

# Doctrine and Covenants 78-83

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## Introduction

On 16 February 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the Vision (D&C 76). On 27 February, Joseph received a revelation (not published) calling Lincoln Haskins, a recent convert from New York, on a mission. He was to take copies of various revelations with him, which he likely received from one of Joseph's scribes there in Hiram, Ohio. During this period, the Prophet continued working on the translation of the Bible, progressing from John chapter 5 in mid-February to Revelation 11 about 20 March.

In March 1832, residents of Jackson County, Missouri, began to hold meetings to determine "how they might destroy the saints."<sup>1</sup> A few windows were broken and threats made, but nothing more happened at that time. However, the tensions that began to show themselves at this time continued to build through the summer of 1832.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, in Hiram, Ohio, where Joseph Smith was living with the Johnsons, tensions were building. But Church business went on. On 1 March, while Joseph was visiting Kirtland, a revelation (D&C 78) commanded the expansion of the Literary Firm to also include mercantile interests, eventually called the United Firm. On 7 March, another revelation with a mission call. On 8 March, Joseph Smith, who had been ordained president of the high priesthood in February, selected Sidney Rigdon and a new convert named Jesse Gause as counselors. On 12 March, another revelation (D&C 79) directed additional missionary efforts. On 15 March, Jesse Gause received more direction (D&C 81) concerning his duties as counselor. On 20 March, a revelation was received directing the brethren to take paper to Missouri, where it was in short supply, so printing of the newspaper and commandments could proceed. And another unpublished revelation in this same period expanded on the duties of a bishop.

Believing that Joseph Smith was attempting to steal their land through the Law of Consecration, on the night of 24-25 March, a group of disgruntled members, faces blackened and in two groups, attacked the Johnson home and the cabin where Sidney Rigdon lived. See the Setting with Section 82 below for details of this horrible attack.

On 1 April, Joseph Smith and others left for Missouri, per commandment, arriving later that month. In Missouri, they held several conferences, worked through the implementations of the United Firm, and received a revelation (D&C 82) on 26 April that was directed to the group of Church leaders gathered in Missouri. Another revelation on 30 April (D&C 83) outlined the care women and children who had lost their husbands should receive under the Law of Consecration.

On 6 May, Joseph Smith started home in company with Sidney Rigdon and Newel K. Whitney. In Indiana, the horses on their stage bolted, and while attempting to jump from the stage, Whitney's leg was caught in the wheel and broken in several places. Joseph stayed with him in Greenville, Indiana, for several weeks until he was well enough to travel, while Sidney returned to Ohio. They were not back in Ohio until late June.<sup>3</sup>

## Summary Chronology

- **Mon, 27 Feb 1832** – Revelation received by Joseph Smith (not in D&C) for Lincoln Haskins.
- **Feb-Mar 1832** – Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith began copying revelations and other items into Revelation Book 2.
- **Thu, 1 Mar 1832** – D&C 78 was received.
- **Between Sun, 4 Mar and Tuesday, 20 Mar 1832** – D&C 77 was recorded.
- **Wed, 7 Mar 1832** – D&C 80 was received.
- **Thu, 8 Mar 1832** – Joseph Smith selected and ordained Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause as his counselors in the presidency of the high priesthood.
- **Mon, 12 Mar 1832** – D&C 79 was received.

<sup>1</sup> JSP, D2:195.

<sup>2</sup> JSP, D2:196.

<sup>3</sup> JSP, D2:195-257.

- **Thu, 15 Mar 1832** – D&C 81 was received.
- **Tue, 20 Mar 1832** – Revelation received by Joseph Smith (not in D&C), commanding them to go to Missouri with printing supplies.
- **Sun, 1 Apr 1832** – Joseph Smith and several others left Ohio for Missouri, arriving just before the end of the month.
- **Thu, 26 Apr 1832** – D&C 82 was received in Independence, Missouri.
- **Mon, 30 Apr 1832** – D&C 83 was received in Independence, Missouri.

## D&C 78 – The Beginning of the United Firm

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### Setting

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Received Thursday, 1 March 1832, at Kirtland, Ohio.

D&C 57:8 had instructed Sidney Gilbert from Kirtland, Ohio, to establish a mercantile store in Jackson County to earn money to buy land there in Missouri. Gilbert did that in early 1832 using his name and that of his former Kirtland partner, Newel K. Whitney. Whitney, soon called as bishop in Kirtland, continued to run the store there, with the proceeds also helping to fund Church activities (D&C 63:42-43).

In November 1831, the Lord called for the creation of the Literary Firm, a group of leaders who would oversee the publications of the Church and receive support from that effort (D&C 70:3-8).

On 29 February to 4 March, Joseph left Hiram and went to Kirtland, to hold meetings with leaders there.<sup>4</sup> While there, the men were discussing the literary and mercantile efforts of the Church. This revelation commanded the creation of an additional firm to the Literary Firm to also manage the mercantile efforts (Gilbert and Whitney's stores). From this and subsequent revelations and council decisions, the members of this new United Firm were the two bishops, Edward Partridge and Newel K. Whitney; the agent in Missouri, Sidney Gilbert; and the previously designated members of the Literary Firm (Joseph Smith, Jr., Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon, and William W. Phelps).<sup>5</sup>

The revelation also called for Joseph, Sidney Rigdon, and Newel K. Whitney to travel to Zion (Missouri) to hold conferences there and to teach the principles of equality and unity.<sup>6</sup>

This was the first revelation in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants to use pseudonyms for certain people, places, and assignments (the others were 82, 92, 96, and 103). Two more in 1844 received the same treatment (104 and 105). None of these 'code names' were in the original revelations, but were added when the revelations were published to protect those who were performing these various leadership tasks for the Church from persecution by its enemies, who in some cases were also creditors. Each of them related to the United Firm (later called the United Order), which was the group of men responsible for the Church's financial affairs. The practice continued in subsequent editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, though Orson Pratt added real names in parentheses following the code names for the ones he could remember. Further research identified all but four in D&C 82, and these were left until the 1981 edition, when all pseudonyms were removed. The discovery of new documents enabled identification of those four later, and today, with any danger to the people long gone, all real names are used.<sup>7</sup>

### Documents and Publication

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The oldest copy is from the Newel K. Whitney papers (1 Mar 1832; NKW below). Other copies include RB2 (between 12 Mar and 1 Apr 1832) and RB1 (between 26 Apr and Aug 1832). It was first published as Section 75 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, then as Section 76 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

### Outline

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- Establish a firm (1-7)

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<sup>4</sup> Note, 8 March 1832, *JSP*, D2:204.

<sup>5</sup> *JSP*, D2:483.

<sup>6</sup> Revelation, 1 March 1832 [D&C 78], *JSP*, D2:197-198.

<sup>7</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 277-279.

- Organize Ohio and Missouri (8-12)
- Prepare to stand independent (13-16)
- The riches of eternity (17-22)

## Establish a firm (1-7)

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### 1 *text note*:

The opening phrase, “The Lord spake unto Joseph Smith, Jun., saying:” was not in the original. It was added in 1835, though the code name “Enoch” was used for Joseph Smith, to protect his identity.

1 ***ordained unto the high priesthood of my church***. The men gathered together in Kirtland had all been ordained to priesthood offices, most of them high priests.

2 ***in that thing which you have presented before me***. The brethren left no notes about their inquiry or the topic of their meeting, but from the contents of the revelation, we can deduce that it was related to the Literary Firm and wondering how that organization might be applied to the two mercantile establishments of the Church in Ohio and Missouri.

### 3 *text note*:

NKW: it must needs be that there be an organization of the Literary and Merchantile establishments of my church, both in this place and in the land of Zion

1835: it must needs be that there be an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the poor my people, both in this place and in the land of Zion, or in other words, the city of Enoch

By 1835, when this revelation was published, the United Firm no longer functioned, having been stressed by the Missouri persecutions of 1833 and the financial losses incurred as a result. D&C 104:47-50 effectively disbanded the United Firm in 1834 and the Kirtland High Council took over most of its functions. Thus, the emphasis was on the bishop’s storehouse instead of the firms in 1835.<sup>8</sup>

Today, the Church has several committees and businesses, such as Deseret Book, that function under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, and include various members, depending on the agenda, including the Presiding Bishopric, members of the Seventy, and full-time employees and consultants of the Church.

### 4 *text note*:

NKW read “for a permanent and everlasting establishment and firm unto my church.” “Firm” was changed in 1835 to “order,” which led to the term United Order. The same change was made in v. 8.

5 ***equal in the bonds of heavenly things, yea, and earthly things also***. The language “equal in the bonds” clarifies what the Lord meant by “equal,” because it indicates that he cares more that we are all under covenant and consecration than the size of our bank accounts. When we are equal in our covenants, which includes caring for others, then that brings us closer to being equal in earthly things as well.

6 ***not equal in earthly things***. The converse of v. 5 is in vv. 6 and 7, that striving to be equal in earthly things—caring for each other and meeting all needs—is a prerequisite to obtaining the blessings of heaven.

7 ***the celestial world***. Using the term of the recently received Section 76, The Vision, the Lord refers to the highest glory promised to the Saints in the next life.

## Organize Ohio and Missouri (8-12)

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8 ***all things be done unto my glory***. Joseph Smith learned that the glory of God was the salvation and exaltation of all of God’s children (Moses 1:39). Thus, doing all things unto God’s glory means to do all things to exalt ourselves and others.

9 ***sit in council with the saints which are in Zion***. The challenge of administering the Church in two different centers is displayed by the need for Joseph and other leaders to make frequent trips to Missouri so that everyone will be working together and using the same information and decisions.

10 ***Satan seeketh to turn their hearts away from the truth***. Without the support of prophetic leadership, those in Missouri could be deceived and not understand the great things the Lord had prepared for them.

11 ***prepare and organize yourselves by a bond or everlasting covenant***. Those called to be part of the Firm in both Ohio and Missouri needed to be bound by solemn covenant to act in concert with the Lord’s will and each other.

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/topic/united-firm>.

12 **who breaketh it shall lose his office and standing.** To break the covenant of the Firm would mean loss of office in the Church as well as standing (meaning, potentially lost membership), and be subject to the “buffetings of Satan.”

## Prepare to stand independent (13-16)

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13 **the foundation, and the ensample.** The United Firm was not the end but the beginning and the example of principles of how the Church is to run in the world of money, profit, and agency.

14 **text note:**

NKW: “through the providence of your Father.” It was changed to “my providence” in 1835, shifting the source of the blessing to the speaker of the revelation, Jesus Christ.

14 **notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend.** It is fascinating in retrospect to look back and see how often the Lord’s language included warning about coming problems. It had already started in Missouri when this revelation was given; the brethren in Ohio didn’t know, but God did. The real tribulation came in 1833 and continued through the Missouri and Nauvoo periods—and into today, in different ways.

14 **text note:**

NKW reads: “you may stand independent,” while 1835 reads “the church may stand independent,” clarifying and perhaps broadening the application of the passage.

15 **rulers over many kingdoms.** Echoing the promise given to the faithful servants in Matthew 25:14-30, those who enter into the Firm’s covenant and are faithful to it inherit an eternal crown and rule over much in the eternities.

15 **text note:**

NKW referred to the “the holy one of Israel.” In 1835, it was expanded to, “the Holy One of Zion, who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman.” The term Adam-ondi-Ahman was first revealed about April 1835 with the later parts of D&C 107 (see v. 53).

16 **text note:**

This whole verse was added in 1835, likely stemming from D&C 107:53-56.

## The riches of eternity (17-22)

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17 **ye are little children.** This is a term of endearment and love. We are like small children when it comes to God’s knowledge and plan and have an eternal amount to learn and understand.

18 **I will lead you along.** We cannot understand or even “bear all things now.” What a great promise from an all-knowing God to speak to us in terms we can understand and bring us eventually to the “riches of eternity.”

19 **text note:**

NKW has, “made glorious in the things of this world.” 1835 reads, “made glorious, and the things of this earth shall be added unto him.” The change shifts the meaning of “glorious” away from the things of the world to the state of those receiving the promised blessings.

19 **even an hundred fold.** Most of the people in the United Firm were sacrificing much, giving up their homes, businesses, time, and opportunity to improve their lot in this life. The Lord promised that their sacrifice would not be overlooked but would be rewarded greatly. The contrast is stark—a few dollars in this life or control over worlds without number in the future!

20 **text note:**

NKW: saith your redeemer even Jesus Christ

1835: saith your Redeemer, even the Son Ahman

As with other changes here, the new phrase likely resulted from editing this revelation after D&C 107 was finalized in April 1835, though an interesting note in RB1, dated sometime in March 1832, speaks of the name of God “in pure Language” as being “Awmen” (the same sound with the spelling later standardized as Ahman) and the Son of God’s name as “The Son Awmen.”<sup>9</sup>

21 **text note:**

NKW: and then he will come even with the church of the first born & receive you in the clowd

1835: for ye are the church of the first born, and he will take you up in the cloud

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<sup>9</sup> Sample of Pure Language, between circa 4 and circa 20 March 1832, *JSP*, D2:213-215.

The later edits assign membership in the Church of the Firstborn (from D&C 76:54) to the recipients of the revelation, not just those returning with Jesus at his coming.

**22 a faithful and wise steward shall inherit all things.** The revelation closes with a final promise to those who accept and faithfully live this promise—they would have all things that the Father would give to his children.

## Results

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The formation of the Literary Firm gave leadership and direction to the publication of Church scriptures and documents. But the two bishops in Zion and Kirtland (Edward Partridge and Newel K. Whitney) and the Church agent in Missouri (Sidney Gilbert) either needed funds for their stewardships or had funds from their stores to share. Before D&C 78, that was not how things worked. D&C 78 brought all these interests together, to better accomplish the goals of the Church and the Lord.

The brethren did travel to Missouri as commanded, leaving 1 April 1832 (see Setting with D&C 82 below). There they formed a corporation, partnership, or firm called the United Firm, later called the United Order, which consisted of a combination of brethren from Ohio and Missouri. The principles of the Law of Consecration drove the function and purpose of the Firm. Most importantly, it combined all the assets and needs into a single entity so the money could be used wherever it was most needed.<sup>10</sup>

This is still how the Church functions today, with donations coming in through tithing or fast offerings or missionary or Perpetual Education funds being used across the world, wherever the need is greatest. Without this concept, all funds might remain local, giving some areas a great surplus and leaving other areas to struggle. With it, all Saints are blessed, bringing greater equality and unity in the Church.

## D&C 79 – Mission Call, Jared Carter

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### Setting

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Received Monday, 12 March 1832, at Hiram, Ohio (Johnson home). Note that D&C 79 came after D&C 80.

Jared Carter had followed much the same geographic path as Joseph Smith, living in Vermont, New York, and then Ohio. He was mentioned earlier in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 52:38; 6 June 1831) when he was ordained a priest. From September 1831 to March 1832, he had served a mission mostly in his former residences: Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont. Not long after returning home, he went to Hiram to meet with Joseph Smith. This revelation was received in conjunction with that visit.<sup>11</sup>

### Documents and Publication

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The oldest copy is in RB2 (between 12 Mar and 1 Apr 1832). Other copies include RB1 (between 26 Apr and Aug 1832). It was first published as Section 76 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, then as Section 77 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

### Commentary

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**1 go again into the eastern countries.** He had just returned from a mission to states to the east, including Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont. This call gave him the opportunity to return and meet with his converts as well as teach new people in those areas.

**1 in the power of the ordination wherewith he has been ordained.** It is not known when Carter was ordained a high priest but it was likely before his first mission, as he noted in his own journal a reference to receiving “the high privilege” to “seal on earth and to build up the Church of Christ and to work meracles in the name of Christ,” all things other members attributed to that ordination.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 281.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/jared-carter> and *JSP*, D2:204-206.

<sup>12</sup> *JSP*, D2:206n57.

**2 *the Comforter, which shall teach him the truth.*** Carter was obviously confirmed already, so this reiteration of the ability of the Spirit to teach and lead him was an indication of a greater promise related to his call.

**3 *I will crown him again with sheaves.*** Sheaves are bundles of grain after the harvest, a fitting image for converts. Carter had been successful on his first mission and now was promised continued success with converts on this new mission.

**4 *let your heart be glad.*** Carter struggled with depression during his mission but carried a copy—perhaps the original—of this revelation with him. This phrase must have given him comfort in challenging times.

## Results

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Jared Carter left on his second mission on 25 April 1832, just a few weeks after this call. He was obedient, going from town to town from Ohio to the town of his youth, Benson, Vermont. He tracked his own struggles and blessings in his journal and saw many instances when he was guided and taught by the Comforter. He recorded that he was indeed blessed with “sheaves,” baptizing seventy-nine people in just over six months. He wrote, “God has blessed me according to the prophecy of Brother Joseph before I went from Ohio.”<sup>13</sup> Jared Carter is a good example of those who were blessed by following Joseph Smith’s revelations.

# D&C 80 – Mission Call, Stephen Burnett

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## Setting

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Received Wednesday, 7 March 1832, at Hiram, Ohio (Johnson home). Note that D&C 80 came before D&C 79.<sup>14</sup>

Stephen Burnett was ordained a high priest at the young age of seventeen, in October 1831. He was called on a mission in early 1832 (D&C 75:35) but it is not known if that mission was fulfilled. This new call may thus be his first but perhaps his second mission.

## Documents and Publication

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The oldest copy is in RB2 (between 15 Mar and 1 Apr 1832), with the date and what is now verse 1 recorded in Joseph Smith’s hand, a rare thing. It was also copied into RB1 (between 26 Apr and Aug 1832). It was first published as Section 77 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, then as Section 78 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

## Commentary

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**1 *preach the gospel to every creature.*** Burnett was given the privilege of preaching to all people who might cross his path and thus come “under the sound of your voice.”

**2 *I will give unto you my servant Eden Smith.*** Few details are known about Eden. He served another mission before this call but apparently left the Church. He returned in 1834, being rebaptized by William McLellin. He lived in Nauvoo, served in the Nauvoo Legion and went on a mission to Pennsylvania in 1843, but did not go west with the Saints, staying in Iowa.<sup>15</sup>

**3 *it mattereth not, for ye cannot go amiss.*** “He cannot go wrong unless he does not go at all.”<sup>16</sup>

**4 *ye have heard, and verily believe, and know to be true.*** Many today would do well to be reminded of these words and remember and declare all things they have learned, believed, and knew were truthful, at least at some point in their lives.

**5 *him who hath called you.*** The call to serve did not come from Joseph Smith or his scribe but from Jesus Christ.

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<sup>13</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 282-283; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 2:360.

<sup>14</sup> The copy in RB1 mistakenly recorded the date as 17 March 1832, likely leading to the current order. RB2, which was copied nearly the same day as the revelation was received, has 7 March and is likely the more accurate (*JSP*, D2:201).

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/eden-smith>.

<sup>16</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 284.



## Results

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Burnett's companion, Eden Smith was ill for an extended period, so Burnett started serving with Eden's father, John Smith, then with Eden in August 1832. He went all the way to New Hampshire, being the first Mormon missionary in that part of the country. Sadly, he joined with Warren Parish and others in the leadership apostasy of 1837-1838 and never returned to the Church.<sup>17</sup>

## D&C 81 – Jesse Gause and Frederick G. Williams

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### Setting

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Received Thursday, 15 March 1832, at Hiram, Ohio (Johnson home).

On 8 March 1832, a rare “Note” was entered into Revelation Book 2, in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams, who was helping as a scribe to the Prophet. It is not a revelation, per se, but more like a notation of a decision and action. D&C 107:78-79 (November 1831) called for one to be ordained president of the high priesthood. While not calling for counselors, the precedent was set in previous revelations with bishops having counselors. Joseph Smith was ordained the president of the high priesthood at a Church conference in Amherst, Ohio, on 25 January 1832. The 8 March note records:

Chose this day and ordained brother Jesse Gause and Broth[er] Sidney [Rigdon] to be my councillors of the ministry of the presidency of <th[e]> hig Pristhood<sup>18</sup>

Jesse Gause was a new convert to the Church, having been baptized at most a few months before (exact date unknown). He was older than most other Church leaders at the time, having been born in 1784. His background was a schoolteacher, Quaker, then a Shaker. He joined the Church while living in the Shaker community in North Union, Ohio, though apparently without his wife's support (see D&C 49 for background on Shakers). He served as a scribe for the work on the Bible translation from 8 to 20 March 1832. This revelation was to instruct him in his duties as counselor and also gave more information about Joseph's role as president of the high priesthood.<sup>19</sup>

The call was not technically to the First Presidency, as that quorum does not exist until 18 March 1833 (D&C 90). But it was essentially the same thing, since the president of the high priesthood functionally effectively as president of the Church.<sup>20</sup>

### Documents and Publication

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The oldest copy is in RB2 (between 12 Mar and 1 Apr 1832). It was also copied into RB1 (between 26 Apr and Aug 1832). It was first published as Section 79 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, then as Section 80 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

### Commentary

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#### 1 *text note*:

Frederick G. Williams was not the original recipient of the revelation. The name was “my servant Jesse,” referring to Jesse Gause. See Results below for more details on this change.

#### 1 *text note*:

RB2 reads, “listen to the voice of him who speaketh to thee the word of the Lord your God.” In 1835, the word “thee” was dropped and a comma added, eliminating the potential misunderstanding that “him who speaketh” was Joseph Smith and not the Lord.

1 *hearken to the calling wherewith you are called*. To hearken means to hear and obey. Jesse's calling was to be a high priest and a counselor to Joseph Smith in that quorum. It was a large responsibility for one so new and untested. He needed to hearken to the demands of the calling and the blessings, both of which were related.

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<sup>17</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 284-285; see also <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/stephen-burnett>.

<sup>18</sup> Note, 8 March 1832, *JSP*, D2:204.

<sup>19</sup> Revelation, 15 March 1832 [D&C 81], *JSP*, D2:207; <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/jesse-gause>.

<sup>20</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:3.

2 **the keys of the kingdom**. Joseph Smith held the keys to the kingdom of God on earth alone at this time and was the only one authorized to exercise them. In March 1833, those keys would also be extended to his counselors, though still residing only in the president and exercised by the counselors only under his direction.<sup>21</sup>

3 **inasmuch as thou art faithful in counsel**. Jesse was promised blessings like those of Joseph Smith if he proved to be a faithful counselor, acting well in the office to which he was called.

3 **in the land of the living**. This phrase is used fifteen times in the Old Testament, predominantly in Ezekiel (seven times) to represent the earth (as opposed to the land of the dead, or Sheol). It appears once in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 14:8) but only because Abinadi was quoting Isaiah, and only this once in the Doctrine and Covenants.

3 **proclaiming the gospel . . . among thy brethren**. Having come from the Shaker community near Kirtland, the Lord wanted Jesse to return to them and teach the gospel to them.

4 **thou wilt do the greatest good**. Many things are good and worthy of our attention and effort. Here the Lord directed Jesse about which of his efforts would do “the greatest good,” guidance we all would appreciate from God.

5 **lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees**. From Hebrews 12:12; both could be indicative of prayer, as the ancients raised their hands to pray or bent the knee in reverence. It represents efforts to support Saints in their needs but also the President in his.<sup>22</sup>

6 **crown of immortality**. This is the only time this phrase appears in all of scripture.

6 **mansions which I have prepared in the house of my Father**. During his mortal ministry, Jesus spoke of many mansions in his Father’s house and that he was going to prepare a place there (John 14:2). In his resurrected state, he has now already prepared them.

## Results

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Jesse Gause traveled with Joseph Smith to Missouri and acted as his supporter and scribe for a few months. He was called to go back and preach to his former community of Shakers with Zebedee Coltrin in August 1832. During that mission, he unsuccessfully tried to persuade his wife, Minerva Byram, to join him in the faith. Less than three weeks into his mission, he left Coltrin and the Church and was excommunicated on 3 December 1832. He no longer engaged with the Church.

In January 1833, Frederick G. Williams was called to replace Jesse Gause as counselor and Oliver Cowdery replaced Gause’s name in this revelation with William’s. Thus, in the first printing, William’s name was used and has been ever since. Jesse Gause was called but chose to leave the Church. The Lord called another to serve, and the work went on.<sup>23</sup>

## D&C 82 – The United Firm

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### Setting

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Received Thursday, 26 April 1832, at Independence Missouri.

Between the previous revelations and this one, two other revelations were recorded but never published as scripture. The first was on 20 March 1832, which asked two questions. The first was “Shall we procure the paper required of our brethren in their letter<sup>24</sup> and carry it with us or not and if we do what moneys shall we use for that purpose”? The answer was: “It is expedient saith the Lord unto you that the paper ~~is~~ shall <be> purchased for the <printing of the > book of the Lords commandments and it must needs be that you take it with [you?] for it is not expedient that my servant Martin [Harris] should as yet go up unto the land of Zion let the purchase be made by the Bishop of [if] it must needs <be> by hire let whatsoever is done be done in the name of the Lord.”

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<sup>21</sup> Revelation, 15 March 1832 [D&C 81], *JSP*, D2:208n72; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:3.

<sup>22</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:5.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/jesse-gause>, Harper, *Making Sense*, 287; Revelation, 15 March 1832 [D&C 81], *JSP*, D2:207.

<sup>24</sup> This was a letter from Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, dated 28 Jan 1832, but probably not read by him until early March when he traveled to Kirtland for a conference (see *JSP*, D2:163-179, 223).



The second question related to the work Joseph was doing on the Bible translation: “Second shall we finish the translation <of the New testament> before we go to Zion or wait till we return”? The answer: “It is expedient saith the Lord that there be no delays and thus saith the Lord for the greatest good and benef[i]t of the church Wherefore omit the translation for the present time.”<sup>25</sup> Thus instructed, the brethren stopped the translation work in Revelation 11 and did not resume it until they returned from Missouri later that summer. The brethren were already planning on going to Missouri, per D&C 78; this revelation perhaps sped up the departure date with the urgency of getting the paper to William W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery for printing the Book of Commandments.

The second revelation received before the brethren left for Missouri pertained to the office of bishop, though it appears to have been for the instruction of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon more than the bishops as it was never circulated among bishops or printed. It discussed a bishop’s stewardship and responsibilities, allowed for many bishops to be called (“severely appointed”) and clarified that they served under the direction of the president of the high priesthood (Joseph Smith).<sup>26</sup>

After these revelations, the Prophet was preparing to go to Missouri. The winter had been extremely cold, and the end of March 1832 continued that trend. Tensions had been high during this time, in spite of Joseph and Sidney’s preaching in the area in December and early January (D&C 71) that did seem to calm things a bit. However, though the newspaper editorials authored by Ezra Booth had stopped, behind the scenes, plans were being made to drive Sidney and Joseph from the area. At the end of February 1832, a group met at the Johnson home to plan their departure to Missouri that spring as soon as the weather broke. At the same meeting, however, Joseph and Sidney were put on notice by those against the move “that they would be mobbed.” At that time, Joseph told them if they attacked any Mormon, they “would be stricken by the Lord,” and that caused the threats to diminish, but only for a time. What the mobbers needed was an insider, someone who could make their job easier. That man proved to be Eli Johnson, John Johnson’s brother. Eli had come for a visit at his brother’s request, to learn more about the Mormons, but he quickly fell into the camp of those opposed to the work. But he was a houseguest at the Johnson home, so had inside information about where the Smiths were sleeping, how best to reach them, and how to foil any defense that might arise with such an attack.<sup>27</sup>

On Saturday, 24 March 1832, Symonds Ryder, the neighbor next-door to the Johnsons and a disgruntled member, raised a company to go after Joseph and Sidney. He was the captain of the local militia, so that was likely why the group looked to him to lead them. The group were mostly members upset with the Church, with a few nere-do-wells joining in. Eli provided the details about where to find their victims. He had earlier “spiked” his brother John’s guns (probably by inserting something into the barrels so they wouldn’t fire) so they could not be used in defense. Another neighbor, Miles Norton, poisoned the Johnson’s dog that afternoon so it wouldn’t bark at them and alert everyone to their presence.

Joseph and Emma were settled into the work or summer kitchen in the back of the first floor of the house (see Image #1), caring for the two Murdock twins they had adopted, who both had the measles. Sidney Rigdon’s six children, staying in the cabin just across the dirt road from the Johnson home (but still on their property, see Image #2), were also suffering from the same affliction. The kitchen had a hearth for cooking which the Smiths would have kept stoked to provide extra heat for the toddlers, and a kettle of water continually steaming for moisture. Emma was also early in her pregnancy with Joseph Smith III, so she was likely tired and ill herself. Joseph pulled out the bottom bed of the trundle set in the room, and laid down with Joseph Murdock, the sicker of the two children.

Down the road and across the street gathered a group of about twenty-five men. Just east past Jason Ryder’s home was Miles Norton’s, and directly across the street from his place was Benjamin Hinkley and his brick kiln. It was in the kiln, away from prying eyes, that the men gathered and blackened their faces, using the soot from the kiln. Many of the wives of the members of the mob were still active, believing members of the Church, so the men did not want their spouses to know about their plans. They had come together because they believed the Church was trying to steal their land and homes through consecration, and their wives by encouraging them to go to Missouri. Building a fire, they softened the tar Eli Johnson and Silas Raymond had brought in a bucket. Raymond also had a dark lantern, one with a cover that could conceal the light until just when it was needed. The local justice of the peace, also a disgruntled member of the Church, brought a barrel of whiskey for courage. The men hid in the kiln for perhaps a few hours, waiting for everyone to be asleep and getting drunker on the whiskey. Some accounts say it was about 2:00 or 3:00 am when they moved out, making it early Sunday, 25 March.

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<sup>25</sup> Revelation, 20 March 1832, *JSP*, 216-218.

<sup>26</sup> Revelation, between circa 8 and circa 24 March 1832, *JSP*, D2:219-222.

<sup>27</sup> Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 335-339.

The group split into two parties, one going to the Johnson home for Joseph, the other to Rigdon's cabin. They coordinated their attacks so the noise wouldn't alert the other party. At the cabin, they broke the door and rushed in, unfortunately grabbing the wrong person at first, a young woman staying with the Rigdon's to help with the sick children, and the future wife of Peter Whitmer, Jr. They quickly corrected their mistake and grabbed Sidney. Because of their mistake, he had time to challenge them, but they ignored his protestations and dragged him outside. Sidney was a large man, weighing well over 200 pounds. Because of his weight, they dragged him by his feet, thumping his head along the frozen ground and badly injuring him, until they arrived at the wood pile (probably a pile of apple branches since they were near Ryder's apple orchard), east and behind the cabins. They tarred him and attempted to put nitric acid on him as well but apparently dropped or broke the container. The men left him for dead.

Meanwhile, at the Johnson home, the men first tapped on the windows, which Emma heard but ignored in her fatigue. They were probably just looking in, trying to see where everyone was. Soon the door burst open, but it was stopped by the end of Joseph's trundle bed. The men leapt through the small opening, surrounded the sleeping Prophet, and picked him up by arms and legs, dragging him out. Emma screamed, which finally aroused her exhausted husband. Realizing what was happening, he freed one leg and gave a hard kick in the face to Warren Waste, who fell off the stoop (the kitchen had an exterior door) onto the ice. He got up, nose broken and blood pouring out, and threatened to kill Joseph. Trying to contain him, one man pulled a clump of Joseph's hair out by the roots, giving him a permanent bald spot for the remainder of his life.

They carried Joseph to the front of the house and across the street when they stopped and someone tried to strangle him. He fainted. When he awoke, they had carried him past Sidney's cabin, south into a meadow. He saw Sidney on the wood pile and took him for dead. Sidney's unconsciousness may have saved his life, as the men stopped hurting him, milled around for a time, then finally broke up and left. Joseph's attackers, however, were not done. Putting him on a plank, the standard preparation for tar and feathers, they tore off his clothes so he was naked in the cold night. The group argued briefly what to do next, some wanting to kill him and others wanting just to tar him and be done. Richard Dennison was the one that brought the nitric acid and argued for castrating Joseph. Finally, the tar arrived, carried by Silas Raymond. The mob rubbed it all over his body, then someone tried to shove the paddle into Joseph's mouth. The paddle broke out one of his incisors, which tooth was missing until a dentist in Nauvoo replaced it a decade later. The mob scratched, hit, and kicked him, breaking one of his ribs. Dennison tried to pour the acid down Joseph's throat but his resistance caused the vial to be broken, spilling some of the acid on his face and burning him. Heber C. Kimball later taught that at this point, Joseph Smith died and his spirit left his body, seeing the whole event from above. But his spirit returned and he called upon God for help, at which point the mob heard a noise that alarmed them, and they fled.

The noise they heard was John Johnson, coming to Rigdon's aid (whom he could see from his house). Initially the mob had blocked the other doors of the house, so Johnson couldn't come out. He got his gun and threatened those holding the door, and they fled, but it was a bluff for Johnson realized his guns had been disabled by his brother's earlier efforts. He grabbed a club and ran out into the night toward the light he could see around Sidney's mob. He managed to knock a couple of them down but then had to turn and run when they attacked him. Running back to his house, he was sadly mistaken for a mob member by John Poorman, another neighbor who came to help, and who accidentally clubbed Johnson, breaking his collarbone. The commotion was enough to break up the group around Sidney, however, and they retreated to Hinckley's brick kiln, joining Joseph's attackers who got there just ahead of them. With all mobbers reassembled, the group cleaned their faces, burned their stained clothing, and did everything possible to hide the evidence of their nighttime activities. Family members later testified that their fathers were in the house all night, more a witness to the men's subterfuge than their whereabouts.

John Johnson was able to make his way back to the house where David Whitmer gave him a blessing and his broken collar bone was instantly healed. Rigdon regained consciousness and stumbled along the road, dazed and uncertain where he was, until his wife saw him and pulled him into their cabin. She removed the tar and feathers as best she could and got him into bed. His son said he was delusional for a few days, threatening to kill Joseph and his family. Four days later, his wife, Phebe, packed up her injured husband and sick children and left Hiram for Kirtland, never to return. They moved to Chardon, Ohio, a few days after that.

Joseph raised himself from the meadow where the mob had left him, pulled some tar from his mouth so he could breathe, and followed the lights back to the Johnson house. Women were waiting inside with Emma when he knocked on the door and asked for a blanket to cover his nakedness. When Emma saw him at the door, she fainted, mistaking the tar for blood. Someone threw him a blanket while others cared for the unconscious Emma, and Joseph came into the house where several spent the night scraping the tar and feathers from his body, using the warm fire and lard to soften it.

That morning, people began to gather for Sunday services at the South Schoolhouse, the only public space with heat. Several members of the mob attended with their wives, probably as a pretended demonstration of their innocence. At the service, Joseph preached, exhausted, with his skin still scarred from the tar and acid, his missing tooth, and his hair combed forward to cover his new bald spot. No one recorded his topic except “the principles of the gospel.” Three people were baptized in the cold creek nearby immediately after the meeting, one proclaiming that his persecution confirmed his calling.

While Joseph and Sidney recovered, one victim did not. Joseph Murdock, one of the twins and sick with measles, died four days later. Emma and others attributed it to the mob who had left the door open. His body was probably buried in the Johnson family graveyard, which Symonds Ryder, the leader of the mob, could see from his west window.<sup>28</sup>

In spite of the attacks, Joseph made plans to leave for Missouri the next Sunday, 1 April 1832. He traveled with Newel K. Whitney, Peter Whitmer, and Jesse Gause, per the command to go to Missouri in D&C 78 and the 20 March 1832 revelation. Their departure was perhaps hastened by what had happened, the brethren wanting to put distance between themselves and the mobbers, even as Joseph was still suffering from his injuries. They picked up the still healing Sidney in Chardon and moved quickly to Wheeling, West Virginia, to buy paper, then hurried to Independence, arriving about 24 April.<sup>29</sup>

Shortly after their arrival, the Ohio and Missouri brethren met in council, on 26-27 April, per revealed instructions (D&C 78). First, the brethren sustained Joseph Smith as president of the high priesthood, to which he had been ordained in Ohio on 25 January. Then Bishop Edward Partridge and Sidney Rigdon settled a long-standing disagreement they had about some things Partridge had done that Rigdon perceived as disrespectful of Joseph Smith. Meeting in person, they were able to resolve this to their mutual satisfaction, after which Partridge extended “the right hand of fellowship” to Joseph Smith, signifying his full support. Sidney Gilbert, the agent of the Church in Missouri, was ordained a high priest, and then Sidney Rigdon explained the main purpose for the visit—to organize the United Firm per D&C 78. This was acceptable to all present, and the conference adjourned for lunch. Returning in the afternoon, with “All differences settled & the hearts of all run together in love,” Joseph received a revelation—D&C 82.<sup>30</sup>

## Documents and Publication

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The oldest copy is in RB1 (between 26 Apr and Aug 1832). It was first published as Section 86 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, then as Section 87 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

## Outline

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- Forgiving each other (1-4)
- Sin no more (5-7)
- A bond and covenant that cannot be broken (8-15)
- The purpose of the Firm (16-24)

## Forgiving each other (1-4)

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**1 *as you have forgiven one another.*** Though Paul counsels the Ephesians to forgive each other as God has forgiven them (Ephesians 4:32), it is in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus taught that “if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14-15). This was a good reminder to Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge who had fostered frustration with each other for several months but finally resolved it at this conference.

**2 *those among you who have sinned exceedingly.*** The nature of the sins or the identification of the individuals is not made known; perhaps it was designed for universal self-reflection. Still, the Lord softened the strong language just a bit in the next phrase: “yea, even all of you have sinned.” None of us are without sin and able to cast the first stone (John 8:7).

**3 *unto whom much is given much is required.*** From Luke 12:48, this phrase only occurs there and in this verse in scripture. Those blessed with great truths, such as these early Church leaders, also receive high expectations from the Lord.

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<sup>28</sup> Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 344-364 provides tremendous details and a riveting account of this event, which I relied upon here.

<sup>29</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 288.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes, 26-27 April 1832, *JSP*, D2:229-233.

3 ***sins against the greater light . . . greater condemnation.*** Alma taught his son, Helaman, that the people living about four hundred years after the coming of Christ would “sin against so great light and knowledge,” referring to their knowledge of his mission and appearances to their people, and would end in “great iniquity” (Alma 45:12).

4 ***Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them.*** The Lord in his great mercy speaks his will to us as we seek it out, on things small and large, as evidenced by the revelations in this lesson alone.<sup>31</sup>

## Sin no more (5-7)

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5 ***the adversary spreadeth his dominions.*** Satan has been the ruler of this world since the Fall. But the end of his reign is coming and he knows it. In a last-ditch effort to maintain control, he is spreading his dominions in any way he can. Today we see him destroying families, basic morality, and eternal principles of happiness. When Christ comes again, Satan will no longer rule over this telestial world, but the Savior will be King.

6 ***none doeth good.*** Psalm 14:1, 3 (and the parallel Psalm 53:1, 3) use this phrase, which is quoted by Paul (Romans 3:12) and Moroni (Moroni 10:25). King Benjamin expressed it differently: “if ye should serve him with all your whole souls, yet ye would be unprofitable servants” (Mosiah 2:21).

6 ***all have gone out of the way.*** The quote is also from Romans 3:12 but is echoed in 2 Nephi 28:11. Both have a source in Psalm 14:3, but given that the early Christian church called themselves “The Way,” Paul’s use of it may have been especially directed at apostates. Importantly, that appears to be exactly what the Lord intended here.

7 ***who sinneth shall the former sins return.*** This does not mean repentance starts over each time we make a mistake. It does mean that our intentions matter. Explained one commentary, “Nevertheless, should we choose to break the covenant and refuse to repent, should we shift our loyalty and commitment from Christ to our sins, then the atonement of Christ can no longer shield us, and we become once again accountable for *all* our own sins.”<sup>32</sup>

## A bond and covenant that cannot be broken (8-15)

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8 ***a new commandment.*** This new commandment will teach them the Lord’s will or “how you may act before me,” which will lead them to salvation (v. 9).

10 ***bound when ye do what I say.*** The new commandment that leads to salvation is to understand that as we are obedient, the Lord is “bound” to bless us. King Benjamin’s insights are also helpful here: “he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and there he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?” (Mosiah 2:24).

11 ***my servants.*** A combination of Missouri and Ohio residents are involved in the United Firm, listed in this verse: Edward Partridge and Newel K. Whitney, the two bishops; A. Sidney Gilbert, the agent in Missouri; Sidney Rigdon, scribe for Joseph and counselor in the high priesthood, Ohio; Joseph Smith; John Whitmer, Church historian and scribe, Ohio; Oliver Cowdery, second elder, holder of keys, and Church printer in Missouri; W. W. Phelps, Church printer in Missouri; and Martin Harris, financial supporter of the Book of Mormon, in Ohio but soon to be in Missouri. Noticeably absent from the list but present at the conference is Jesse Gause, who is new to the Church and leadership and as yet has only briefly served as scribe.

### 11-12 *text note.*

RB1: bound together by a bond & Covennant that cannot be broken in your several stewardships to manage the literary & Mercantile concerns & the Bishopricks

1835: bound together by a bond and covenant that cannot be broken by transgression except judgment shall immediately follow, in your several stewardships, to manage the affairs of the poor, and all things pertaining to the bishopric

The change from a reference to the Firms to caring for the poor matches other changes in D&C 78 made in the 1835 edition, after the United Firm no longer existed.

13 ***I have consecrated the land of Kirtland in mine own due time.*** Initially, when the identification of Jackson County as the center place had been received, many expected to leave Ohio immediately and make their way to Missouri. But the

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<sup>31</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:12.

<sup>32</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:12.

Lord revealed that the migration should be slow and careful so as not to tax the ability of the Church to provide stewardships or the land (and existing settlers) to receive them. D&C 64:21 taught that Kirtland would be “a strong hold” for at least five more years.

**13 *for a stake to Zion*.** Drawing on the imagery of Isaiah 54:2, the Lord referred to Ohio as a stake in the tent of Zion, teaching in verse 14 that the tent must be enlarged and the stakes holding it up strengthened, that all can come in under its protection. Though the word “stakes” appears in D&C 68:25-26 today, it was not in the originals of those revelations but was added in 1835. Rather, in this verse is the origin of the use of the term to designate an area of the Church, first applied to the Kirtland area.

**14 *Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments*.** Following Moroni’s lead (Moroni 10:31), the Lord combined phrases from Isaiah 52:1 and 54:2 (stakes) to represent enlarging the tent and beautifying the kingdom at the same time.

**15 *bind yourselves by this covenant*.** Entering into the Firm required a serious covenant of all parties, in order to affirm their complete commitment and faithfulness to the common good.

**15 *text note*:**

RB1: according to the Laws of the Land

1835: according to the laws of the Lord

The first revelation assured the brethren that the Firm they were creating would adhere to earthly laws; in the 1835 change, it assured the Church that their covenants of consecration were according to the Lord’s laws.

## The purpose of the Firm (16-24)

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**16 *wisdom also in me*.** With the creation of the Firm explained, the final verses give the Lord’s wisdom relative to its true purpose.

**17 *you are to have equal claims on the properties*.** First saying that they were to be equal (compare D&C 70:14 and 78:5-6), the revelation explained that to be “equal” meant having equal claims on Church stewardships. This relates not to lands and farms but to the properties managed by the Firm, meaning the stores and printing office, which were to share equally in their surplus, and thus “become the common property of the whole church” (v. 18).

**17 *according to his wants and his needs*.** Remembering that “wants” and “needs” were likely interchangeable in 1832 (see commentary on D&C 42:33 and 51:3) and that this is pertaining to the Firm and not the entire membership, we can understand that each in their stewardship would have financial needs to be met that would allow fulfillment of the stewardship—paper and other supplies for printing, money to acquire land in Missouri, plus funds to support the men in the Firm and their families—this system allowed for the combination of all funds to meet their combined needs. In other words, if the printing business was not producing adequately and the stores were, the sharing of funds would give them all “equal claims” on the results.

**18 *gain other talents*.** The revelation uses “talents” in the monetary sense of the New Testament, not as in ‘abilities’ or ‘gifts.’ As the members of the Firm exercise their stewardships righteously, the expectation was that the income of their businesses would rise, positively impacting the financial position of the Church and especially the amount available in the bishop’s storehouse, which could be used to bless the poor and build up Zion.

**19 *seeking the interest of his neighbor*.** Selfishness was to have no place in the Firm or the Church. Rather, as they put each other’s interests first, ahead of their own, the Lord could bless them “an hundred fold” (v. 18).

**20 *an everlasting order*.** RB1 reads “firm” for both references to “order” in the current text. Though the Firm was not truly eternal, the Lord expected them to treat it as such and act accordingly. If they acted as if it was only a short-term effort, it might change their expectations and commitment.

**21 *dealt with according to the laws of my church*.** Breaking the covenant would result in the guilty party being judged according to D&C 20, 42, and subsequent expansions of the law of the Church.

**21 *delivered over the buffetings of Satan*.** Even more significant than Church discipline, the covenant-breaker would be subject to Satan’s blows (see D&C 78:12).

**22 *make unto yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness*.** From Luke 16:9, it is not the intention to do all things in partnership with the world, but rather to work within the world’s systems, to show kindness and respect, to be honest, and deal fairly. Only by that means will the Church’s efforts to build Zion be successful.

23 ***Leave judgment alone with me.*** Efforts by the Saints to retaliate against the wrongs their neighbors may have committed rarely achieved anything but more animosity. When they had a disagreement, Sarai said to Abraham, “the Lord judge between me and thee.”

24 ***the kingdom is yours . . . if you fall not.*** Blessings are always conditional upon our own efforts to keep the commandments and covenants the Lord has given us. It is given to us by a generous and loving God, and it is only ours to lose.

## Results

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The United Firm was formed as a result of the trip to Missouri and this revelation. They drafted the covenant or bond called for in the revelation and all signed it. Following the Lord’s directions, they purchased lands, published books and newspapers, and ran two stores.

However, tensions between Missouri leaders and those in Ohio were not immediately resolved. In a letter dated 31 July 1832, to William W. Phelps in Missouri, Joseph Smith expressed frustration that there was still strong criticism between the groups. He said that after getting a letter from some of the men in Missouri, he could discern:

That the Devel had been to work with all his inventive imagination to reward us for our toils in travling from this country [Ohio] to Zion [Missouri] amidst a crooked & preverse generation leaving our familys in affliction amidst of death upon the mercy of mobs & of brethren who you know sometimes are found to be u[n]stable unbeleiving, unmerciful & unkind, and in this trying situation to keeping the commandment of God we took our lives in our hands and traveled through evry combination of wickedness to your country for your salvation & for our travail & our toils, suffering & privations as I said before we learned by Broth Johns letter that the devel had set to work to reward us by stirring up your hearts (I mean those who were engaged in this wickedness) by raking up evry fault, which those eyes that are filled with beams could see in looking for moles in the eyes of those who are laboring with tender and <prayerful> hearts continually for there salvation, and not being content with bringing up those things which had been settled & forgiven & which they dare not bring to our faces but many with which we were charged with were absolutely false & could not come from any other sourse than the fath[e]r of all lies<sup>33</sup>

On top of these challenges, in July 1833, antagonistic members of the Independence community attacked Church property, destroying the press and printing office (which was also Phelps’ home). They also tarred and feathered Bishop Partridge, demanding that the Mormons end their businesses and leave town. That was the end of the Church in Jackson County. (Joseph wrote his letter above after those events had occurred in Missouri but before he knew about them.)

In D&C 104, the United Firm was disbanded because of debts from property losses in Missouri and a membership unable to sustain it in Ohio. It only lasted two years. But it wasn’t the end. Other mechanisms were used to manage Church properties, with increasing success over time. Today the Church manages a worldwide organization with a large staff of consecrated leaders, full-time employees, and volunteers. The principles in D&C 82 still apply.<sup>34</sup>

## D&C 83 – Widows and Orphans

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### Setting

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Received Monday, 30 April 1832, at Independence, Missouri.

On 30 April 1832, Joseph Smith returned from a two-day visit to Kaw Township to meet with former Colesville, New York members there, some of his earliest and most faithful converts. Back in Jackson County, the first meeting of the Literary Firm was held, since its creation by revelation on 12 November 1831. In that meeting, it was decided to reduce the number of copies of the Book of Commandments from the original optimistic 10,000 to a more practical but still ambitious 3,000; to defer printing a Church Almanac; to limit the printing of distribution of revelations prior to printing; to have William Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer review and correct the grammar of the revelations; and to move ahead with printing a hymnbook, with hymns selected by Emma Smith and edited by Phelps.

Later that day, a question arose concerning the disposition of consecrated properties to wives and children of men who may pass away. This was probably prompted by the situation Joseph had just witnessed in Kaw Township with two sisters

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<sup>33</sup> Letter to William W. Phelps, 31 July 1832, *JSP*, D2:263.

<sup>34</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 290-291.



there who were widows, Phebe Crosby Peck and Anna Slade Rogers. Since the properties belonged to the Church, and since in Missouri, women of deceased men had only a right to part of his property; should they follow the law of the land or handle things differently with consecrated lands and personal property?

## Documents and Publication

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The oldest copy is in the Newel K. Whitney papers (about 31 Mar 1832; NKW below). Also, in Sidney Gilbert's notebook (Apr 1832), RB1 (between 26 Apr and Aug 1832), and RB2 (Aug 1834). It was first published in *The Evening and the Morning Star* (Jan 1833), as Section 88 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, then in the *Evening and Morning Star* (Apr 1836), then as Section 89 in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

## Commentary

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**1 *in addition to the laws of the church.*** Early publications have a comma after this phrase, indicating that the laws of the church were separate from women and children, and it is not speaking about laws concerning women and children. The comma was dropped in 1835, which changes the meaning.

**1 *have lost their husbands or fathers.*** Widows and orphans (or at least fatherless children) are the subject the Lord is addressing.

### 2-3 *text note:*

NKW: ~~<a> women <woman>~~ <women> ~~have <has>~~ <have> claim on their husbands until <t>he<y> is <are> taken and if they are not found transgressors they remain upon their inheritances

1835: women have claim on their husbands for their maintainance until their husbands are taken; and if they are not found transgressors they shall have fellowship in the church, and if they are not faithful, they shall have fellowship in the church; yet they may remain upon their inheritances according to the laws of the land.

This change in 1835 reflected adjustments the Church had to make to implementations of the Law of Consecration after settling certain lawsuits brought against it by consecrated members who left the Church and wanted their property back.

**2 *Women have claim on their husbands for maintenance.*** The general principle is that women should expect their husbands to support them and their family in the Church. Circumstances may vary in individual cases, but that is the normal expectation.

**3 *yet they may remain upon their inheritances.*** Even unfaithful or non-member wives could claim their deceased husband's consecrated property, under this policy.

**4 *children have claim upon their parents.*** Until they are old enough to take care of themselves (which in Missouri in 1832 was 21), children could expect their parents to support and provide for them.

### 5-6 *text note:*

NKW: or in other words the Lord's storehouse for inheritances

1835: or in other words upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not wherewith to give them inheritances. And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church, that widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor. Amen.

This greatly expanded edition in 1835 goes from saying that children receive an inheritance from the Church when they come of age to having them first look to their parents for an inheritance. It then adds that the Church's storehouse, supplied by the consecration of its members, shall take care of widows and orphans specifically, as well as the poor.

## Results

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This revelation resolved some real issues in Missouri at that time, dealing with the needs of widows and their families. Later, as events played out, the text was modified to meet the ongoing legal and financial situations the Church found itself facing. The principles still apply—fathers are to care for their families and parents are to care for their children.

## Images

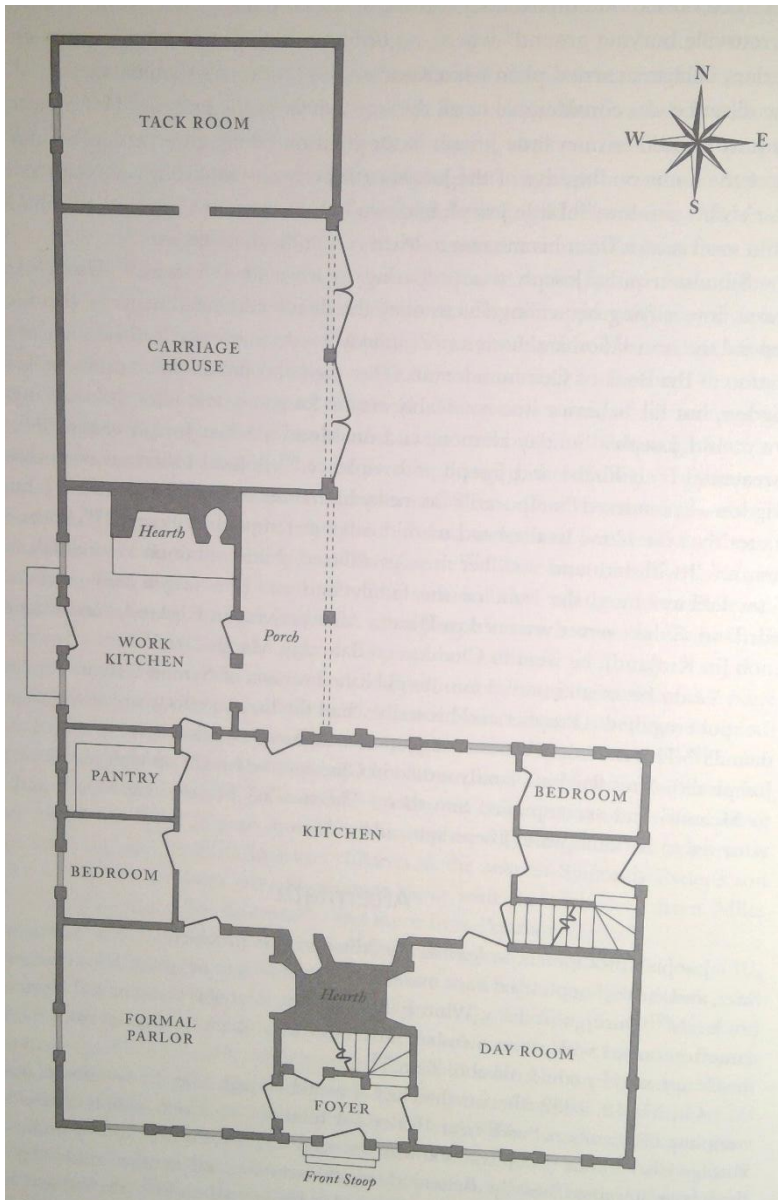


Image #1: Interior of the Johnson home. Joseph and Emma were likely sleeping in the Work Kitchen to stay warm with the Murdock twins, both sick with measles. Joseph and Emma slept on a trundle bed that pulled out to mostly fill the room, leaving little room for intruders to open the door, get in, and drag Joseph out. From Straker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 356.

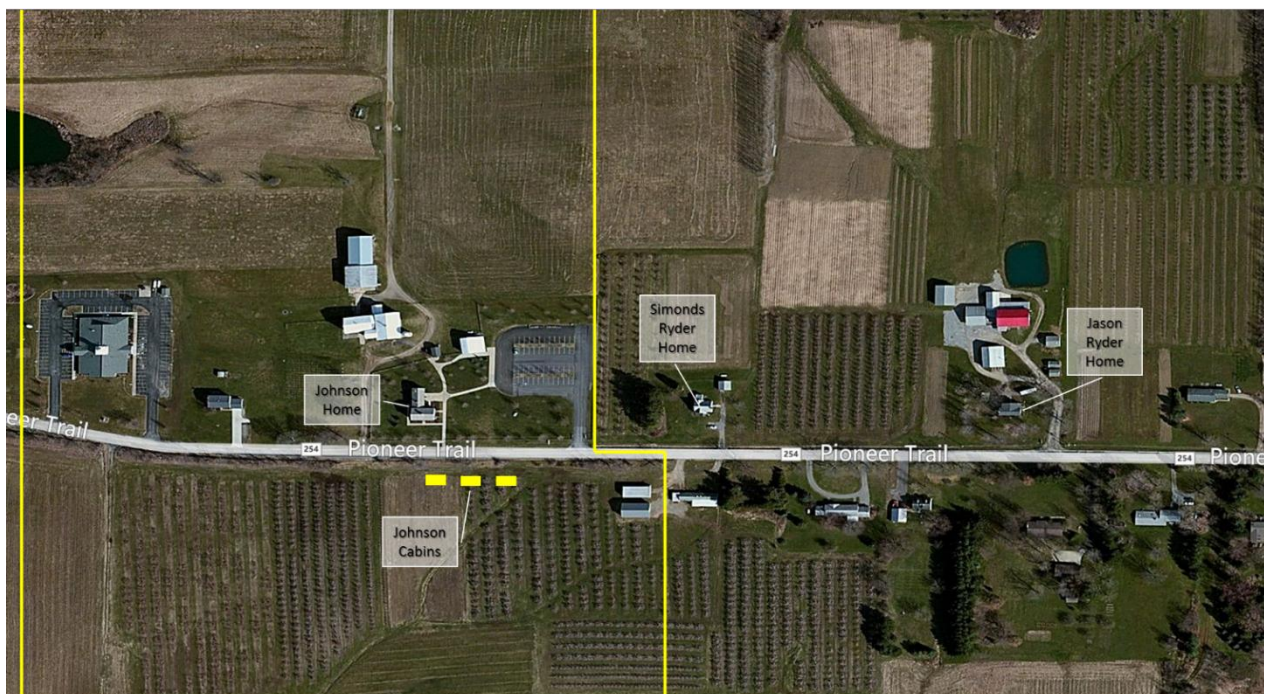


Image #2: Johnson farm, cabins, and Ryder properties, Hiram, Ohio. Johnson property boundaries in yellow. Note the LDS church on the west edge, and the cabins (not there now but marked in yellow rectangles) where Sidney Rigdon lived.

## Works Referenced

For text notes:

RB1 – Revelation Book 1, from *JSP*, MRB:8-405; R1:3-294.

RB2 – Revelation Book 2, from *JSP*, MRB:407-665; R1:307-482.

EMS – The Evening and the Morning Star, June 1832-May 1833, from *JSP*, R2:202-299.

1833 – Book of Commandments, printed in 1833, from *JSP*, R2:13-193.

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