

D&C 43-46

Lesson 9, Doctrine & Covenants, Adult Religion Class, Monday, 14 Nov 2016

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General Introduction

These revelations cover a short period of time—as little as three weeks—in the history of the Church. But they were critical to the growing Church in Kirtland and provided a strong sense of direction to the new members who were trying to understand just what it meant to be a member of the Church of Christ.

Summary Chronology

- **Between 9 and 22 Feb 1831** – Joseph Smith received D&C 43 and 44.
- **Mon, 14 Feb 1831** – The missionaries in Missouri (Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Parley Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Frederick Williams) decided to send Parley Pratt back to Kirtland to visit the branches they organized there. Parley began the one-thousand-mile journey on this day.
- **Tue, 22 Feb 1831** – Joseph wrote a letter to Martin Harris, requesting he come to Ohio as soon as possible to help arrange things for subsequent New York Saints. He arrived 12 Mar 1831.
- **Wed, 23 Feb 1831** – Joseph Smith received the remainder of what is today D&C 42 (vv. 74-93).
- **Thu-Fri, 3-4 Mar 1831** – Joseph Smith wrote a letter to his brother, Hyrum, who was in Colesville, New York, asking that he come to Kirtland and bring their father, Joseph Smith, Sr. Hyrum did so, leaving Newel Knight to organize the Colesville Saints for the trip to Kirtland.
- **Mon, 7 Mar 1831** – Joseph Smith received D&C 45.
- **Tue, 8 Mar 1831** – Joseph Smith received D&C 46 and 47. He and Sidney Rigdon began the translation of the New Testament in response to D&C 45:60-62.

D&C 43 – Mrs. Hubbell and Revelations

Date and Location

Between 9 and 22 February 1831, in Kirtland, Ohio.

Setting

Shortly after D&C 42 was received, a woman came among the Saints in Kirtland. Her last name, according to John Whitmer, was “Hubble.” There are two candidates for who this might be. The first is Laura Fuller Hubbell, a sister of one of the elders from Kirtland. More likely is Louisa Hubbell, who joined the Church for only a few weeks and then returned to her former church, The Disciples of Christ led by Alexander Campbell.¹

In Joseph’s history, he wrote that she came “with great pretensions to revealing commandments, laws and other curious matters” so that it was “necessary to inquire of the Lord.”² The result was D&C 43.

John Whitmer added in his history that she “professed to be a prophetess of the Lord. and professed to have many revelations, and knew the Book of mormon was true; and that she should become a teacher in the Church of Christ. She appeared very sanctimonious and deceived some, who were not able to detect her in her hypocrisy: others however had a spirit of discernment and her folies and abominations were made manifest.”³

Ezra Booth, a good member at this time but who by the end of the year became an enemy to Joseph Smith, wrote in his disaffection the following for the *Painesville Telegraph* (20 December 1831) about this incident (<http://www.sidney-rigdon.com/dbroadhu/OH/paintel2.htm#122031>):

A female professing to be a prophetess, made her appearance in Kirtland, and so ingratiated herself into the esteem and favor of some of the Elders, that they received her, as a person commissioned to act a conspicuous part in Mormonizing the world. Rigdon, and some others, gave her the right hand of fellowship, and literally saluted her with what they called the kiss of charity. But

¹ *JSP*, D1:257n95.

² *JSP*, D1:257.

³ *JSP*, H2:29.

Smith, viewing her as encroaching upon his sacred premises, declared her an impostor, and she returned to the place from whence she came. Her visit, however, made a deep impression on the minds of many, and the barbed arrow which she left in the hearts of some, is not yet eradicated.

D&C 43 deals in part with an issue already dealt with in D&C 28—who can receive revelations for the Church. But that was in Fayette in 1830 and this is Kirtland in 1831. D&C 28 had not been published and was certainly unfamiliar to most, if not all, of the Kirtland Saints, so D&C 43 repeats some of the same information for their benefit. Like D&C 42 received just a few days previously, D&C 43 was given in the presence of several elders.

D&C 43 solves a thorny theological problem: does God speak to his children today, and if so, how do we know his voice? Many said God only spoke through the text of the Bible. Others thought he continued to speak to man, such as Thomas Müntzer, a German contemporary of Martin Luther's who gave his life for the concept that God spoke to modern prophets.⁴

Joseph Smith declared that God spoke to man again, directly and personally. But if God spoke to everyone, whose revelations should be binding on the Church? The answer here, like D&C 28, is God's chosen Prophet.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is from Revelation Book 1. It was first published in *The Evening and Morning Star* (October 1832), as Chapter 45 in the 1833 Book of Commandments, and as Section 14 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

1. None other appointed (1-7)
2. Purposes of meeting together (8-11)
3. Support Joseph (12-14)
4. Cry repentance (15-22)
5. The gathering (23-28)
6. The great Millennium (29-35)

Commentary

None other appointed (1-7)

1 *hearken...give ear.* The parallel phrases emphasize the need to listen and obey what the Lord is about to tell them.

2 *ye have received a commandment for a law.* Referring to D&C 42 received just a few days previously, a revelation

that had been received warmly by the Kirtland members as from God.

3 *there is none other appointed.* They should not be deceived by Mrs. Hubbell or anyone else. Revelation for the Church is not a spiritual free-for-all. The Lord appoints one—his chosen prophet—to speak for him before the whole Church. It's also important to note that in 1831 there was yet no First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve, who today are also sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators. The Prophet is still the lead voice, but others can now also collectively receive revelation for the Church.

3 *if he abide in me.* Some members later looked to this and similar statements when they claimed that Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet. But they overlooked the next verse, which clarifies what would occur if that ever happened.

4 *none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him.* The Lord here promised that even if the Prophet were to fail, his final act would be to appoint his successor. Thus the sequence is established—anyone claiming Joseph was a fallen prophet could only do so if Joseph had appointed his own successor.

5 *this shall be a law unto you.* The doctrine here is not just a good idea or nice advice; it is “a law” to the Church that they would reject false teachings.

5 *receive not the teachings.* The Saints were not to be deceived by any who claimed special revelation for the Church unless it followed the simple pattern in vv. 3-4. It doesn't mean that revelation could not be received within a person's stewardship or calling—that will always be supported. But only one can speak for the whole Church. That enabled them to “know they [the revelation receivers] are not of me” (v. 6).

7 *teach those revelations.* Not only were they to accept revelations only from Joseph on Church matters, but they were to take Joseph's revelations, past and future, and teach them to the world.

Purposes of meeting together (8-11)

8 *text note:*

RB1 reads: “when ye are assembled yourselves together ye shall note with a Pen how to act, & for my Church to act upon the points of my law & commandments.” Taking good notes at meetings is always an important part of retaining the learning and decisions, so the Church can act according to God's law (in this context, D&C 42) and commandments (other sections). This language was retained in 1833 but edited in 1835 to become the text we use today which emphasizes instruction and edification over recording.

⁴ Harper, *Making Sense*, 147-148

8 *instruct and edify each other.* When we gather together in meetings, this should be our purpose. Negativity, criticism, and similar actions are what should be part of our meetings. As we instruct and edify, then we also come to know “how to act and direct my church.”

9 *text note:*

RB1 reads: “& thus it shall become a law unto you being Sanctified by that which ye have received that ye shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness before me.” 1833 follows that reading, while it was edited to 1835 to match the current text. The current reading addresses the need for instruction in the law to proceed sanctification.

9 *be sanctified.* By meeting together and instructing and edifying each other, they could become sanctified or born anew, changed into the kind of people God desired them to be. The charge to do this is repeated in vv. 11 and 16.

9 *bind yourselves to act in all holiness.* Part of coming together is to make covenants. This includes the sacrament each week, where we do indeed bind ourselves to act righteously.

10 *glory shall be added.* Taking a cue from the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-29) but replacing talents with “glory,” the Lord taught that the faithful will receive even more glory but the unfaithful will have their glory taken away.

11 *Purge ye out the iniquity which is among you.* Though the direct reference is likely Mrs. Hubbell, the broader iniquity was following after her or anyone like her who tried to supplant the Lord’s appointed mouthpiece, Joseph Smith.

Support Joseph (12-14)

12 *appoint ye my servant Joseph Smith.* “Appoint” in this context has the meaning of ‘provide for.’ This is a call to support Joseph financially. This is clearer in v. 13 where it plainly says to “provide for him food and raiment, and whatsoever thing he needeth.”

12 *uphold him before me by the prayer of faith.* The Prophet needed more than just material support to accomplish his mission; the prayers of the Saints have an important impact on any leader’s ability to do the Lord’s work.

13 *the mysteries of the kingdom.* Mysteries are those things that can only be learned by revelation. The Lord counseled the Church to support the Prophet in order that revelation could continue to flow. If Joseph was forced to constantly stop and work and farm at this time, he would not be able to devote himself to his main revelatory work—

the new translation of the Bible. The Saints never did fully keep this commandment, not only delaying the translation work and publication, but cutting the Church off from blessings they might have enjoyed had they kept this commandment.

14 *he shall remain unto them that have received him.* If the Church at large would not support Joseph Smith, his impact would be more limited, just to those who fully support him, helping to make them a “pure people.”

Cry Repentance (15-22)

15 *not sent forth to be taught, but to teach.* The calling of the elders who have been “appointed” is missionary work—teaching the gospel. They are to teach the revelations put into their hands by the Spirit of God—the Book of Mormon and the revelations given through Joseph Smith.

16 *ye are to be taught from on high.* Isaiah 54:13 says that the children of the bride (Israel) will be “taught of the Lord.” See also Ether 6:17.

17 *the great day of the Lord is nigh at hand.* It was language like this that made these early converts believe that the Second Coming was very soon. Today the Second Coming is still “nigh at hand” and something we should always be preparing for. Thus the Lord’s words should motivate us to action as they did for many of the Saints in that day, even though we it has been almost two centuries since these words were spoken by the Lord; if it was “nigh” in 1831, it must be even more nigh now!

18 *the heavens shall shake and the earth shall tremble.* The imagery of the heavens and the earth shaking is common in the Old Testament and found in both the New Testament and Book of Mormon.⁵ It represents full divine displeasure and is often tied to a voice from heaven or a physical act of the Lord in judgment. This is the first time the concept is used in the Doctrine and Covenants but not the last.

18 *Ye saints arise and live.* The first resurrection doctrine is taught, with the righteous arising at the beginning of the Millennium and the “sinners” being told to “stay and sleep until I shall call again,” which is at the end of the Millennium.

20 *Lift up your voices and spare not.* The urgency of the work is not only tied to the coming of Christ, which is “nigh at hand” (v. 17) but to the urgency of saving each soul. “Repent,” they are told to cry; “Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord.”

⁵ E.g., 2 Samuel 22:8; Psalms 68:8; 77:18; Isaiah 13:13; Ezekiel 38:20; Joel 3:16; Haggai 2:6, 21; Luke 21:26; Hebrews 12:26; Revelation 6:13; Helaman 5:32; Ether 4:9.

21 ***I, who am a man, do lift up my voice.*** Verse 21 continues the command of what the elders should say to the world, so the “man” mentioned here is each person making the call to repentance.

21 ***when the thunders shall utter their voices.*** This is a clear reference to Revelation 10:3-4, where “seven thunders uttered their voices.” John was told not to write the words he heard the thunders utter, but in the last days, the voices shall be heard “to the ears of all that live,” and the message will be a continued call to repentance, echoing the elders’ call to do the same.

22 ***lightnings...shall utter forth their voices.*** While Jeremiah (10:13; 51:16) has the image of the voice from heaven triggering lightning, and Revelation (4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18) associates voices with thunder and lightning, only in this verse, D&C 43:25 and 88:90 does lightning have a voice. In this case, it utters the same thing as the elders and the thunders, becoming a third witness of the need to repent.

The Gathering (23-28)

23 ***the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven.*** The final witness will be the Lord’s voice; when that voice comes, however, it is a pronouncement of judgment instead of warning. When the world hears the voice of the Lord, it means it is too late!

24 ***as a hen gathereth her chickens.*** Though not a new metaphor, and v. 25 expands the meaning greatly. The Lord gathers the righteous by the teachings of his servants, the ministering of angels, and by his own voice. He also uses the ‘voice’ of nature, including thunder, lightning, tempests, earthquakes, hailstorms, famine, and pestilences. The potential reward is mercy, glory, honor, eternal life, and everlasting salvation.

25 ***but ye would not!*** Sadly, with all this warning from servants, angels, and nature, the wicked world still rejects the Lord’s offer of mercy and forgiveness and will not repent and receive the great rewards he has planned for them.

26 ***the day has come.*** All the witnesses who called for repentance now stand as witnesses against the lack of a response, and that the time to repent has past, and the day of judgment and consequences has come.

28 ***labor ye in my vineyard for the last time.*** Because the potential outcome for the wicked is so dire, we are called

upon to labor diligently now, while the time of warning still leaves room for change and blessings.

The Great Millennium (29-35)

30 ***the great Millennium.*** Though the concept is not new, this is the first time the word “Millennium” is used in all of our scripture, and it is only used one other time, D&C 130:116. The word is not Biblical (though it was used multiple times in Revelation by William Tyndale, but removed in later translations); it was coined in the 1500s from two Latin words, *mille* or thousand, and *annus* or year, to refer to Christ’s 1,000 year reign (see Revelation 20:1-7). It was commonly used in Joseph Smith’s day in that context.

31 ***Satan shall be bound.*** See Revelation 20:2.

31 ***loosed again.*** See Revelation 20:3.

32 ***changed in the twinkling of an eye.*** This marvelous phrase comes from William Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament, translating the Greek verb meaning ‘rapid movement.’ He spelled it “twincklynge.” The implication is that it will happen as fast as you can move or blink your eye.

34 ***the solemnities of eternity.*** This phrase is unique in all of scripture to this verse. A ‘solemnity’ is something that is formal and impressive. The Lord invites us to ponder on the impressive nature of eternity and have that change our hearts and stay in our minds.

Results

John Whitmer wrote: “After this commandment [D&C 43] was receivd, the saints to understanding on this subject, and unity and harmony prevailed throughout the church of God: and the Saints began to learn wisdom, and treasure up knowledge which they learned from the word of God, and by experience as they advanced in the way of eternal life. And Joseph Smith <J[r]> the Seer continued the translation of the holy Scriptures”⁶

The Church is founded on revelation and so the Lord and Joseph did not want to stifle that. But it also must be a Church of order, with a pattern and practice that allows members to know when true revelations are given. D&C 43 strikes that balance, sustaining prophetic leadership while supporting and fostering personal revelation that both confirms prophetic commandments and leads the person individually in their own lives and activities.

D&C 44 – Prepare the Elders

⁶ JSP, H2:32.

Date and Location

Between 9 and 22 February 1831, in Kirtland, Ohio.

Setting

The Church had been commanded to hold quarterly conferences (D&C 20:61). Three had been convened so far, the last one in January 1831. Because of the gathering to the Ohio, there had not been another, so this revelation calls for a conference to be held soon to conduct Church business. As part of this conference, elders were called to gather so the Lord could “pour out [his] Spirit”⁷ to help them better prepare for missionary service, per D&C 42. It’s not clear if the meeting called for here occurred on 9 April 1831 or in June 1831, because minutes from both meetings are terse and both mention elders coming together.⁸ However, John Whitmer’s history ties it to the June date,⁹ and Joseph Smith’s later history also points to the June conference,¹⁰ so that date seems more likely.

The climate of the time contributed to the need for elders to be better prepared and more led by the Spirit. Recent opposition from Eber Howe, Grandison Newell, and others, brought negative press and legal actions against the Church. The Lord knew this effort would help that situation.¹¹

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is found in Revelation Book 1. It was first published as Chapter 46 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and as Section 62 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Commentary

1 *my servants*. This revelation was given jointly to Joseph and Sidney Rigdon, instructing them how to better support the elders in their callings to preach the gospel.

1 *the elders of my church should be called together*. This is the call for a conference, which was to gather Church members from every direction, “by letter or some other way.”

2 *I will pour out my Spirit*. Though these men had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, the promise was a greater outpouring of the Spirit specific to their mission calls. They would be buoyed up, taught and prepared, and guided in their efforts by God’s Spirit.

⁷ JSP, D1:261.

⁸ JSP, D1:260-261.

⁹ JSP, H2:33; a later hand crossed out “June” and added “March,” but there is no record of a conference in March, and Joseph’s letter to Hyrum (JSP, D1:270-273) dated 3-4 March 1831

3 *go forth into the regions round about*. The need in Kirtland wasn’t for converts from a long distance to gather, because those converts brought no land with them. The Law (D&C 42) would only work if there was sufficient land to redistribute, so the need was for local converts who could add to the already too small pool of land. This effort was very successful, with the number of Church members in Ohio growing 50-100% each year between 1830 and 1838.

4 *organize yourselves according to the laws of man*. Ohio law required at least twenty men to be Church leaders. Many had been baptized in Ohio but additional converts would make it easy to meet all state laws.

5 *you may be enabled to keep my laws*. In addition to keeping the laws of the land, this successful missionary effort would allow the people to better live the Law the Lord had given them to consecrate and live in stewardship.

6 *visit the poor and the needy*. In the effort to convert more, gather Saints, and spur the economy, this was a good reminder of the main purpose of the Law of consecration—care for the poor. Until the Law could be fully implemented, the poor still needed the care of the Saints in the conventional way: “administer to their relief.”

Results

The conference called for in the revelation was the first held in Ohio, on 3-6 June 1831 (D&C 52 was received just after the conference). At this conference, attended by at least sixty-three brethren, a number of men, including the Prophet Joseph Smith, were ordained high priests. The conference also conformed to Ohio law, which required twenty men (much more than New York’s six) to meet and elect officers in order to have the organization recognized by the state. This was necessary so the Church could own land in

makes no mention of a March conference, even though it would have been happening at the time of the letter if the revision to Whitmer’s history were correct.

¹⁰ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 2:44.

¹¹ Harper, *Making Sense*, 152.

the state, even though the organization in New York was valid in terms of the existence of the Church.¹²

D&C 45 – “A Prophecy” of the Second Coming

Date and Location

Monday, 7 March 1831 at Kirtland, Ohio.¹³

Setting

The Second Coming of Christ was a topic of much interest to members of the Church and to many in the United States in general at this time. Much speculation was involved as to the time and circumstances of that coming.

John Whitmer recorded in his history, “In those days the Lord blessed his disciples greatly, and he gave Revelation after Revelation, which contained doctrine, instructions, and prophecies: The word of the Lord came to the seer as follows.”¹⁴ That was followed by D&C 45, which is dated to 7 March 1831. In Joseph Smith’s history, it introduced it by alluding to “false reports, lies, and fo[o]lish stories” that were being published against the Church and hampering the missionary work. It says this revelation came to the “joy of the saints who had to struggle against every thing that prejudice and wickedness could invent.”¹⁵

A major effort of the Prophet at this time was the New Translation of the Bible. He had laid it aside in New York until arriving in Ohio, (D&C 37:1). Once established in Kirtland, he and Sidney Rigdon resumed the work. They were in the middle chapters of Genesis when this revelation was received. However, D&C 45 is the Lord’s interpretation and commentary on Matthew 24. There is much evidence from this and other sections that Joseph Smith did not limit his scripture study to the chapters and verses he was working on in the translation. Rather, it is clear that he studied ahead, looking at other scriptures that would later be translated, both to prepare himself for that work and for his personal edification. This is the first example of that, demonstrating that it is likely that he was personally examining Matthew 24, which triggered questions, which prompted revelation.

As a result of the commandment in this revelation to shift the work on the translation of the Bible to the New Testament (vv. 60-61), Joseph and Sidney laid aside the work on

Genesis, ending at 24:42a (right in the middle of the verse) and started on Matthew 1:1 the next day, 8 March 1831. They continued translating the New Testament until it was complete in July 1832, then returned to finish the Old Testament from July 1832 to 2 July 1833.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is from Revelation Book 1, but early copies exist from Edward Partridge and William E. McLellin.¹⁶ It was first published in *The Evening and Morning Star* (June 1832), then as Chapter 48 in the 1833 Book of Commandments, and as Section 15 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

- Christ our advocate (1-5)
- Prepare the way (6-10)
- Enoch and Zion (11-15)
- The destruction of the Jews (16-23)
- Signs preceding the Second Coming (24-47)
- Christ on the Mount of Olives (48-53)
- Millennial reign (54-59)
- New Translation instructions (60-62)
- The New Jerusalem (63-75)

Commentary

Christ our advocate (1-5)

1 to him who laid the foundation of the earth. Jesus set forth his background and authority to give this revelation—he is the creator and sustainer of all life on the earth. The quote is from several places in the Bible and once in the recently translated book of Genesis.¹⁷

1 live and move, and have a being. From Acts 17:28. This phrase is uniquely found here in the Doctrine and Covenants and emphasizes the totality of his authority over creation.

¹² Harper, *Making Sense*, 152-153.

¹³ *JSP*, D1:274n170 explains that while 7 March 1831 is the date given this revelation by John Whitmer but two early copies by Edward Partridge and William E. McLellin both date it one day earlier, 6 March 1831. For this discussion, we’ll follow the traditional 7 March 1831 date.

¹⁴ *JSP*, H2:33.

¹⁵ *JS History*, vol. A-1, 104, cited in *JSP*, D1:274.

¹⁶ *JSP*, D1:274n170.

¹⁷ Job 38:4; Psalm 102:25; 104:5; Isaiah 48:13; 51:13, 16, Zechariah 12:1; Hebrews 1:10; Moses 6:44.

2 *the summer shall be past, and the harvest ended.* With a nod to Jeremiah 8:20, the Lord warned that this information is essential to their salvation.

3 *the advocate with the Father.* In the Bible, this concept is only found in 1 John 2:1 but Mormon makes a similar description of the Lord (Moroni 7:28). This is the third of five times it is found in the Doctrine and Covenants.¹⁸

4 *behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin.* Jesus is our advocate with the Father because he alone can stand and say this. He fully pleased the Father with his life and gave his blood for each of us—all for the selfless purpose of glorifying the Father. Notice that he does not stand in our behalf and declare our innocence, because none of us are; rather, he declares that he is able to pay the price for our sins, and then pleads that the Father “spare these my brethren” (v. 5).

Prepare the way (6-10)

6 *while it is called today.* From Hebrews 3:13, which also mentions being hardened by sin. The only other place in scripture this phrase is used is D&C 64:23, 25.

7 *the light and the life of the world.* From John 8:12 but also found several times in the Book of Mormon and even more often in the Doctrine and Covenants.¹⁹ The beauty of this description is that Jesus alone makes all light and life possible on earth.

7 *light that shineth in the darkness.* From John 1:5, this is a common phrase used to describe Christ in the Doctrine and Covenants.²⁰

8 *power to obtain eternal life.* The work of the Restoration is given to accomplish many of God’s purposes, but this is the ultimate one.

9 *I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world.* The covenants of the gospel are given that people might see the light—Christ—and that they might have a standard (see Isaiah 49:22; 62:10) by which to measure themselves in their relationship with God.

10 *I will reason as with men in days of old.* The Restoration includes the powerful concept that God is unchanging and works with man today as he did with those in ancient times, as recorded in the Bible and Book of Mormon. This is reiterated in v. 15.

Enoch and Zion (11-15)

11 *the God of Enoch, and his brethren.* The passages about Enoch that we today call Moses 5-7, were translated toward the end of 1830. Not all had read them yet as they

¹⁸ D&C 29:5; 32:3; 45:3; 62:1; 110:4.

¹⁹ Mosiah 16:9; Alma 38:9; 3 Nephi 9:18; 11:11; Ether 4:12; D&C 10:70; 11:28; 12:9; 34:2; 39:2; 45:7; 93:9.

had not been published, but Joseph and Sidney and others who had read them had certainly been teaching them, applying the messages of those chapters to the current situation of the Church, especially after the reception of D&C 42.

12 *a city reserved until a day of righteousness shall come.* As the footnote says, Genesis 14 in the JST describes this event.

13 *strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Unique here to the Doctrine and Covenants, this marvelous image of being a visitor to the earth on which we live comes from Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2:11, though both got the language first from Exodus 6:4.

15 *I will speak unto you and prophesy.* This ends the section that set up Christ’s authority to deliver this message and the background as to why it is important. Now we are ready for the prophesy itself.

The destruction of the Jews (16-23)

16 *As ye have asked of concerning the signs of my coming.* The New Testament disciples asked this question on the Mount of Olives during Jesus final week, as recorded in Matthew 24:3. The Church in New York and Ohio were asking the same question, so the Lord shared his personal version and interpretation of those teachings from nearly 2,000 years ago.

17 *the long absence of your spirits from your bodies.* This phrase seems out of place in the context of a revelation about the signs of the times, but the Lord is expanding his audience to more than the disciples on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24 or than the people in Kirtland in 1831, but addressing all the dead who are patiently waiting for the two key events next mentioned. The only other place this phrase is used in scripture is D&C 138:50.

17 *the day of redemption...the restoration of the scattered Israel.* These are the two main themes of the discourse, explained the Lord. In other words, the signs are important, but we need to keep in mind the ultimate reason they are given—to prepare us for these two events.

20 *this temple...shall be thrown down.* The temple in Jerusalem was the house of God, and Jews of that day did not believe that God would ever allow it to be destroyed. They should have learned a lesson from the people in the days of Jeremiah, who thought the same thing but who still witnessed the destruction of that temple.

²⁰ D&C 6:1; 10:58; 11:11; 34:2; 29:2; 45:7; 88:49

21 **this generation of Jews shall not pass away until every desolation.** The destruction Jesus prophesied happened about forty years later.

22 **the end of the world cometh.** Even in Jesus' day, the disciples were thinking eschatologically, looking for the end of the world. Jesus assured them they were correct but explained that many things had to happen first (v. 23), which he taught in the next twenty-four verses.

Signs preceding the Second Coming (24-47)

24 **and when that day shall come.** Verse 24 is a transition verse, moving the conversation from the destruction of Jerusalem in that day toward signs of the Second Coming in the last days.

25 **they shall be gathered again.** The house of Israel was scattered by the Lord at least three times—the Assyrian conquest of the northern tribes in 721 BC, the Babylonian conquest of the southern kingdom in 587 BC, and the Roman conquest of Palestine in 70 AD. In the last days, the Lord will find Israel from throughout the earth and bring them back to a knowledge of who they are and the covenants he has made with them.

26 **Christ delayeth his coming.** The signs will evidently be obvious and many, causing some to believe that the Second Coming is delayed. But we can be assured that the Lord's timetable is such that he will come exactly when it is planned. Our actions—or inaction—has no impact on the timing that the Father has already decreed.

28 **the fulness of my gospel.** Not in Matthew 24, Christ assures us that the Restoration in our day is a significant sign of the Second Coming—as important as the other signs discussed in this chapter.

30 **the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.** The times of the Gentiles started in the days of the early apostles and continues today, but will come to an end before the Second Coming, putting the house of Israel back in the position of prominence.

32 **my disciples shall stand in holy places.** President Ezra Taft Benson said, "Holy men and holy women stand in holy places, and these holy places include our temples, our chapels, our homes, and the stake of Zion."²¹

33 **earthquakes...desolations...sword.** The state of the world in the last days will be one of turmoil and bloodshed.

35 **Be not troubled.** 'Peace be unto you' is the Lord's greeting to us. In spite of troubles, be they wars, natural disasters, sins of the world, or more personal struggles with family, health, or other challenges. Having confidence that

God is in charge and doing everything he can to bless us can bring us peace and comfort.

35 **the promises...shall be fulfilled.** The signs of the times are a warning to the wicked but a joy to the Saints, because they mean that the Lord's great promises are about to come to pass.

39 **be looking forth for the great day.** Saints are counseled to watch and prepare. Sister Patricia Holland was concerned a few years ago about tragic events that were seemingly to build and pile on, and asked her husband and apostle, Jeffrey R. Holland, if the Second Coming was soon. "No," he replied, "but wouldn't it be wonderful if it were?"²²

43 **the remnant shall be gathered unto this place.** Making it very personal, the Lord speaks of the gathering of the Saints to Kirtland, called for in D&C 37-38 as a sign of the Second Coming.

45 **saints that have slept shall come forth.** The first resurrection began with Jesus coming forth from the tomb and the many saints resurrected with and after him. It has continued through the last two thousand years. But there will be a massive resurrection just before his coming as the righteous from all ages receive their eternal bodies and stand with Jesus in triumph.

Christ on the Mount of Olives (48-53)

48 **set his foot upon this mount.** Still using the words he spake to his disciples on the Mount of Olives.

51 **What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?** Quoting and greatly enlarging Zechariah 12:9-10, the Lord provides an image of Jews 'seeing' Christ for the first time, realizing that Jesus whom their ancestors rejected truly is their long-awaited Messiah, and weeping at the action of those ancestors.

Millennial reign (54-59)

54 **they that knew no law.** The first resurrection continues with those that died without any knowledge of God's plan for them.

55 **Satan shall be bound.** The binding happens in two ways: First, the wicked, who are Satan's instruments, will be swept off the earth; and, second, the commitment and righteousness of the remaining people will be such that Satan will not have power over them. It may also be that God somehow restricts his activities and influence during the Millennium (Revelation 20:3).

56 **the ten virgins.** This parable is found in Matthew 25, the continuation of the sermon started in Matthew 24.

²¹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 2:61.

²² Harper, *Making Sense*, 156.

57 taken the Holy Spirit for their guide. The key to surviving the last days is this, that the Holy Spirit is our constant companion, directing us for good, giving us peace, teaching us the mysteries, and preserving us from calamity. Not all righteous individuals will come through unscathed, of course, but no one who has rejected the truth and lacks this gift will come through at all.

58 the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance. The term ‘celestial kingdom’ is not yet in the Church’s vocabulary, but this prepares them for the doctrine that the earth will be that kingdom, the eternal inheritance of the righteous, though the immediate application is the state of the earth in the Millennium.

New Translation instructions (60-62)

60 it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter. The original revelation read “it shall not be given unto you to know any farther then this” (RB1). It was changed in 1835, perhaps as Joseph Smith had concluded the New Translation, including Matthew 24, and made the connection with D&C 45 and that specific chapter.

60 until the New Testament be translated. Joseph and Sidney Rigdon began the translation of the New Testament the next day, 8 March 1831, according to the date on the first New Testament manuscript. They were very obedient. For a month or so, they worked in both the Old and the New Testaments, switching back and forth. But finally in April 1831, they laid aside the Old Testament and focused solely on the New until it was completed in July 1832, then they returned to the Old Testament where they had left off and completed that work in July 1833.

62 great things await you. The New Testament translation experience was an amazing spiritual outpouring for Joseph Smith, enlarging his understanding of Christ’s mission and his own, as well as the doctrines of salvation, how to run the Church, and much more.

The New Jerusalem (63-75)

63 wars in your own lands. Alluding to the coming Civil War.

64 gather ye out from the eastern lands. This is a reiteration of the call to gather from New York to Ohio.

64 go ye forth into the western countries. Looking ahead to Missouri, the Lord calls some of them to go there. The summer of 1831 will see hundreds follow this command.

65 purchase an inheritance. A bold command to a young, small Church mostly in impoverished conditions. But this call was heeded, and people did their best to buy lands in Missouri in the coming years to meet this and other commandments. They desired greatly to build up Zion.

68 the only people that shall not be at war. This yet future prophesy of Zion will be fascinating to watch and perhaps participate in. With war all around, the Saints and other righteous people will gather to Zion, fend off the wicked, and somehow keep peace in the midst of terrible battles and destruction going on all around them.

72-75 These verses were in the first recording of this revelation in RB1, but were not printed in early publications of the revelation in Church newspapers. They were added in the 1833 Book of Commandments and subsequent printings.

Results

In D&C 45, Jesus interpreted himself, providing great insights into the New Testament text far beyond linguistic, textual, or other analysis. He applies that interpretation directly to the young Church, and ties it together with the other things they are learning and trying to apply relative to Zion, Enoch, and the recently revealed Law of Consecration and Stewardship (D&C 42). It reminds us that God is indeed in charge, and the outcome of his work is sure, giving us hope and faith and the ability to put our trust in him.

D&C 46 – Meetings and Gifts of the Spirit

Date and Location

Tuesday, 8 March 1831, in Kirtland, Ohio.

Setting

John Murdock and some others were preaching the gospel in nearby Cleveland, Ohio. It was evening and the room was lit by candles. A man came forward and made as if to pray, but he was actually giving a signal to the others. The room went dark as candles were extinguished and people began throwing inkstands and books at John Murdock.

This triggered a conversation among the brethren at Kirtland proposing that non-members should be excluded from Church meetings. Those against the idea cited 3 Nephi 18:22-33 that says no one should be forbidden from their meetings. But concerns for the safety of Church members made others believe it was a good idea. With that

background, Joseph Smith asked the Lord for direction, and D&C 46 was the result.²³

The revelation also addresses spiritual gifts and their role in the Church. Members in Kirtland had exhibited a number of actions and activities that they interpreted as gifts of the Spirit. John Whitmer, who was sent by Joseph Smith to help organize things in Kirtland before the Prophet's arrival, wrote in his history:

The disciples had increased in number about three hundred. But the enemy of all righteous had got hold of some of those who professed to be his followers, because they had not sufficient knowledge to detect him in all his devices. He took a notion to blind their minds of some of the weaker ones, and made them think that an angel of God appeared to them, and show them writings ~~and~~ 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, others lost their strength, and some ~~seoted~~ ~~and~~ on the floor, and such lie maneuvers, which proved greatly to th[e] injury of the cause....It was very ne[ce]ssary that this people should have instruction, and learn to discern between the things of God and the works of Satan.²⁴

Of this period, Joseph wrote to his brother Hyrum on either 3 or 4 March 1831 (so just before this revelation), "I hav[e] been engaged in regulating the Churches here as the disciples are numerous and the devil had made many attempts to over throw them it has been a Serious job but the Lord is with us and we have overcome and have all things regular."²⁵

This section was given the day after D&C 45, on 8 March 1831, and the same day as D&C 47.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is from Revelation Book 1. It was first published as Chapter 49 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and then as Section 16 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

- Conducting meetings (1-6)
- Spiritual gifts (7-26)
- Church leaders discern gifts (27-33)

Commentary

Conducting Meetings (1-6)

1 *spoken unto you for your profit and learning.* The language is softer here than some other revelations; this is some information the Lord saw as profitable for them to learn important principles.

2 *conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit.* Handbooks, instructions, and common practices all help bring things into conformity and unanimity. But ultimately, it is the Holy Ghost that must be relied upon to determine whether a given practice or activity is appropriate. Events could happen at a given meeting that dictates a variation from the standard, but that should only happen by the direction and confirmation of the Spirit.

3 *never to cast any one out.* There are public and private meetings in the Church. Private meetings are leadership meetings, planning meetings, councils, etc. Public meetings are those open to anyone. Here especially, the term seems to apply to preaching meetings where the public is specifically invited to hear the message of the Restoration taught. To these meetings, everyone needs to be welcome. Today, we don't have many such meetings, preferring to teach our missionary messages one family at a time.

4 *not to cast any one who belongeth to the church out.* A person can be a member of the Church and not be in good standing. The Lord wanted to be clear that they were always welcome in the Church's meetings, though they may be restricted in terms of taking the sacrament.

4 *sacrament meetings.* Though we use the same term today, our sacrament meetings and theirs are quite different, less formal in structure or even regular in schedule. The purpose of a sacrament meeting was truly to take the sacrament, as described in the Book of Mormon and the revelations. The meetings were held irregularly and often on weekdays.

4 *if any have trespassed, let him not partake.* Because the sacrament is a renewal of baptismal covenants, only worthy members should participate. This is because someone who is not prepared to keep the covenants of the sacrament only brings damage to themselves by ostentatiously but without conviction renewing that covenant. On the other hand, none are perfect and we should not exclude ourselves from the sacrament unnecessarily. That is why in general the Lord leaves it to priesthood leaders to make that determination.

²³ Harper, *Making Sense*, 159.

²⁴ *JSP*, H2:22.

²⁵ *JSP*, D1:270.

5 not cast any out of your sacrament meetings. Investigators and other truth seekers were to be invited into the sacrament meetings.

6 your confirmation meetings. The third type of meeting held in the early Church was confirmation meetings, where recently baptized members were confirmed members of the Church and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. These meetings were particular targets for some of the charismatic behaviors that had troubled John Whitmer when he arrived (see Results below) because of the injunction to receive the Holy Ghost as part of the meeting. Honest truth seekers, member or not, were always welcome at these meetings.

Spiritual Gifts (7-26)

7 ye are commanded in all things to ask of God. Restoration doctrine sustains and supports personal revelation (D&C 43). Each member is to have a daily, meaningful communication with God, doing “that which the Spirit testifies unto you.” It is this interaction that brings us to “holiness of heart.”

7 considering the end of your salvation. Or we might say, keeping the end in mind, the ultimate blessing of returning to God’s presence.

7 some are of men, and others of devils. Not all evil in the world comes from Satan; sometimes it is simply people making mistakes. With earnest prayer, the Spirit will help us discern these various efforts for what they are.

8 seek ye earnestly the best gifts. The Lord acknowledged that there are many gifts, but some had more value to the new Church and to us today. Those are the gifts we should seek to enjoy. Paul taught similarly (see 1 Corinthians 14:1-4). Likewise, not all gifts are from God, but the best gifts are. In his later teachings, Joseph Smith clearly condemned many of the practices of the Ohio converts, such as swooning and rolling around on the floor, saying that they brought “the greatest disorder and indecency in the conduct of both men, and women.”²⁶

9 given for the benefit of those who love me. Spiritual gifts are for the edification and blessing of the lives of faithful members, not for those who seek a sign “that they might consume it upon their lusts.”

11 to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. No one has all the gifts, but everyone has some gift. The combination of these gifts strengthens the entire Church (v. 12). The next eighteen verses should be compared to 1 Corinthians 12:3-11 and Moroni 10:8-17.

13 to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is referring to personal knowledge of Christ, such as that experienced by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and others. It is a gift from God to have such experiences, the truth of which is still confirmed by the Holy Ghost.

14 believe on their words. Most members of the Church seek this gift, to have a testimony of the words of living prophets, to believe that when they say they saw God or angels or had other similar experiences, the Spirit can confirm to us that is true.

15 know the differences of administration. Like 1 Corinthians 12:5, this phrase means ‘different ways of serving.’ In other words, some have the gift of discerning how the Spirit works individually with each of us. We especially think of leaders who extend calls to ward and stake members, who seek to discern an individual’s gifts and how those will bless the lives of others as they serve.

16 know the diversities of operations. Like 1 Corinthians 12:6, this phrase means knowing ‘what is really going on,’ in other words, whether the gift is truly from God.

17 the word of wisdom. This is not referring to a future D&C 89 but to true wisdom, which is knowledge of something plus judgment about how to deal with it.

18 word of knowledge. Some can convey knowledge or information as a gift.

19 faith to be healed. Such faith is a gift of the Spirit. Many seek blessings at the hands of priesthood holders and see no results. Others have miraculous experiences under the anointing priesthood power. The difference can be attributed to many things but one of those is a gift of the Spirit.

20 faith to heal. Healing is also a gift, though admittedly, that gift can be given to any single priesthood bearer in any single circumstance, as desired by God.

21 the working of miracles. Other than priesthood healings, there are many miracles that could be given by God to bless his Saints, many at the hands of someone with the gift of miracles.

22 to prophesy. We sustain prophets, seers, and revelators today, but others can prophesy as well, which means to bear testimony of Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

23 discerning of spirits. Judging between true and false spirits protects those who would be deceived by Satan,

²⁶ J. Spencer Fluhman, “The Joseph Smith Revelations and the Crisis of Early American Spirituality,” in Hedges, Fluhman, and Gaskill, *Doctrine and Covenants*, 78.

such as Mrs. Hubbell or Hiram Page. It also protects the Church from such deceptions.

24 *Speak with tongues*. No gift was perhaps more troublesome to the young Church. Many people in that day claimed to speak in tongues, meaning they babbled on and on with no one understanding what they could say. Working through this issue over time, Joseph Smith came to teach that “Tongues were given for the purpose of preaching among those whose language is not understood, as on the day of Pentecost &c and it is not necessary for tongues to be taught to the Church particularly, for any man that has the Holy Ghost, can speak of the things of God in his own tongue, as well as to speak in another.”²⁷ He further counseled the Saints, “Speak not in the gift of Tongues without understanding it or without interpretation—The Devil can speak in Tongues--...Let no one speak in Tongues unless he interpret except by the consent of the one who is placed to preside then he may discern or interpret or another may.”²⁸

26 *all these gifts come from God*. This is not a definitive list of all gifts, but a representative one that reflects the types of gifts God may give us “for the benefit of the children of God.”

Church Leaders Discern Gifts (27-33)

27 *given unto them to discern all those gifts*. The Lord promised that authorized Church leaders, such as the bishop, have the specific gift of discerning the various spiritual gifts, so if there are any questions, we should turn to them.

29 *it may be given to have all those gifts*. Continuing the thought from v. 27, a duly-appointed leader might have all the gifts given “that there may be a head.” In other words, the leader through the power of his office can have any of the gifts given to help discern the truth of another’s gift.

30 *in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God*. Just as meetings were to be conducted by the Spirit of the Lord,

so even our prayers are to be guided by the Spirit, that what we pray is truly the will of God.

31 *all things must be done in the name of Christ*. It is only with Christ’s permission—through the use of his name—that any spiritual gift exists or can be used.

32 *give thanks unto God in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing ye are blessed with*. Whatever gifts we receive, we are to always remember the source of that blessing and give thanks to God.

33 *practice virtue and holiness before me*. No spiritual gift will come to an evil person but only to those who strive to live virtuous lives and be holy—dedicated and committed—to God’s commandments.

Results

The Church not only got the question of how to conduct its meetings answered, but also learned more about how the Spirit can keep members from being deceived. The issue of spiritual gifts was addressed—particularly timely given the many charismatic manifestations and actions going on with the Ohio members that were of concern. Parley P. Pratt reported that they would “swoon away, and make unseemly gestures, and be drawn or disfigured in their countenances.” He said they would contort, cramp, and have fits, while some had visions and revelations “which were not edifying.”²⁹

Even more descriptive is an article in the *Painesville Telegraph* (February 1831) that say they rolled on the floor, lay in the snow on cold winter days, made “grimaces both horrid and ridiculous, creeping upon their hands and feet.” They jabbered, claiming it was the gift of tongues.³⁰ Though such practices didn’t end immediately, D&C 46 had an impact and steered the Church in the right direction in terms of correct worship practices. It directly addressed the concept of spiritual gifts and put them in their proper place in the Church.

Works Consulted

For text notes:

RB1 – Revelation Book 1, from *JSP*, MRB:8-405.

RB2 – Revelation Book 1, from *JSP*, MRB:407-665.

²⁷ "History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842] [addenda]," p. 8 [addenda], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 14, 2016, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/543?highlight=understand%20day%20of%20pentecost>.

²⁸ "History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842] [addenda]," p. 13 [addenda], The Joseph Smith Papers, ac-

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²⁹ Fluhman, “The Joseph Smith Revelations” in Hedges, Fluhman, and Gaskill, *Doctrine and Covenants*, 66.

³⁰ Fluhman, “The Joseph Smith Revelations” in Hedges, Fluhman, and Gaskill, *Doctrine and Covenants*, 67.

Dx – Various early manuscripts of revelations in the *JSP Documents* series books.
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