to the spirit world, President Joseph F. Smith noted that the Savior "did not go … among the ungodly and the unrepentant who had defiled themselves while in the flesh" (D&C 138:20). Nor did He visit "the rebellious who rejected the testimonies and the warnings of the ancient prophets" (D&C 138:21). According to Doctrine and Covenants 138:37, the Savior "could not go personally" to the wicked "because of their rebellion and transgression."

President Smith also described the differences between the state of the wicked and that of the righteous in the spirit world: "Where [the wicked] were, darkness reigned, but among the righteous there was peace" (D&C 138:22; see also Alma 40:12–14). **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that before the Savior's visit to the spirit world, there was a "gulf" between the righteous and wicked spirits:

"Before Christ bridged the gulf between paradise and hell—so that the righteous could mingle with the wicked and preach them the gospel—the wicked in hell were confined to locations which precluded them from contact with the righteous in paradise. …

"Now that the righteous spirits in paradise have been commissioned to carry the message of salvation to the wicked spirits in hell, there is a certain amount of mingling together of the good and bad spirits. Repentance opens the prison doors to the spirits in hell; it enables those bound with the chains of hell to free themselves from darkness, unbelief, ignorance, and sin. As rapidly as they can overcome these obstacles—gain light, believe truth, acquire intelligence, cast off sin, and break the chains of hell—they can leave the hell that imprisons them and dwell with the righteous in the peace of paradise" (*Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. [1966], 755).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:25–60

President Joseph F. Smith learns how the Savior organized the preaching of the gospel in the spirit world

Read Doctrine and Covenants 138:25–35, looking for how the Lord prepared the way for the gospel to be preached to those in spirit prison.

Doctrine and Covenants 138:30–37. "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh"

In his vision of the Savior's visit to the spirit world, President Joseph F. Smith learned that to fulfill God's plan to bring about the redemption of the dead, "messengers clothed with power and authority" were "commissioned … to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the

spirits of men" and "to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets" (D&C 138:30, 32). The message taught to these spirits is centered on the doctrine of Jesus Christ and is the same message taught to Heavenly Father's children who are living (see D&C 138:33–34). All people—both living and dead—who desire entrance into Heavenly Father's kingdom must receive the principles and ordinances of the gospel. In our dispensation this was made possible for the dead beginning on August 15, 1840, when the Prophet Joseph Smith introduced the doctrine of vicarious baptism for the dead (see *Teachings: Joseph Smith,* 403). Whether individuals hear the gospel in mortality or in the spirit world, Heavenly Father ensures that all will have the opportunity to accept or reject the gospel so that all of His children can be judged according to the same standard.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 138:36–52, looking for whom the Savior "instruct[ed] and prepar[ed]" (D&C 138:36) to teach the gospel to the dead.

Doctrine and Covenants 138:38–52. "Among the great and mighty ones"

In describing his vision of the spirit world, President Joseph F. Smith listed the names of a number of ancient prophets and other individuals, including "our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters" (D&C 138:39), who were among the righteous spirits whom the Savior instructed. These persons were given "power to come forth, after [Jesus Christ's] resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father's kingdom, there to be crowned with immortality and eternal life, and … be partakers of all blessings which were held in reserve for those that love him" (D&C 138:51–52), which blessings are made possible through the ordinances and power of the priesthood.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 138:53–60, looking for how spirits "who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin" (D&C 138:57) can be redeemed.

Doctrine and Covenants 138:53–56. "Received their first lessons in the world of spirits"

The Old Testament prophet Abraham was given a vision in which he saw the premortal world. He saw that among all of God's spirit children, some, like Abraham himself, were "noble and great" and were "chosen" to become "rulers" in God's kingdom on earth (Abraham 3:22–23). President Joseph F. Smith also saw many "noble and great ones" in his vision of the spirit world (D&C 138:55), and these "noble and great ones" included his father, Hyrum Smith; his uncle the Prophet Joseph Smith; and other early Church leaders (D&C 138:53). President Smith also observed that, in addition to these leaders, there were "many others" who "received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men" (D&C 138:56). This refers to the doctrine of foreordination, which teaches that "in the premortal spirit world, God appointed certain spirits to fulfill specific missions during their mortal lives. … Foreordination does not guarantee

that individuals will receive certain callings or responsibilities. Such opportunities come in this life as a result of the righteous exercise of agency, just as foreordination came as a result of righteousness in the premortal existence" ("Foreordination," topics.lds.org).

While speaking of the importance of developing our spiritual natures, **President Russell M. Nelson** taught:

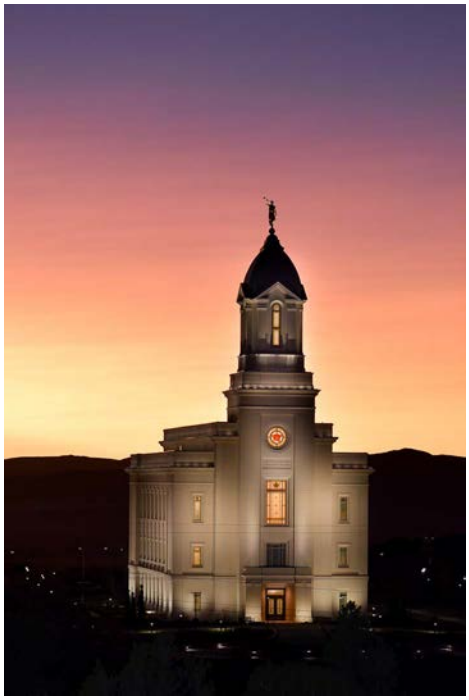
"Your spirit is an eternal entity. …

"Your Heavenly Father has known you for a very long time. You, as His son or daughter, were chosen by Him to come to earth at this precise time, to be a leader in His great work on earth [See Alma 13:2–3; D&C 138:38–57]. You were chosen *not* for your bodily characteristics but for your *spiritual* attributes, such as bravery, courage, integrity of heart, a thirst for truth, a hunger for wisdom, and a desire to serve others.

"You developed some of these attributes premortally. Others you can develop here on earth as you persistently seek them [see 1 Corinthians 12; 14:1–12; Moroni 10:8–19; D&C 46:10–29]" ("Decisions for Eternity," *Ensign* or *Liahona,* Nov. 2013, 107).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:54. "The building of the temples and the performance of ordinances therein for the redemption of the dead"

President Joseph F. Smith emphasized the important role temples and vicarious ordinance work have in the salvation of the dead: "We will not finish our work until we have saved ourselves, and then not until we shall have saved all depending upon us; for we are to become saviors upon Mount Zion, as well as Christ. We are called to this mission. The dead are not perfect without us, neither are we without them [see D&C 128:18]. We have a mission to perform for and in their behalf; we have a certain work to do in order to liberate those who, because of their ignorance and the unfavorable circumstances in which they were placed while here, are unprepared for eternal life; we have to open the door for them, by performing ordinances which they cannot perform for themselves, and which are essential to their release from the 'prison-house,' to come forth and live according to God in the spirit, and be judged according to men in the flesh [see D&C 138:33–34]" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 410).



The performance of temple ordinances makes possible the redemption of the dead (see D&C 138:54).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:57. "The faithful … continue their labors … in the great world of the spirits of the dead"

"The spirits of the dead" (D&C 138:57) must hear the message of the gospel if they are to exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, and receive vicarious ordinances performed on their behalf (see D&C 138:33). President Joseph F. Smith saw in his vision "that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel … among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead" (D&C 138:57). Years before President Smith had this vision, **President Wilford Woodruff** (1807–1898) taught the following about missionary work in the spirit world: "Every Apostle, every Seventy, every Elder, etc., that has died in the faith as soon as he passes to the other side of the v[e]il, enters into the work of the ministry, and there is a thousand times more to preach [to] there than there is here. … They have work on the other side of the v[e]il; and they want men, and they call them" (in "Discourse by Prest. Wilford Woodruff," *Deseret News,* Jan. 25, 1882, 818).

President Joseph F. Smith taught that along with men, faithful women are also called to preach the gospel in the spirit world: "Now, among all these millions of spirits that have lived on the earth and have passed away, from generation to generation, since the beginning of the world, without the knowledge of the gospel—among them you may count that at least one-half are women. Who is going to preach the gospel to the women? Who is going to carry the testimony of Jesus Christ to the hearts of the women who have passed away without a knowledge of the gospel? Well, to my mind, it is a simple thing. These good sisters who have been set apart, ordained to the work, called to it, authorized by the authority of the holy Priesthood to minister for their sex, in the House of God for the living and for the dead, will be fully authorized and empowered to preach the gospel and minister to the women" (*Gospel Doctrine,* 5th ed. [1939], 461).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:58–60. "The dead who repent will be redeemed"

Just as Heavenly Father's children living on earth are free to accept or reject the gospel message as taught to them, the dead are able to choose whether to accept the vicarious work performed on their behalf. **President Lorenzo Snow** (1814–1901) taught about how the gospel will be received by those in the spirit world: "I believe, strongly too, that when the Gospel is preached to the spirits in prison, the success attending that preaching will be far greater than that attending the preaching of our Elders in this life. I believe there will be very few indeed of those spirits who will not gladly receive the Gospel when it is carried to them. The circumstances there will be a thousand times more favorable" ("Discourse by President Lorenzo Snow," *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star,* Jan. 22, 1894, 50).

As you ponder the doctrine and principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 137–38, consider what you can do to participate more fully in the work of salvation for your kindred dead. Set a goal to increase your efforts to do family history and temple service.

CHAPTER 56

Official Declaration 2

Introduction and Timeline

As missionary work spread across the world during the 20th century, Church leaders prayed for further guidance concerning restrictions that had existed on priesthood ordination and temple ordinances for Church members of black African descent. On June 1, 1978, the Lord revealed to President Spencer W. Kimball, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that these restrictions should be removed. On June 8, 1978, the First Presidency announced this revelation in a letter to Church leaders. This letter is recorded in Official Declaration 2.

December 30, 1973

Spencer W. Kimball was ordained as President of the Church.

June 1, 1978

President Kimball, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles received a revelation extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy Church members.

June 8, 1978

The First Presidency issued a letter announcing the revelation.

September 30, 1978

The revelation received on June 1 was presented to Church members during general conference and was unanimously sustained as "the word and will of the Lord" (Official Declaration 2).

November–December 1978

Missionaries arrived in Ghana and Nigeria to establish the Church in West Africa.

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: "Of all things, that for which we should be most grateful today is that the heavens are indeed open and that the restored church of Jesus Christ is founded upon the rock of revelation" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 243). As you study Official Declaration 2, consider how it illustrates the doctrine that "the restored church of Jesus Christ is founded upon the rock of revelation."

Official Declaration 2: Additional Historical Background

"From the mid-1800s until 1978 … the Church did not ordain men of black African descent to [the] priesthood or allow black men or women to participate in temple endowment or sealing ordinances" ("Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org). In regards to the origin of these priesthood and temple restrictions, the introduction to Official Declaration 2 in the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants states: "The Book of Mormon teaches that 'all are alike unto God,' including 'black and white, bond and free, male and female' (2 Nephi 26:33). Throughout the history of the Church, people of every race and ethnicity in many countries have been baptized and have lived as faithful members of the Church. During Joseph Smith's lifetime, a few black male members of the Church were ordained to the priesthood. Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice. Church leaders believed that a revelation from God was needed to alter this practice and prayerfully sought guidance. The revelation came to Church President Spencer W. Kimball and was affirmed to other Church leaders in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978. The

revelation removed all restrictions with regard to race that once applied to the priesthood" (Official Declaration 2, introduction).

"The origins of priesthood availability are not entirely clear. Some explanations with respect to this matter were made in the absence of direct revelation and references to these explanations are sometimes cited in publications. These previous personal statements do not represent Church doctrine" ("Race and the Church: All Are Alike Unto God," Feb. 29, 2012, mormonnewsroom.org). "Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form" ("Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org).

Speaking of past theories and alleged reasons given by some for the priesthood and temple restrictions, **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote:

"In June 1978 we were thrilled when President Spencer W. Kimball, our prophet-president, announced that 'all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color' (Official Declaration 2). The direction was changed by revelation, and with that revelation the reasons mortals had given for the prior direction were all swept away.

"In a 1988 interview on the tenth anniversary of the revelation on the priesthood, I explained my attitude toward attempts to supply mortal reasons for divine revelation:

"'If you read the scriptures with this question in mind, "Why did the Lord command this or why did he command that," you find that in less than one in a hundred commands was any reason given. It's not the pattern of the Lord to give reasons. We [mortals] can put reasons to revelation. We can put reasons to commandments. When we do, we're on our own. Some people put reasons to the one we're talking about here [the priesthood and temple restrictions], and they turned out to be spectacularly wrong. …

"'… Let's don't make the mistake that's been made in the past, here and in other areas, trying to put reasons to revelation. The reasons turn out to be man-made to a great extent. The revelations are what we sustain as the will of the Lord, and that's where safety lies'" (*Life's Lessons Learned* [2011], 68–69).

For additional historical background regarding the restrictions on priesthood ordination and temple ordinances for black Church members of African descent, see "Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org.

Official Declaration 2

The Lord reveals that all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood and the blessings of the temple may be extended to all worthy Church members

Read Official Declaration 2, looking for what the First Presidency declared in 1978.

Official Declaration 2. "A revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball"

The announcement of the revelation "that the long-promised day [had] come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood" (Official Declaration 2) was included in a letter to Church leaders throughout the world. This letter is included in Official Declaration 2. The letter was dated June 8, 1978, and was first released through the media on June 9, 1978. On September 30, 1978, during general conference, President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency presented this revelation "extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church" (Official Declaration 2) to Church members for a sustaining vote. Church members sustained the revelation as "the word and will of the Lord" (Official Declaration 2). Thus, Official Declaration 2 stands as further witness that the heavens are still open and that the Lord guides His Church through continuing revelation to His prophets. While testifying that the Lord reveals His will to His prophets today, **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) declared:

"Continuous revelation is indeed the very lifeblood of the gospel of the living Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. …

"How this confused world of today needs revelation from God. … How absurd it would be to think that the Lord would give to a small handful of people in Palestine and the Old World his precious direction through revelation and now, in our extremity, close the heavens. …

"I bear witness to the world today that more than a century and a half ago the iron ceiling was shattered; the heavens were once again opened, and since that time revelations have been continuous.

"That new day dawned when another soul with passionate yearning prayed for divine guidance. A spot of hidden solitude was found, knees were bent, a heart was humbled, pleadings were voiced, and a light brighter than the noonday sun illuminated the world—the curtain never to be closed again.

"A young lad … , Joseph Smith, of incomparable faith, broke the spell, shattered the 'heavens of iron' and reestablished communication. … A new prophet was in the land and through him God set up his kingdom, never to be destroyed nor left to another people—a kingdom that will stand forever. …

"Since that momentous day in 1820, additional scripture has continued to come, including the numerous and vital revelations flowing in a never-ending stream from God to his prophets on the earth. …

"… We testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain these revelations which come month to month and day to day. We testify also that there is, since 1830 when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, and will continue to be, so long as time shall last, a prophet, recognized of God and his people, who will continue to interpret the mind and will of the Lord" ("Revelation: The Word of the Lord to His Prophets," *Ensign,* May 1977, 76–78).

Why do you think it is important to know that the Lord continues to direct His Church through revelation to His prophets?

Official Declaration 2. Church leaders accepted the revelation received on June 1, 1978, and "unanimously approved it"

While presenting to Church members the revelation lifting restrictions on priesthood and temple blessings, President N. Eldon Tanner emphasized Church leaders' unanimous support and approval of the revelation: "After [President Spencer W. Kimball] had received this revelation, which came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it" (Official Declaration 2). This meeting occurred on June 1, 1978, during which ten members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency were present (see Gordon B. Hinckley, "Priesthood Restoration," *Ensign,* Oct. 1988, 69–70).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "This revelation which came on the first day of June was reaffirmed by the spirit of inspiration one week later on June 8, when the Brethren approved the document that was to be announced to the world" ("All Are Alike unto God" [Church Educational System Symposium, Aug. 18, 1978], 5, speeches.byu.edu). Later that day, the First Presidency contacted two members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Elder Mark E. Petersen and Elder Delbert L. Stapley—who had not been able to attend either the June 1 or June 8 meetings. Elder Peterson declared his full support of the revelation by telephone from South America, where he was on assignment. Elder Stapley approved the revelation when the First Presidency visited him that day in the hospital (see Henry Dixon Taylor, *Autobiography of Henry Dixon Taylor* [1980], 286–87). Thus, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were united in sustaining the revelation as "the word and will of the Lord" (Official Declaration 2; see also D&C 107:27, 29).



The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when the revelation on the priesthood was received in June 1978

The following day, June 9, 1978, the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met with all available General Authorities in the Salt Lake Temple. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who was then serving as a member of the Seventy and was present at the meeting, related the following experience: "I had no inkling what was going on. And as we knelt down to pray [to begin the meeting], the Spirit told me what it was going to be … and after that prayer, President Kimball began the description. I began to weep" ("Associated Press Interviews: 10th Anniversary of Priesthood Revelation," May 24, 1988, Church History Library).

During this meeting the letter announcing the revelation was read, and each member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who was present shared his individual witness and testimony that the decision to "[extend] priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church" (Official Declaration 2) came by revelation. President Spencer W. Kimball called for a sustaining vote, and the General Authorities of the Church approved unanimously.

The effort of Church leaders to act in unity on the Lord's inspiration and revelations has always been a guiding principle for the governing councils of the Church. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** (1910–2008) taught:

"Any major questions of policy, procedures, programs, or doctrine are considered deliberately and prayerfully by the First Presidency and the Twelve together. These two quorums, the Quorum of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve,

meeting together, with every man having total freedom to express himself, consider every major question. …

"No decision emanates from the deliberations of the First Presidency and the Twelve without total unanimity among all concerned. At the outset in considering matters, there may be differences of opinion. These are to be expected. These men come from different backgrounds. They are men who think for themselves. But before a final decision is reached, there comes a unanimity of mind and voice. …

"… I have seen differences of opinion presented in these deliberations. Out of this very process of men speaking their minds has come a sifting and winnowing of ideas and concepts. But I have never observed serious discord or personal enmity among my Brethren. I have, rather, observed a beautiful and remarkable thing—the coming together, under the directing influence of the Holy Spirit and under the power of revelation, of divergent views until there is total harmony and full agreement. Only then is implementation made. That, I testify, represents the spirit of revelation manifested again and again in directing this the Lord's work.

"I know of no other governing body of any kind of which this might be said" ("God Is at the Helm," *Ensign,* May 1994, 54, 59).

Official Declaration 2. "As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth"

Before June 1, 1978, "all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords" had not always been available "to every worthy member of the Church" (Official Declaration 2). "As the Church grew worldwide, its overarching mission to 'go ye therefore, and teach all nations' [Matthew 28:19] seemed increasingly incompatible with the priesthood and temple restrictions. The Book of Mormon declared that the gospel message of salvation should go forth to 'every nation, kindred, tongue, and people' [Mosiah 15:28; 1 Nephi 19:17]. While there were no limits on whom the Lord invited to 'partake of his goodness' through baptism [2 Nephi 26:23, 28], the priesthood and temple restrictions created significant barriers, a point made increasingly evident as the Church spread in international locations with diverse and mixed racial heritages.

"Brazil in particular presented many challenges. Unlike the United States and South Africa where legal and [other forms of] racism led to deeply segregated societies, Brazil prided itself on its open, integrated, and mixed racial heritage. In 1975, the Church announced that a temple would be built in São Paulo, Brazil. As the temple construction proceeded, Church authorities encountered faithful black and mixed-ancestry [Church members] who had contributed financially and in other ways to the building of the São Paulo temple, a sanctuary they realized they would not be allowed to enter once it was completed. Their sacrifices, as well as the conversions of thousands of Nigerians and Ghanaians in the 1960s and early 1970s, moved Church leaders" ("Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org).



The São Paulo Brazil Temple was dedicated on October 30, 1978.

"The expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth" and the occurrence of "people of many nations [responding] to the message of the restored gospel, and [joining] the Church in ever-increasing numbers … inspired [Church leaders] with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords" (Official Declaration 2).

Official Declaration 2. "Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us"

Motivated by the desire to extend all the blessings of the gospel to every worthy Church member, President Spencer W. Kimball began a careful study of the scriptures and statements by Church leaders since the Prophet Joseph Smith. A number of latter-day prophets had taught that "at some time, in God's eternal plan, all … brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood" (Official Declaration 2). **President Brigham Young** (1801–1877) "said that at some future day, black Church members would 'have [all] the privilege and more' enjoyed by other members" ("Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org). **President David O. McKay** (1873–1970) testified that "sometime in God's eternal plan," worthy men of black African descent "will be given the right to hold the priesthood" (in "Policy Statement of Presidency," *Church News,* Jan. 10, 1970, 12). Shortly after becoming President of the Church in 1972, **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) explained that it was "only a matter of time" before Church members of black African descent would be able to receive all the blessings of the gospel. He affirmed: "We're just waiting for that time" (in L. Brent Goates, *Harold B. Lee: Prophet and Seer* [1985], 506).

Despite their desires to see that "long-promised day … come" (Official Declaration 2), "Church leaders believed that a revelation from God was needed to alter the policy [of priesthood and temple restrictions for those of black African descent], and they made ongoing efforts to understand what should be done" ("Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org).

As to why the revelation came when it did, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught, "It was a matter of faith and righteousness and seeking on the one hand, and it was a matter of the divine timetable on the other hand" ("All Are Alike unto God," 3, speeches.byu.edu; "The New Revelation on Priesthood," in *Priesthood* [1981], 133).

Official Declaration 2. "Witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld"

The examples of Helvécio and Rudá Martins from Brazil and Joseph William Billy Johnson from Ghana illustrate the remarkable faithfulness of those who patiently waited on God to extend priesthood and temple blessings to all His worthy children.

"On a clear April night in 1972, while stuck in a traffic jam in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Helvécio Martins contemplated his family's search for truth. He and his wife, Rudá, had investigated many religions, but none seemed to fill their spiritual void. 'I conversed with God that night, asking for help,' he [said]" ("Elder Helvécio Martins of the Seventy," *Ensign,* May 1990, 106). Several nights later, missionaries came to their home in Rio de Janeiro. Elder Martins recalled:

"The moment those two young men stepped into our apartment, all of my gloom and spiritual discomfort immediately disappeared and was replaced by a calm and serenity which I now know came from the influence of the Holy Spirit. An extraordinary feeling of relief overcame me as I greeted those missionaries and invited my two children into the room. …

"… Before we knew it, the hour was one in the morning, and those missionaries had given us, I … realize in retrospect, most of the missionary lessons" (Helvécio Martins, with Mark Grover, *The Autobiography of Elder Helvécio Martins* [1994], 43).

"The family was baptized on 2 July 1972. According to Elder Martins, 'We had found the truth, and nothing would stop us from living it'—not even the fact that their family could not directly enjoy the blessings of the priesthood. But 'when the Spirit tells you the gospel is true,' [said Elder Martins], 'how can you deny it?'" ("Elder Helvécio Martins of the Seventy," 106). Because Elder Martins and his family had received a testimony of the restored gospel through the Holy Ghost, they moved forward, trusting in the Lord, though there were things that they did not understand.

The Martins family served faithfully in the Church. In 1975, President Spencer W. Kimball announced that a temple would be built in São Paulo, Brazil. "'Although we didn't expect to enter it, we worked for the construction of the temple just like other members. … It was the house of the Lord, after all.' Sister Martins sold her jewelry to help with fund-raising, and Brother Martins served on the publicity committee" ("Elder Helvécio Martins of the Seventy," 106).

Similar devotion and faithfulness were evident in Africa. When the Church sent missionaries to Ghana in December 1978, they found "the gospel was already well established there" because of the devoted efforts of Joseph William Billy Johnson (Elizabeth Maki, "'A People Prepared': West African Pioneer Preached the Gospel Before Missionaries," history.lds.org). Brother Johnson had first learned of the Church 14 years earlier when a friend gave him copies of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and other Church literature. He recounted: "As I read the Book of Mormon I became convinced that it was really the word of God, and sometimes while reading I would burst into tears. I felt the Spirit as I read. I felt that the book had an inspired message, especially the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith" (Joseph William Billy Johnson, "We Felt the Spirit of the Pioneers," in *"All Are Alike unto God"* ed. Dale E. LeBaron [1990], 14).



A congregation of Latter-day Saints in Ghana, Africa

"Together with [his friends] R. A. F. Mensah and Clement Osekre, Johnson organized a congregation based on the teachings found in a single Book of Mormon and a few pamphlets that Mensah had received from a woman in Europe. Mensah organized a school teaching both secular subjects and religion, again using the Book of Mormon as text. Johnson especially was tireless in spreading the message of the restored church in Ghana, going from street to street, day after day, preaching the gospel.

"'I was constrained to do it,' he said. 'Despite opposition I met on the way—I was highly, really opposed. But still I went on. I couldn't stop it at all.' …

"The men wrote to Church headquarters in Salt Lake asking for missionaries to be sent to Ghana to baptize them and establish the Church there, but because of [the priesthood restriction] (making Church organization there impossible), their requests went unfulfilled. They were encouraged by Church President David O. McKay to continue studying the scriptures and to be faithful. …

"Having maintained steady correspondence with Salt Lake, the men learned in 1969 that a member of the Church, Lynn Hilton, would soon be in Ghana on business. Johnson and his associates tracked Hilton down, asked him if he indeed held the 'Holy Melchizedek Priesthood,' and took him to the building where they held their meetings.

"'It was a mud architecture building, only one story high,' Hilton remembered. 'And there was a sign over the door that said, "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Accra, Ghana Branch." … They took us inside and there were rough lumber benches. A dirt floor as I recall.'

"There, the men showed Hilton their one, well-used copy of the Book of Mormon. …

"The men explained that each person was allowed just a few minutes with the book, then it was passed on to the next person to read; the book, they said, was being 'used and read around the clock and week after week.'

"With a priesthood holder finally in their midst, the men asked Hilton if he would baptize them. Instead, Hilton offered them priesthood blessings and left with a promise to send them multiple copies of the Book of Mormon for their congregations to use.

"In time, Johnson moved his proselyting efforts from Accra to Cape Coast and did his best to organize the Church, eventually establishing several branches with hundreds of members in Ghana. For years, he led the members in regular fasts, pleading for missionaries from Salt Lake to come and establish the Church among them" (Maki, "A People Prepared," history.lds.org).

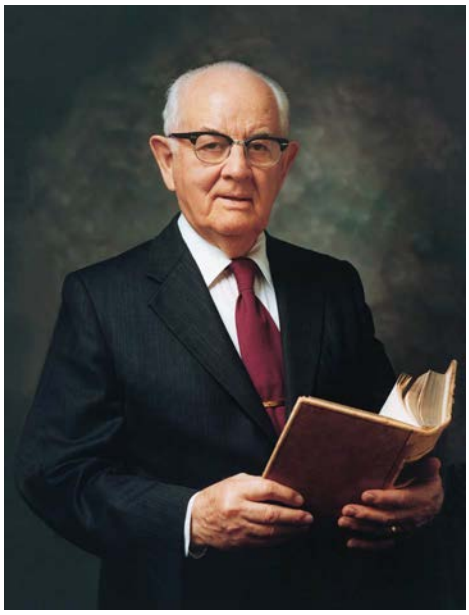
For more information regarding the Martins family and Joseph William Billy Johnson, see the commentary titled "The significance of extending priesthood ordination to all worthy male members of the Church and temple blessings to every worthy Church member" in this chapter.

Why do you think the Martins family and Joseph William Billy Johnson were willing to embrace and live the restored gospel even though they were denied priesthood and temple blessings at the time?

Official Declaration 2. "Supplicating the Lord for divine guidance"

The scriptures and Church history contain many examples of prophets seeking divine guidance from the Lord to direct His work and Church on the earth. Before 1978 the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had discussed the priesthood restriction on numerous occasions and had earnestly prayed about it. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** stated: "Obviously, the Brethren have had a great anxiety and concern about [the priesthood and temple restrictions] for a long period of time" ("All Are Alike unto God," 3, speeches.byu.edu; "The New Revelation on Priesthood," 132). **President Gordon B. Hinckley** explained: "The question of extending the blessings of the priesthood to blacks had been on the minds of many of the Brethren over a period of years. It had repeatedly been brought up by Presidents of the Church" ("Priesthood Restoration," 70). President

David O. McKay, for example, studied the matter, but "after praying for guidance, [he] did not feel impressed to lift the ban" ("Race and the Priesthood," Gospel Topics Essays, topics.lds.org).



President Spencer W. Kimball, 1895–1985

When **President Spencer W. Kimball** became the President of the Church, the priesthood restriction became a particular concern to him. He provided the following account of his own efforts to receive divine guidance regarding the matter: "I knew that something was before us that was extremely important to many of the children of God. I knew that we could receive the revelations of the Lord only by being worthy and ready for them and ready to accept them and put them into place. Day after day I went alone and with great solemnity and seriousness in the upper rooms of the temple, and there I offered my soul and offered my efforts to go forward with the program. I wanted to do what he wanted. I talked about it to him and said, 'Lord, I want only what is right. … We want only the thing that thou dost want, and we want it when you want it and not until'" (*Teachings: Spencer W. Kimball,* 238).

On June 1, 1978, members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met in the Salt Lake Temple. They had come fasting. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** recalled:

"Each first Thursday of the month is a day for fasting and the bearing of testimony by the General Authorities of the Church. So many of the Brethren are absent from home on the first Sunday of the month because of assignments to stake conferences that we hold our monthly testimony meeting in an upper room of the Salt Lake Temple the first Thursday of the month. The Thursday of which I speak was June 1, 1978. We heard testimonies from some of the brethren, and we partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

"It was a wonderfully spiritual meeting, as are all such meetings in these holy precincts and under these circumstances. Then the members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric were excused, while there remained the president of the Church, his two Counselors, and ten members of the Council of the Twelve—two being absent, one in South America and the other in the hospital" ("Priesthood Restoration," 69–70).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie recounted:

"President Kimball brought up the matter of the possible conferral of the priesthood upon those of all races. This was a subject that the group of us had discussed at length on numerous occasions in the preceding weeks and months. The President restated the problem involved, reminded us of our prior discussions,

and said he had spent many days alone in [the] upper room [of the temple] pleading with the Lord for an answer to our prayers. … He expressed the hope that we might receive a clear answer [from the Lord] one way or the other so the matter might be laid to rest.

"At this point President Kimball asked the brethren if any of them desired to express their feelings and views as to the matter in hand. We all did so, freely and fluently and at considerable length, each person stating his views and manifesting the feelings of his heart. There was a marvelous outpouring of unity, oneness, and agreement in the council. This session continued for somewhat more than two hours. Then President Kimball suggested that we unite in formal prayer and said, modestly, that if it was agreeable with the rest of us he would act as voice" ("The New Revelation on Priesthood," in *Priesthood,* 127–28).

Elder McConkie also described the feeling of unity that existed among those present as President Kimball offered the prayer:

"In his prayer President Kimball asked that all of us might be cleansed and made free from sin so that we might receive the Lord's word. He counseled freely and fully with the Lord, was given utterance by the power of the Spirit, and what he said was inspired from on high. It was one of those rare and seldom-experienced times when the disciples of the Lord are perfectly united, when every heart beats as one, and when the same Spirit beats in every bosom. …

"It was during this prayer that the revelation came" ("The New Revelation on Priesthood," in *Priesthood,* 126, 128).

What does President Spencer W. Kimball's example teach you about seeking personal revelation?

Official Declaration 2. "He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come"

Beginning with President Brigham Young, prophets of the Church had declared that sometime in God's eternal plan all of the blessings of the priesthood and temple would be given to those from whom these blessings had once been withheld. This "long-promised day" came on June 1, 1978, when the Lord confirmed through revelation to President Spencer W. Kimball, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that "all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color" (Official Declaration 2).

President Spencer W. Kimball later testified: "We had the glorious experience of having the Lord indicate clearly that the time had come when all worthy men and women everywhere can be fellowheirs and partakers of the full blessings of the gospel. I want you to know, as a special witness of the Savior, how close I have felt to him and to our Heavenly Father as I have made numerous visits to the upper rooms in the temple, going on some days several times by myself. The Lord made it very clear to me what was to be done" (*Teachings: Spencer W. Kimball,* 239).

Some members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles later described the spiritual witness they received when the revelation ending the priesthood and temple

restrictions was given. **President Gordon B. Hinckley**, who was serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1978, testified:

"There was a hallowed and sanctified atmosphere in the room. For me, it felt as if a conduit opened between the heavenly throne and the kneeling, pleading prophet of God who was joined by his Brethren. The Spirit of God was there. And by the power of the Holy Ghost there came to that prophet an assurance that the thing for which he prayed was right, that the time had come, and that now the wondrous blessings of the priesthood should be extended to worthy men everywhere regardless of lineage.

"Every man in that circle, by the power of the Holy Ghost, knew the same thing.

"It was a quiet sublime occasion.

"There was not the sound 'as of a rushing mighty wind,' there were not 'cloven tongues like as of fire' (Acts 2:2–3) as there had been on the Day of Pentecost. But there was a Pentecostal spirit, for the Holy Ghost was there.

"No voice audible to our physical ears was heard. But the voice of the Spirit whispered with a certainty into our minds and our very souls.

"It was for us, at least for me personally, as I imagine it was with Enos, who said concerning his remarkable experience, 'And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind.' (Enos 1:10.)

"So it was on that memorable June 1, 1978. We left that meeting subdued and reverent and joyful. Not one of us who was present on that occasion was ever quite the same after that. Nor has the Church been quite the same.

"All of us knew that the time had come for a change and that the decision had come from the heavens. The answer was clear. There was perfect unity among us in our experience and in our understanding" ("Priesthood Restoration," 70).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie affirmed that the revelation came to each individual who was present during the meeting in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978:

"On this occasion, because of the importuning and the faith, and because the hour and the time had arrived, the Lord in his providences poured out the Holy Ghost upon the First Presidency and the Twelve in a miraculous and marvelous manner, beyond anything that any then present had ever experienced. The revelation came to the President of the Church; it also came to each individual present. … The result was that President Kimball knew, and each one of us knew, independent of any other person, by direct and personal revelation to us, that the time had now come to extend the gospel and all its blessings and all its obligations, including the priesthood and the blessings of the house of the Lord, to those of every nation, culture, and race. … There was no question whatsoever as to what happened or as to the word and message that came.

"The revelation came to the president of the Church and, in harmony with Church government, was announced by him; the announcement was made eight days later over the signature of the First Presidency. But in this instance, in addition to the revelation coming to the man who would announce it to the Church and to the world, and who was sustained as the mouthpiece of God on earth, the revelation

came to every member of the body that I have named. They all knew it in the temple.

"In my judgment this was done by the Lord in this way because it was a revelation of such tremendous significance and import; one which would reverse the whole direction of the Church, procedurally and administratively; one which would affect the living and the dead; one which would affect the total relationship that we have with the world; one, I say, of such significance that the Lord wanted independent witnesses who could bear record that the thing had happened" ("All Are Alike unto God," 4, speeches.byu.edu; "The New Revelation on Priesthood," in *Priesthood,* 133–34).

Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared his testimony of the revelation that was received on June 1, 1978:

"I was in the temple when President Spencer W. Kimball received the revelation regarding the priesthood. I was the junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve. I was there. I was there with the outpouring of the Spirit in that room so strong that none of us could speak afterwards. We just left quietly to go back to the office. No one could say anything because of the powerful outpouring of the heavenly spiritual experience.

"But just a few hours after the announcement was made to the press, I was assigned to attend a stake conference in Detroit, Michigan. When my plane landed in Chicago, I noticed an edition of the *Chicago Tribune* on the newsstand. The headline in the paper said, "Mormons Give Blacks Priesthood." And the subheading said, "President Kimball Claims to Have Received a Revelation." I bought a copy of the newspaper. I stared at one word in that subheading—*claims.* It stood out to me just like it was in red neon. As I walked along the hallway to make my plane connection, I thought, *Here I am now in Chicago walking through this busy airport, yet I was a witness to this revelation. I was there. I witnessed it. I felt that heavenly influence. I was part of it.* Little did the editor of that newspaper realize the truth of that revelation when he wrote, "… Claims to Have Received a Revelation." Little did he know, or the printer, or the man who put the ink on the press, or the one who delivered the newspaper—little did any of them know that it was truly a revelation from God. Little did they know what I knew because I was a witness to it" ("This Work Is True," *Ensign,* May 1996, 23).

Official Declaration 2. The significance of extending priesthood ordination to all worthy male members of the Church and temple blessings to every worthy Church member

The revelation to President Spencer W. Kimball ending the priesthood restriction had a profound impact on the Church, its members, and people throughout the world. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught that this revelation "affects our missionary work and all of our preaching to the world. This affects our genealogical research and all of our temple ordinances. This affects what is going on in the spirit world, because the gospel is preached in the spirit world preparatory to men's receiving the vicarious ordinances which make them heirs of salvation and exaltation. This is a revelation of tremendous significance" ("All Are Alike unto

God," 4, speeches.byu.edu; "The New Revelation on Priesthood," in *Priesthood,* 134–35).

For black men of African descent, ordination to the priesthood meant that they could baptize their children, administer priesthood blessings, and serve as home teachers and full-time missionaries. The revelation also extended to all black Church members the blessings of temple ordinances, including the opportunity to be sealed for eternity as families.



"The long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood" (Official Declaration 2).

Helvécio Martins recalled how he and his wife, Rudá, reacted to the announcement of the revelation: "I could not contain my emotions. Rudá and I went into our bedroom, knelt down, and prayed. We wept as we thanked our Father in Heaven for an event we had only dreamed about. The day had actually arrived, and in *our* mortal lives" (*The Autobiography of Elder Helvecio Martins,* 69–70). The Martins family was sealed in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. Their son, Marcus, was among the first Church members of African descent to serve a mission after the priesthood restriction was lifted. Elder Martins remembered: "One week after Marcus and I received the Aaronic Priesthood, we were ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood. President João Eduardo Keminy of the Rio de Janeiro-Niteroi Stake ordained me an elder, after which I put my hands on the head of my son and, with the assistance of others in the circle, conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood on him. I felt I would explode with joy, happiness, and contentment. What an incredible experience for me and for Marcus" (*The Autobiography of Elder Helvecio Martins,* 70–71). Helvécio Martins served as a local priesthood leader in Brazil and eventually was called as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

In Ghana, Joseph William Billy Johnson "heard the news around midnight at the end of a hard day when he was compelled to tune his radio to BBC before going to bed.

" 'I jumped and started crying and rejoicing in the Lord with tears that now is the time that the Lord will send missionaries to Ghana and to other parts of Africa to receive the priesthood,' he remembered. 'I was so happy indeed.'

"When missionaries finally arrived a few months later, they were directed to Johnson's chapel in Cape Coast, Ghana, where they found 'a large statue of the Angel Moroni standing on a ball and blowing a trumpet. There were also pictures of the Bible and the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, the Tabernacle Choir, and other Latter-day Saint scenes.'

"Many of the members of Johnson's congregations requested baptism, and on the first day thirty-four people were interviewed for the ordinance. The missionaries spent an afternoon and into the evening hours baptizing new members, with

several more arriving at Johnson's home in tears that night, having walked from a distant village in hopes of being baptized that day.

"Within a few days, the Cape Coast Branch had been organized with Joseph William Billy Johnson as branch president" ("A People Prepared," history.lds.org).



Group of people lined up to be baptized in Nigeria, Africa

Approximately 600 members of Brother Johnson's congregation were baptized (see Johnson, "We Felt the Spirit of the Pioneers," in *"All Are Alike unto God,"* 22). After faithfully waiting for 14 years, Joseph William Billy Johnson had finally become a member of the Lord's Church. "After serving as the Cape Coast branch's first president, [Brother] Johnson went on to serve as a district president, a full-time missionary, and as patriarch of the Cape Coast Ghana Stake" ("A People Prepared," history.lds.org).

As a result of the revelation ending the priesthood restriction, missionaries today preach the gospel in many countries in Africa, temples have since been built on that continent, and hundreds of thousands of people of African descent have received the ordinances of the gospel for themselves and for their deceased ancestors. Today Church members of African descent throughout the world experience meaningful integration and unity with their fellow Saints as they strive to become "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Consider the doctrine and principles you have learned from Official Declaration 2 about prophets and revelation. How has your life been blessed because the Lord calls living prophets and guides the Church through revelation to them?



SEMINARIES AND
INSTITUTES OF RELIGION

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

ENGLISH
4 02143 44000 0
14344 000