

D&C 103-105

Lesson 23, Doctrine & Covenants, Adult Religion Class, Monday, 13 Mar 2017

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General Introduction

Things

Summary Chronology

- **Wed, 19 Feb 1833** – The first high council meeting was held, discussing the case of Curtis Hodges.
- **Mon, 24 Feb 1834** – D&C 103 was received, at Kirtland, Ohio.
- **Wed, 23 Apr 1834** – D&C 104 was received, at or near Kirtland, Ohio.
- **Sun, 22 Jun 1834** – D&C 105 was received, on Fishing River, Missouri.

D&C 103 – The Camp of Israel

Date and Location

Monday, 24 February 1834, at Kirtland, Ohio

Setting

The Saints in Missouri were mostly scattered across Clay County, just north of Jackson County. They determined to send two brethren to Kirtland to meet with Joseph Smith to determine what to do. Lyman Wight and Parley P. Pratt volunteered, though in desperate circumstances. Parley wrote how he went to ask for money from one brother, but everyone in the family was sick, so he got another priesthood brother, healed them all, then asked for the funds, which he received. Another brother gave him a horse, and Sidney Gilbert gave him cloth for some decent clothing (which a sister volunteered to make for him) and a cloak. They left 1 February 1834 in the middle of winter and arrived before 24 February.

Pratt and Wight reported to the Kirtland High Council on 24 February. They explained that Clay County residents had been very kind, allowing Church members to work for food and clothing, so they were not starving or naked. But it “pained their souls” to have lost their homes in Jackson County. But after learning the details from Missouri, especially that Missouri governor Daniel Dunklin had agreed to support the Church in regaining their lands but could not supply a standing militia to help maintain them, Joseph Smith determined to go to Missouri himself, received the unanimous support of the meeting (he would be “Commander in Chief of the Armies of Israel”) and sought for volunteers to go with him. Thirty to forty in the meeting

volunteered (which interestingly demonstrates there were a lot of people sitting in on the high council meeting besides the presidency and the high councilors). In conjunction with this meeting, the Lord revealed D&C 103, though it’s not clear if it was before, during, or after the high council meeting.¹

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in the Hyde and Pratt Notebook (between about late Apr and 18 Aug 1834), [7]-[18], with other copies in RB1 (about early 1834), 189-192, RB2 (18 Aug 1834), 108-111, William Phelps diary (about 1835), 17-30, and Revelations Collection (about 1835). It was first published as Section 101 in 1844.

Outline

- Why persecution in Missouri (1-4)
- The obedient will prevail (5-10)
- Redeemed by God’s power (11-20)
- Led by Joseph Smith (21-28)
- Gather the Camp of Israel (29-40)

Commentary

Why persecution in Missouri (1-4)

1 *how to act in the discharge of your duties*. Like D&C 101, this revelation has as its subject the responsibilities of the Church toward the displaced members in Missouri. The difference is that D&C 101 was directed just at the Kirtland

¹ Minutes, 24 February 1834, *JSP*, D3:453-457; Revelation, 24 February 1834 [D&C 103], *JSP*, D3:457-463; Harper, *Making*

Sense, 379; McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 747-749; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 289-290.

members and taught them by parable, while D&C 103 is to all members and uses direct, clear language.

2 *by the hands of mine enemies.* The enemies of the Saints are also the enemies of the Lord, who will pour out his wrath on them in his own time.

3 *I have suffered them thus far.* The enemies have been given room to act in their ways that their actions and intentions might be clear and “their cup might be full.”

4 *chastened for a little season with a sore and grievous chastisement.* The enemies were also allowed to act as they did in order to chastise the Saints who “did not hearken altogether” to the Lord’s commandments. See D&C 101:2.

The obedient will prevail (5-10)

5 *inasmuch as they harken from this very hour.* If the Saints were obedient to the Lord starting at this point, they were promised to “begin to prevail” against their enemies (v. 6).

7 *they shall never cease to prevail.* The act of prevailing over their enemies would go on until the Second Coming when Christ subdues the kingdoms of this world under his feet. Only then would the Saints full possess the earth.

8 *the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them.* Disobedience would lead to the world dominating the Saints.

9 *they were set to be a light unto the world.* The covenant nature of the gospel requires that members of the Church be a great example of Christ to the world, and to be their saviors by preaching the gospel message to them.

10 *as salt that has lost its savor.* D&C 101:39-40 used the same metaphor, originally from Matthew 5:13. The part where the Saints would be “cast out and trodden under foot” was especially powerful as they had just been cast out of their homes, farms, and businesses.

Redeemed by God’s power (11-20)

11 *shall return to the lands of their inheritances.* The Lord promised that the scattered would return to their lands and build up Zion again, but it is always conditional and in the Lord’s time and circumstances. See D&C 101:17-18.

12 *after much tribulation, as I have said.* Originally this was said in D&C 58:4, the first revelation given after announcing that Jackson County was the center-place of Zion.

13 *even their restoration to the land of Zion.* The promise of restoration was what the refugee Saints desired—to back to their legally purchased lands and homes which they had lost illegally due to mob violence.

14 *if they pollute their inheritances they shall be thrown down.* D&C 101:6 used similar language as part of the explanation for them losing their lands in the first place.

15 *the redemption of Zion must needs come by power.* Ultimately, the efforts of the Saints to appeal to the courts and the government were necessary to show they were in the right, but would not yield the desired result. That would only come by the power of God.

16 *a man, who shall lead them like as Moses.* Joseph Smith had already been likened to Moses in D&C 28:2 and D&C 107:91 (in 1830 and 1831, respectively).

17 *led out of bondage by power.* Like the children of Israel enslaved in Egypt, where nothing could free them but the power of God (Exodus 6:6; Deuteronomy 9:29; 2 Kings 17:36), so in our day the only power that would firmly establish Zion was the “stretched-out arm” of the Lord (also v. 18).

19 *I say not . . . not my presence.* Exodus 33:1-3 recounts how the Lord sent his angel before the children of Israel as they moved into the promised land, but said, “I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.” In our day, the Lord promises to say just the opposite—they’ll be supported by angels and his presence (v. 20).

20 *in time ye shall possess the goodly land.* With all the great promises above, I’m sure the Saints expected immediate results and redemption, but the Lord’s “in time” comment left the door open for a future fulfillment.

Led by Joseph Smith (21-28)

21 *Joseph Smith, Jun., is the man.* D&C 101:43-62 (especially v. 55) recounted a parable of a nobleman who commanded servants to build a tower to protect his olive trees. When they did not, he sent a servant to gather together the servants to redeem the vineyard (D&C 101:55-63). Now the identity of the servant in the parable is made explicit as the Prophet.

22 *Gather yourselves together unto the land of Zion.* Joseph had probably anticipated this from the parable in D&C 101 but now the command is explicit to start to form the army that will redeem Zion.

23 *wise men with their moneys.* This reiterates the command from D&C 101:72-74 to collect funds to support the Saints and continue to purchase lands in Missouri.

24 *after these testimonies.* D&C 98 described scenarios where the Saints were to tolerate attacks and offer the hand of peace at least three times. After documenting these peaceful attempts, their unrepentant enemies could be cursed.

25 *ye shall avenge me of mine enemies*. Though Zion would only be redeemed by God's power, he also made it clear that if they followed the pattern laid out for dealing with others, their enemies (who became God's enemies) could be dealt with by the Saints themselves, as D&C 98 taught (also v. 26).

27 *whoso layeth down his life for my sake shall find it*. D&C 101:35 speaks of those who are called to lay down their lives partaking of God's glory, and D&C 98:13 adds that to find it again means to have "life eternal." See also Matthew 10:39; 16:25.

28 *not willing to lay down his life for my sake is not my disciple*. A JST change to Mark 8:35 adds to that verse, "whosoever will save his life, shall be willing to lay it down for my sake; and if he is not willing to lay it down for my sake, he shall lose it."

Gather the Camp of Israel (29-40)

29 *Sidney Rigdon shall lift up his voice*. Several brethren were called upon to go recruit for the Camp of Israel, as it came to be called, with Sidney as the first one mentioned. He was called to go to "the eastern countries," which meant anything east of Ohio.

30 *Parley P. Pratt . . . Lyman Wight should not return*. The two brethren had come from Missouri bearing the news of recent events and anxious to get back with the report of the decisions taken. Instead, the Lord called them to help gather the men to join the camp.

30 *until they have obtained to the number of five hundred*. The Lord's goal for the camp was an ambitious but possible five hundred men.

31 *men do not always do my will*. Men had their agency still, even in this critical assignment, and the Lord acknowledged that because people are not always obedient, the full contingent of five hundred might not be possible.

32 *peradventure you may obtain three hundred*. Using the language of Genesis 18 where Abraham was negotiating the number that could result in saving Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord negotiates with the Saints to let them know how low their numbers could be before they should no longer go to Missouri, which turned out to be one hundred (vv. 33-34).

35 *pray earnestly that peradventure my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., may go with you*. "As late as April 1834, [Joseph] remained concerned that he would not be able to go to Missouri because of pressing debts."²

36 *diligence, faithfulness, and prayers*. Diligence and faithfulness are tied together in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants in several verses.³ This is the only instance where they are tied to prayer. The result is "victorious and glory," a great promise to an organizing army.

37 *Parley P. Pratt journey with my servant Joseph Smith*. The Lord designated these two as companions, a friendship that would last through many difficult years ahead.

38 *Lyman Wight with my servant Sidney Rigdon*. The other Missourian, Wight, was paired with the dynamic spokesman, Rigdon.

39 *Hyrum Smith journey with my servant Frederick G. Williams*. The final member of the presidency of the high priesthood, Williams, was paired with the Prophet's brother, who ironically later would replace Williams in his position in 1837.

40 *Orson Hyde journey with my servant Orson Pratt*. The final companionship to recruit members of the camp was a pair of Orsons, both of who had proven themselves diligent in doing the Lord's will.

Results

The four pairs of men called to recruit for the Camp of Israel began to leave just two days after the revelation was recorded. Joseph Smith went with Parley Pratt and Orson Hyde with Orson Pratt right away, with Lyman Wight with Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith with Frederick G. Williams leaving not long after. Each pair preached, recruited members for the Camp of Israel, and solicited funds to support the Missouri Saints, covering many states and branches of the Church. They gathered over two hundred people that started their march to Clay County in the summer of 1834, bringing with them clothing and other needed supplies for the Saints desperately trying to make a new life in Clay County, all while waiting for the opportunity to return to their lands in Jackson County.⁴

How Zion would be redeemed was still vague in the minds of those committed to the Camp of Israel. The Lord had said Zion would be redeemed by divine power, but was not clear about what that looked like. Would he enable them to be victorious in battle? Would some lose their lives, as the revelation intimated? In that spirit of uncertainty, they nevertheless packed up their gear, bade goodbye to their families, and otherwise exhibited faith as they marched off to redeem Zion. They would have to go all the way to Missouri to understand just what power the Lord was referring to.⁵

² JSP, D3:462n239.

³ For example, 1 Nephi 17:15; Alma 38:5; 39:1; D&C 6:18, 20; 59:4.

⁴ Revelation, 24 February 1834 [D&C 103], JSP, D3:458-459.

⁵ Harper, *Making Sense*, 380-381.

D&C 104 – Ending the United Firm

Date and Location

Wednesday, 23 April 1834, at or near Kirtland, Ohio

Setting

The United Firm had been formed in April 1832 (D&C 82:11-12), building on the previously-created Literary Firm (*JSP*, D2:137 and D&C 80:3, 8). It oversaw the Church's publishing and mercantile efforts in Missouri and Ohio. By early April 1834, the firm was confronted with several challenges. William W. Phelps' printing office, press, and supplies had been destroyed by a mob in July 1833. Sidney Gilbert's store in Independence, Missouri, had also been ransacked in the fall of that year and was no longer in the Church's possession. Yet there were still debts associated with each enterprise that needed to be paid, but with the loss of any potential income from these efforts.

The Church also had debts associated with lands purchases in Ohio, notably the French farm where the House of the Lord was to be built and the purchase of a new printing press.⁶ Joseph Smith had been commanded to lead the Camp of Israel to Missouri, but feared that dealing with these debts would force him to stay behind, which he believed jeopardized the whole effort.

Previous letters had called out some covetous statements and feelings of some of the members of the firm, which they had covenanted not to do upon joining the firm. One blessing on 9 April was the conclusion of the lawsuit with Doctor Philastus Hurlbut; Joseph Smith was victorious and Hurlbut was compelled to keep the peace, had to pay the court costs, and received none of the properties he was seeking.⁷ That lifted a huge burden from the Prophet.

All of this led to a council meeting the next day, 10 April, where it was determined "that the firm should be desold" and each person given a stewardship to manage. This revelation, however, modified that approach, though in the end, the result was the same.

The revelation seems to have been given during a meeting of the members of the United Firm present in Kirtland: Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Newel K. Whitney, John Johnson, and Oliver Cowdery.⁸

⁶ Minutes from a meeting in Avon, New York speak of raising \$2000 to pay off Kirtland debts (*JSP*, D3:485-486).

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in the Hyde and Pratt Notebook (between 23 Apr and 18 Aug 1834), [19]-[43], with other copies in RB2 (18 Aug 1834), 100-107 and RB1 (about mid-1834), 192-198. It was first published as Section 98 in 1835, and as Section 99 in 1844.

Outline

- The Firm broken up by transgression (1-10)
- Consecration reviewed (11-18)
- Stewardships assigned (19-46)
- Separate the firm (47-53)
- The treasury (54-66)
- Common consent (67-77)
- Forgive debts (78-86)

Commentary

The Firm broken up by transgression (1-10)

1 *text note*:

The original read, ". . . all the properties which belong to the Firm, which I commanded to be organized & established to be a United Firm, & an everlasting Firm." The change from "United Firm" to "United Order" happened with the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, along with the use of codenames for members of the Firm, in order to protect them. This change is also found in all verses mentioned "the order" or the "United Order" throughout this revelation.

2 *promised immutable and unchangeable*. When the Firm was first created, it was designed to be a permanent part of the Church (D&C 78:3-4).

3 *they were not faithful*. Not all members of the Firm lived up to the solemn covenants they made concerning selflessness and sharing (v. 4; see also D&C 95:2-6; 98:19-21; 101:2, 6-8, 50).

5 *he shall be cursed in this life, and shall be trodden down*. This strong language appears to refer to the trials of the members in Missouri who had been accused of covetousness. See D&C 82:21.

6 *not to be mocked*. When we make solemn covenants and then choose to ignore them, we are mocking God, who always commits to keep his part of the covenant as we keep ours.

⁷ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:296.

⁸ Revelation, 23 April 1834 [D&C 104], *JSP*, D4:19-22.

7 **that the innocent among you may not be condemned.** Though the revelation does not name the “innocent,” the Lord’s point is that they should not be “cursed” with the guilty, though they may still suffer because of the choices of the guilty.

8 **you cannot escape my wrath.** It is quite impossible to hide from God and avoid the consequences of our choices.

9 **cannot escape the buffetings of Satan.** See D&C 78:12 and 82:21.

10 **ye shall deliver him over to the buffetings of Satan.** If a member of the Firm sinned without repentance, the members of the Firm were to deliver him over to Satan. This likely referred to excommunication.

Consecration reviewed (11-18)

11 **appoint every man his stewardship.** The members of the United Firm had stewardships before but not always in the form of property. With this change, each will be assigned property on which to live and, in some cases, earn a living.

13 **accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings.** The principles of accountability required first that people understand that everything is created by and belongs to God (v. 14) and therefore every blessing we receive is from him. As he gives us those stewardships in the form of blessings, we are then accountable how we use them.

15 **my purpose to provide for my saints.** The Lord desires for all his covenant people to have their needs met, which another key principle in accountability and stewardship.

16 **that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.** The Lord’s way of providing for all his saints is to lift the poor out of poverty by means of the excess in the hands of the rich. In other words, “in a Zion society, everyone will be middle class, economically speaking (that is, there will be no rich or poor among them).⁹

17 **the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare.** The Lord has created this earth with enough resources to feed, clothe, and house all his children, with wise stewards managing those resources.

18 **take of the abundance . . . and impart not his portion.** The expectation is that the rich who enjoy the “abundance” of this earth will share it with “the poor and the needy.” If not, they will find themselves in hell and in torment later.

18 text note:

The end of his verse read slightly differently in the original: “he shall with Diveses lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.” The reference is to Luke 16:19-31, with “Diveses” being the traditional but non-Biblical name of the rich man (from *dives*, the Latin word for “rich”). This strengthens the message that the rich need

to give to the poor and puts the punishment in the context of Jesus’ parable. When the revelation was printed in 1835, the non-Biblical name was replaced with “the wicked.”

Stewardships assigned (19-46)

19 **concerning the properties of the order.** The next section divides up the properties of the United Firm among its various members.

20 **Sidney Rigdon.** First, Sidney Rigdon received his current house and the tannery, to provide income for him and his family.

21 **let all things be done according to the counsel of the order.** Before continuing with the stewardships, the Lord established the principle that all decisions affecting stewardships and members of the United Firm were to be determined by “united consent” of the Firm.

24 **Martin Harris.** Martin was to have a stewardship from the land that was originally given to John Johnson, where the Johnson Inn was located.

26 **devote his moneys for the proclaims of my words.** As he had done with the Book of Mormon, Martin Harris was called on to help print additional scriptures, like the Doctrine and Covenants.

27 **Frederick G. Williams.** The second counselor in the presidency of the high priesthood kept his current residence as his stewardship. He was to run the printing office with Oliver Cowdery (v. 29).

28 **Oliver Cowdery.** Oliver had been living in Missouri. He was called to move to Kirtland with his family and help run the printing office, and given “lot number one” as his stewardship, which was the lot immediately behind (west of) the temple lot.

34 **John Johnson.** Johnson had moved from Hiram, Ohio, after selling his large home and property there, and had been given the stewardship of the Peter French Inn, which was renamed Johnson Inn. He was to have all the former French property except the portion “reserved for the building of my houses,” meaning the House of the Lord, the print shop, and the administrative building planned.

36 **sell the lots that are laid off.** Likely to help raise some money to fund the debts faced by the Firm, Johnson was to sell some of the lots the Church had purchased as dictated to him “by the voice of the Spirit” and according to the counsel of the members of the Firm.

39 **Newel K. Whitney.** Whitney was to keep his current properties also, which included two stores (white and red) and his personal residence, as well as another nearby lot

⁹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:299.

and the ashery. As the best businessman in the Firm, his expertise in managing these businesses was invaluable.

41 **and his agent**. Whitney had been told to get an agent in a previous revelation (D&C 84:113) but there is no record that he did that, so the agent's name is not included here. Evidently it was still an expectation that he would get an agent to assist him at some point.

43 **Joseph Smit, Jun**. Joseph was to have the temple lot as his stewardship, to manage the construction of that building. He received lot 109 (just a bit north of the temple) and 108, which was to be used by his father (vv. 44-45).

Separate the firm (47-53)

47 **no longer be bound as a united order**. The Lord's instructions were to separate out the Firm into two, one in Kirtland and one in Missouri. While there were debts in Ohio to deal with, they had resources to provide income and the potential to pay those. In Missouri, with the total displacement of the members there to Clay County, there was little opportunity to do more than survive. Separating out the Missouri debts from the Ohio ones would help manage them better (because of the difficulties of communicating), not burden the whole Church with the losses in Missouri, and perhaps keep the records cleaner for the legal actions required in Missouri to try and get the lands back (v. 51).

49 **organized in their own names**. Instead of buying things in the name of the Church or the Firm, the brethren were to purchase things and do business (v. 50) in their own names according to their stewardships.

52 **by covetousness and feigned words**. Reiterating what was said in v. 4 about the reasons for the required changes.

53 **only on this wise, as I said, by loan**. D&C 51:11 allowed for one church (location) to borrow from another and pay it back according to their agreement. Thus the two firms could loan each other money, if needed.

The treasury (54-66)

55 **all these properties are mine, or else your faith is vain**. Now that all the stewardships had been assigned out to the various members of the United Firm, the Lord reminded them who ultimately owned everything. If they didn't believe that, then their faith in the Church and the covenants they had made were a waste of time, and they were just hypocrites.

56 **if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards**. If God was real and truly possessed the whole earth, then they needed to be faithful stewards and not call things their own, be selfish, or otherwise violate their covenants.

57 **I have appoint unto you to be stewards**. But they were stewards, appointed by the Lord, to manage the affairs of the kingdom.

58 **print my words, the fulness of my scriptures, the revelations**. As part of that stewardship, they were to print both the Bible translation that Joseph had finished less a year previously, and the revelations he had received, which was previously printed as the Book of Commandment (unfinished because of mob attacks) and soon to be called the Doctrine and Covenants. There was also a desire to do another printing of the Book of Mormon (v. 59 text note).

59 **to prepare my people**. One of the purposes of the scriptures is to prepare the Saints for the Second Coming, "when I shall dwell with them," said the Lord, which coming is "nigh at hand."

59 text note.

The original had a large section about the items to be printed and copyrights not included in the printed version later, at the end of what is v. 59 today: "Therefore a commandment I give unto you that ye shall take the books of Mormon, & also the copyright, & also the copy-right which shall be secured of the articles and covenants, in which covenants, all my commandments, which it is my will should be printed, shall be printed, as it shall be made known unto you; & also the copy-right to the new translation of the scriptures; & this I say that others may not take the blessings away from you which I have conferred upon you."

60 **a place for a treasury**. This isn't a building but an account, sacred and set apart just to fund the printing of the scriptures discussed in v. 59.

61 **appoint one among you**. A person was to be called and "ordained" (set apart) to manage the treasury.

62 **a seal upon the treasury**. Not a literal seal but setting the funds apart for the sole purpose of printing the scriptures. No single person, even the one appointed to manage it, would "call it his own" but it was to be a joint asset for all those in leadership.

64 **the avails of the sacred things**. Any profits gained from printing the scriptures were to go back in the treasury for the same sacred uses and guarded in the same way from individual usage (v. 65).

Common consent (67-77)

67 **another treasury prepared, and a treasurer appointed**. The second treasury (account) was different from the first, though it was still to be guarded like the other one from inappropriate use with "a seal."

68 **moneys that you receive in your stewardships**. If the various stewardship they had received—the store, tannery, inn, etc.—generated profits, they would be put in this second treasury "as fast as you receive moneys." Like the other account, it would not belong to any one person but to

the Firm overall (v. 70) and it would only be used by a united voice of the whole Firm (v. 71).

72 I have need of this to help me in my stewardship. Any member of the Firm could come to the treasurer and request funds as needed for his stewardship. As long as he was faithful, “the treasurer shall not withhold” (v. 75).

76 the treasurer shall be subject unto the council. If the treasurer was suspected or found to be guilty of mismanagement of the accounts, he would be accountable to the high council in Kirtland and the members of the Firm, and could be “removed out of his place.”

Forgive debts (78-86)

78 it is my will that you shall pay all your debts. It is not the Lord’s will that we should contract debts and then not pay them. It is part of being honest to shoulder our obligations.

79 obtain this blessing by your diligence and humility. The current situation faced by the United Firm was dire, with thousands of dollars of debts owed, the loss of substantial amounts of property and the resulting income, and growing needs to continue to fund other Church efforts and operations, including the Camp of Israel about to leave for Missouri that needed funding. The Lord counseled hard work, humility, and faithful prayers to resolve the issues.

80 I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt. Not that the debts would be forgiven, but that they would be patient and tolerant “until I shall send means” to pay them off. If they did this, the Lord promised “it shall be taken away out of their minds to bring affliction upon you” (v. 81).

83 you shall be delivered this once out of your bondage. Not a standing promise but only this one time.

84 as you obtain a chance to loan money. In this one circumstance, the Lord would allow additional debt (procuring a loan, not making one).

85 pledge the properties which I have put into your hands. Existing Church lands, including the French farm on which the House of the Lord will be built, could be used as collateral for such loans.

86 the master will not suffer his house to be broken up. If they follow the Lord’s instructions perfectly, this one time, the Lord will deliver them and keep the Church intact.

Results

Five days after this revelation, another was received that declared the Kirtland firm to be “free from the Firm of Zion.”¹⁰ However, the commands here to establish treasuries and mortgage stewardships appears not to have happened immediately, as the Camp of Israel seems to have taken precedence (D&C 103, 105). As a result, the United Firm effectively no longer existed after this revelation, or rather it existed as the Kirtland high council instead. Starting 24 September 1834, the high council minutes record them discussing for the first time projects for the literary firm, such as the printing of the Doctrine and Covenants, how Bishop Newel K. Whitney should run his store, and how Church debts should be paid.

In Missouri, the Church followed a similar course, with a high council created while Joseph Smith was in Missouri at the end of the Camp of Israel. On 7 July 1834, two miles south of Liberty, the Prophet called David Whitmer as the president, with William W. Phelps and John Whitmer as counselors (also presidents), and twelve high councilors to work with them. This presidency and high council took over financial functions for the Missouri area.¹¹

The treasurers called for in the revelation ended up being the bishops in both locations, with the presidency of the high priesthood supervising both.¹²

As part of the dissolution of the United Firm, the members of the Firm forgave each other any debts owed, per a revelation received the same day but not recorded. The total amount forgiven is not known, though one document from Newel K. Whitney, recorded the same day as this revelation, listed the debts owed by other members just to him (through his store) for various things, such as paper, printing press, and perhaps food and other supplies that he sold:¹³

- Frederick G. Williams and Co. – \$584.14
- Joseph Smith Jr. – \$1,151.31
- Oliver Cowdery – \$68.57
- Sidney Rigdon – \$777.98
- Frederick G. Williams – \$485.67
- John Johnson – \$67.68
- Total: \$3,635.35

More debts were owed to outsiders, who would not just write them off as the men had done with each other. These amounts are not known but just before this revelation (17 March 1834), Joseph Smith noted that they needed “Two Thousand Dollars, which sum will deliver Kirtland from Debt for the present.”¹⁴ They continued to pray for relief

¹⁰ Revelation, 28 April 1834, *JSP*, D4:34.

¹¹ *JSP*, D4:21-22.

¹² Parkin, “Joseph Smith and the United Firm,” 33-34.

¹³ Balance of Account, 23 April 1834, *JSP*, D4:31-33.

¹⁴ Minutes, 17 March 1834, *JSP*, D3:487.

and a solution. On 30 November 1834, Joseph Smith's journal noted, "While reflecting upon the goodness and mercy of the Lord, this evening, a prophecy was put into our hearts, that in a short time the Lord would arrange his providences in a merciful manner and send us assistance to deliver us from debt and bondage."¹⁵ Less than two months later, a new convert from New York, John Tanner, arrived in Kirtland with \$3,000 to donate to save the temple lot

from foreclosure. The Lord had indeed softened hearts until he sent "means unto you for your deliverance" (v. 80).¹⁶

Though the United Firm no longer exists, the concepts behind it still operate in the Church today, with various kinds of Church entities such as the Corporation of the President or Intellectual Reserve, which manage Church assets and resources and use proceeds from those assets to further the work of the Church.

D&C 105 – Disbanding the Camp of Israel

Date and Location

Sunday, 22 June 1834, John Cooper property, north of Fishing River, Missouri

Setting

Shortly after recording D&C 103, Joseph Smith learned from a letter from William W. Phelps of two events in Missouri. First, members of the Church and their hired attorneys had called for a grand jury to take testimony on the Saints' persecutions. But when they arrived, the attorneys discovered that the whole jury was made up of mob members, so they did not bother to have the Mormons testify. Second, a few members had decided to try returning to their homes in February. On 20 February, however, a group came to their homes, beat them with whips and sticks ("clubs" in Phelps' words), and threatened them with death if they did not leave immediately.¹⁷

Missouri Governor Daniel Dunklin had indicated that he would provide militia support for Saints to return to their Jackson county homes, and early support from militia indicated to the Mormons that he would probably come through with that support. The Mormon army was then supposed to come to Missouri, be instituted as a state militia, and protect their own people after the withdrawal of the Missouri militia.

On 1 May 1834, a small advance company left Kirtland. Four days later, on 5 May 1834, Joseph Smith left Ohio with about one hundred men, much less than D&C 103 called for but enough to meet the minimum requirement (D&C 103:30-32). They picked up others along the way and eventually got up to just over two hundred. Their group also included about twelve women and ten children. They called their group the Camp of Israel, though later (after 1840), people began to refer to it as the camp of Zion, then Zions Camp. They had companies of twelve

men each led by a captain and were funded by consecrated funds by the members of the camp and other donations. They brought money to help the members of the Church in Missouri as well. The plan was for them to march to Missouri, join with the state militia and escort the Saints back to their lands in Jackson County, then stay to defend and help them while they planted crops and otherwise restored their properties. While they hoped not to encounter violence, they were instructed to bring weapons to defend themselves.

The Camp traveled through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois on foot, arriving in Missouri in June 1834. Though they tried to disguise their purpose, including splitting into smaller groups during the long march. Events during the journey were documented by several, though Joseph Smith himself said very little. He did write two letters to Emma during the journey, one in his own hand on 18 May and another dictated to Frederick G. Williams on 4 June.

When the Camp arrived in Richmond, Indiana, they had been marching briskly—up to thirty miles a day—and many had sore, blistered, and even bleeding feet. One member, Sylvester Smith, became quite agitated and argued with Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith prophesied that if the spirit of contention continued, they would meet with misfortunes. The next day they found all their horses lame, which humbled many. Petitioning the Lord, their horses were all healed except Sylvester Smith's, whose horse died. They then held a sacrament meeting and had some preaching to bring a better feeling into the camp. Joseph wrote his first letter to Emma immediately following this event. He prayed for her and the children's well-being, thanked her for her letter (not extant), and promised to write more. He kept the letter short, he said, because "I cannot write on my knees sitting on the ground to edification." He closed with a prayer for blessings on her.¹⁸

His next letter included more details about the journey. Written on the banks of the Mississippi in Illinois, waiting

¹⁵ Journal, 1832-1834, 30 November 1834, Sunday, *JSP*, J1:47.

¹⁶ Harper, *Making Sense*, 388.

¹⁷ Letter from William W. Phelps, 27 February 1834, *JSP*, D3:469.

¹⁸ Letter to Emma Smith, 18 May 1834, *JSP*, D4:48-52.

for the ferry to cross, on 4 June. He said they had “a tolerable degree of union” in the camp. A few men had taken sick, and Joseph complained of “lameness” (perhaps from his leg surgery in 1813) and blistered feet. He worried that the “numbers and means are altogether too small for the accomplishment of such a great enterprise.” But he still held out hope for more men to join them (they did get a few more a few days later but only thirty or so). He spoke of their simple provisions of flour, butter, bacon, and milk, which they purchased at towns along the way. He spoke of “wandering over the plains of the Nephites, recounting occasionally the history of the Book of Mormon, roving over the mounds of that once beloved people of the Lord, pick up their skulls & their bones, as a proof of its divine authenticity.” He was already looking forward to the trip home and returning to Kirtland, and looks forward to the day when trials and tribulations would end.¹⁹

In spite of the Camp’s efforts to quietly come to Missouri, Jackson County citizens nevertheless were aware of their approach and organized a resistance to what they anticipated was an effort to take Jackson County by force of arms.

It soon became clear that it would be impossible to enter Jackson County without significant bloodshed. Because of that, Governor Dunklin had not called out the militia to help them, as he had previously indicated he would do; he was trying to avoid civil war. The Clay County sheriff, Cornelius Gilliam, came to Joseph Smith on 21 June expressing great concern about all these events. The Prophet and others signed a statement for him that they would not be the ones to start hostilities and were very willing to work toward a peaceful solution. They even offered to purchase lands of settlers who didn’t want to live near them in Jackson County.²⁰

On 22 June 1834, a council was held to discuss the situation. During that council, this revelation was received at the Camp of Israel campsite, which was on the property of Church member John Cooper, four miles north of Fishing River in Clay County. It directed the Camp of Israel to disband, explaining that redemption would have to “wait for a little season.” This was because the Camp numbers were too small to support the resettlement of several communities of Saints and because people from the east had not come to Missouri and purchased additional lands, as they had been requested (D&C 101:72-74). The revelation anticipated an endowment from on high that would proceed the redemption of Zion.²¹

¹⁹ Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834, *JSP*, D4:52-59.

²⁰ Revelation, 22 June 1834 [D&C 105], *JSP*, D4:69-73.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in RB1 (between about 23 June 1834 and 5 Jul 1835), 199-[201], with other copies in Phelps Diary and Notebook (about June 1834), 4-17, JS History, A-1 (3-4 Aug 1834), 499-502, RB2 (about Aug 1834), 97-100, NKW (about Aug 1834), and Revelations Collection (before 3 Jul 1835). The revelation was not made known generally. Accordingly, it was not published in 1835 but was first published as Section 102 in 1844, using pseudonyms for Church leaders to preserve identity.

Outline

- Zion requires celestial living (1-5)
- The redemption of Zion deferred (6-13)
- The Lord will redeem Zion (14-19)
- Don’t boast (20-26)
- Purchase lands (27-30)
- An endowment in Kirtland (31-37)
- A message of peace (38-41)

Commentary

Zion requires celestial living (1-5)

1 *my will concerning the redemption of mine afflicted people.* The audience for the revelation was not only the two hundred plus members of the Camp of Israel but the Missouri members of the Church there in Clay County where the revelation was received and the Missourians who were expecting a battle from the Mormon army at any time, which many in the army, including Joseph Smith, were ready to give them, if needed.

2 *were it not for the transgressions of my people.* The transgressions of many in the Church have been highlighted in previous revelations, especially D&C 101 and 103, as the cause of the persecutions in Missouri. Now the Lord explained that those collective sins had delayed the redemption. This includes the members of the Camp from the north and east, not just the Missouri members.

3 *they have not learned to be obedient.* Members of the Church were not fully obedient to the covenants they had made, with the chief sins here and in v. 4: they did not care for the poor and were not united according to celestial law.

5 *Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom.* This is the core of the matter, and the reason Zion is not built up even today. The Church must become even as Enoch’s people, caring per-

²¹ *JSP*, D4:xix-xxi; this “endowment of the Elders with power from on high” was a topic addressed in the months preceding the Camp (*JSP*, D4:17).

fectly for one another and fully united in purpose and commitment to righteousness, before it can be successful in building Zion (Moses 7:18).

The redemption of Zion deferred (6-13)

6 *my people must needs be chastened.* Compare D&C 95:1 and Hebrews 5:8.

7 *not concerning those who are appointed to lead my people.* Though not called out by name, the “first elders” initially applied to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (D&C 20:2, 5) but then was later applied to Church leadership in general (D&C 88:85).

8 *many who will say: Where is their God?* People will see the effort of the Camp of Israel to come here and question why God did not show his powerful hand against the enemies of the Church. Because they do not see the immediate deliverance, they will decide, “[we] will keep our moneys.” In spite of great effort on the part of several Church leaders and missionaries, the sufficient funds had not been raised to relieve the Church of its debt at this point.

9 *mine elders should wait for a little season.* Because of several factors, especially the failure of the government to come through with support, the Camp of Israel was stymied in their immediate efforts to return the Missouri Saints to their lands in Jackson County. Therefore the Lord declared that redemption would have to wait.

In a letter written 16 August 1834 to Lyman Wight and others in Missouri, Joseph Smith declared that the “little season” would end “in two years from the Eleventh of September next [11 September 1836] which is the appointed time for the redemption of Zion.” But this would only happen “If the church with one united effort perform their duties If they do this the work shall be complete If they do not this in all humility . . . they shall be driven from City to City and but few shall remain to receive an inheritance.”²² We are still in the “little season” today.

10 *That they themselves may be prepared.* The purpose of the persecutions and the march to Missouri are outlined here: that the people might be taught important principles, gain experience, and better know their duty in relation to the Lord’s requirements for a Zion people.

11 *until mine elders are endowed with power from on high.* The next step in preparing a Zion people was an endowment—a gift—from the Lord that would bring them power from God. This would only happen in the House of the Lord. The Lord was prepared to give them that with faith and humility (v. 12).

13 *wait for a little season.* See v. 9, which brackets the reasons for the delay and the need to have the Lord’s power. The principles in these verses still apply today and are how Zion will one day be fully redeemed.

The Lord will redeem Zion (14-19)

14 *I will fight your battles.* The Lord had already promised this to them (D&C 98:37), but many in the Camp were anxious to engage against the enemy. The excitement of battle had drawn them here, but they needed to learn to rely on the Lord instead of the arm of flesh.

15 *destroy and lay waste mine enemies.* The identify of “the destroyer” is not clear, other than it is someone or something that is driven by the power of the Lord. The promise is that this destroyer will do the work of cleansing the land of Zion from iniquity when the “little season” is over.

16 *I have commanded . . . to gather together.* The effort to gather an army and march to Missouri was not Joseph Smith’s idea but was indeed a command from God (D&C 101:55-57; 103:21-28).

17 *have not hearkened.* The Camp of Israel were not fully obedient either.

18 *I have prepared a blessing and an endowment.* But for those who had joined the Camp and been obedient, great blessings were coming, gifts from God.

19 *I have heard their prayers, and will accept their offering.* The offering was participation in the Camp. Notice that those who had not hearkened among the Camp did not have the same promise; attitude impacts the acceptability of our efforts (e.g., Exodus 35; D&C 67:3).

Don’t boast (20-26)

20 *let them stay.* Some had made the journey and intended to stay in Missouri after the march; the Lord gave them permission to do just that.

21 *tarry for a little season.* Those with families or other obligations back home could stay for a short time, then return, under the direction of Joseph Smith.

23 *reveal not the things which I have revealed.* A big part of the reason for the persecutions suffered in Missouri had to do with Saints publicly declaring that the current residents would all be driven out and that the Church was going to take everything over. The Lord counsels them not to “boast of faith nor of mighty works” (v. 24) but gather quietly, in a way that would not upset “the feelings of the people” (v. 24).

²² “Letter to Lyman Wight and Others, 16 August 1834,” p. 86, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed March 13, 2017,

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-lyman-wight-and-others-16-august-1834/3>.

25 *rest in peace and safety*. If they follow this pattern, they can have a period of peace, giving them time to pursue legal recourse and redress for the wrongs committed against them in Jackson County. Doing it this way will gain them “favor in the eyes of the people” (v. 26).

Purchase lands (27-30)

27 *time to gather up the strength of my house*. Since the size of the present army was too small to redeem the people without government support, and since tensions were so high that bloodshed and hostilities were inevitable, it was required to build up the Church to a larger size and to improve relations with the existing inhabitants, and wait for the hand of the Lord to redeem Zion.

28 *sent wise men, to fulfil that which I have commanded concerning the purchasing of all the lands*. D&C 101:73 commanded that honorable and wise men should be sent to purchase lands in Missouri, as had been envisioned all along (D&C 42:35; 57:5-7; 58:49-51; 101:68-74).

29 *lands should be purchased . . . the laws of consecration*. The principle behind the building up of Zion was still consecration and stewardship. Legal ownership of the land was the foundation of consecration.

30 *taking possession of their own lands*. With the purchase of additional lands, the increase in the size of the army, the endowment of power, and the perfect obedience of the covenant people, then the Lord would “hold the armies of Israel guiltless” in reclaiming their legally purchased lands.

An endowment in Kirtland (31-37)

31 *fair as the sun, and clear as the moon, and that her banners may be terrible unto all nations*. From Song of Solomon 6:10, where it applies to a woman and the nouns and adjectives are reversed, and D&C 5:14, the only other time this imagery had been used thus far (one more will come later in D&C 109:73).

32 *constrained to acknowledge*. Once the covenant people have done all these things and become a righteous, terrible army before the Lord, the world will be compelled to recognize the source of their power and will declare, “let us become subject unto her laws.”

33 *endowment from on high in my house*. The House of the Lord under construction in Kirtland would be the location of the endowment of power.

34 *law be executed and fulfilled, after her redemption*. Fully living a Zion law would not come until after all the

things the Lord had laid out that would lead to the redemption of Zion, which would be after a “little season” (vv. 9, 13) of undetermined length.

35 *a day of calling . . . a day of choosing*. D&C 95:5-6 taught that many had been called and ordained but “few of them are chosen” because they have sinned (also Matthew 20:16; 22:14). The “chosen” are those that are worthy, meaning to be chosen is the choice of the obedient.

36 *they shall be sanctified*. The Spirit will tell Joseph Smith who is chosen and they will receive and be sanctified by the promised endowment of power. In other words, it will not be for everyone.

A message of peace (38-41)

38 *sue for peace*. With all the talk of armies and pulling down towers of the enemies, the Lord makes it clear that peace is still the goal, both with the very people who have driven them out of Jackson County and “all people.”

39 *lift up an ensign of peace*. An ensign is a banner, a sign that proclaims where someone is assembled. Peace is to be the banner the Saints lift up to the entire world.

40 *make proposals for peace unto those who have smitten you*. The Missourians expected the Saints to fight them for their lands. The Lord instructs them to instead reach out for peaceful settlements. By doing this, “all things shall work together for your good.”

41 *I am with you even unto the end*. See Matthew 28:20.

Results

Members of the Camp of Israel came to see their experience as something like Abraham’s requested sacrifice of his son, Isaac, something the Lord asked but didn’t require in the end (D&C 101:2-5; 103:4). Others felt it was definitely the word of the Lord to end the Camp as they did. Others murmured because they had come all that way with no redemption of their fellow saints to their lands. Some just wanted to fight and were disappointed that they did not get to do that.

Shortly after the revelation, there was an outbreak of cholera among the camp and some Missouri members, resulting in thirteen deaths. This hastened the required disbanding of the Camp and convinced some that the rebellious attitudes among a few Camp members brought God’s punishment.²³

Following the counsel to live peaceably with their neighbors in Clay County, members settled in and things went well for some time. But even the people friendly to the Church in Clay County began to have concerns when they saw boasting and began to tell those in Clay County that the land was theirs from the Lord and the residents would

²³ Revelation, 22 June 1834 [D&C 105], JSP, D4:69-73.

eventually fall into their hands. Soon Clay County residents came out in opposition to the Saints, just as had happened in Jackson County.²⁴ Because the people did not prepare themselves, even after the endowment of power in the Kirtland temple in 1836, the anticipated redemption on 11 September 1836 came and went with no redress.

“The revelation powerfully refocused Joseph Smith and the Church.”²⁵ Camp of Israel members returned to Ohio, and Joseph Smith began to focus on the Lord’s commands in this revelation to build the House of the Lord and teach the people. They restarted the school of the prophets (calling it the School of the Elders now) and other school efforts to educate and prepare people for what was coming.²⁶

Joseph taught the people later, “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 . . . 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.”²⁷ From the Camp of Israel came most of the first Quorum of the Twelve and all of the Seventies.

The promise of D&C 105 is that Zion will one day be redeemed. When is up to the Lord, but our responsibility is to be ready to fully live consecration and stewardship, to keep ourselves holy through consistent righteous living, including receiving the power that comes from temple attendance, and waiting on the Lord.

Images

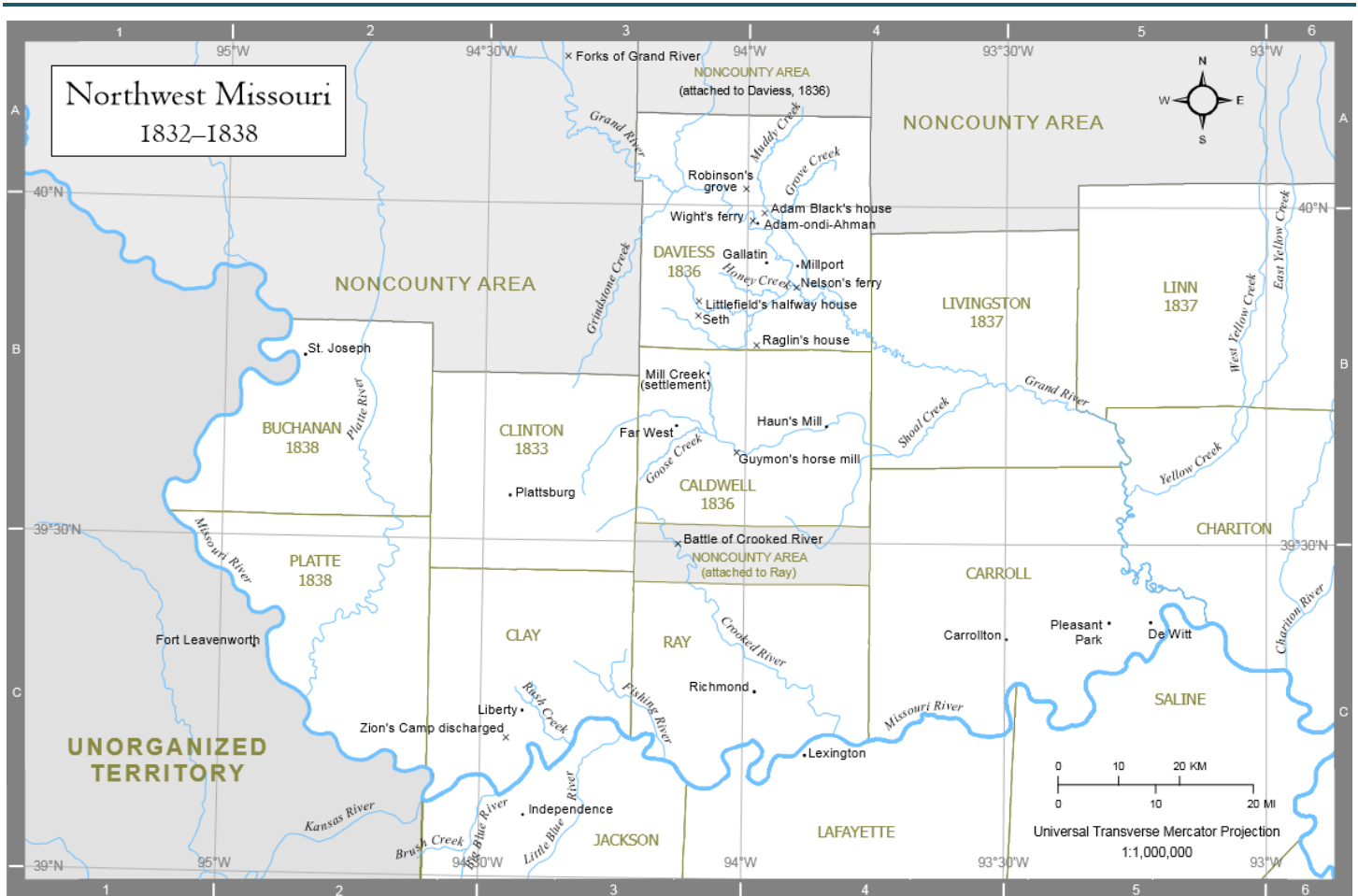


Image #1: Northwest Missouri, 1832-1838. From the Joseph Smith Papers website.

²⁴ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 777-778.

²⁵ Harper, *Making Sense*, 391.

²⁶ *JSP*, D4:xxi-xxii.

²⁷ Harper, *Making Sense*, 391.



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Image #2: Joseph Smith's recruiting mission for the Camp of Israel, Feb-Mar 1834. From Joseph Smith Papers website.

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