

Doctrine and Covenants 88

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General Introduction

Summary Chronology

- **Tue, 25 Dec 1832** – D&C 87 was received in Kirtland, Ohio
- **Thu-Fri, 27-28 Dec 1832** – D&C 88:1-126 was received in Kirtland, Ohio
- **Wed, 3 Jan 1833** – D&C 88:127-137 received in Kirtland, Ohio

D&C 88 – The Olive Leaf, Message of Peace

Setting

Received Thursday and Friday, 27-28 December 1832 (vv. 1-126), and Wednesday, 3 January 1833 (vv. 127-137), at Kirtland, Ohio, in the upstairs translating room of the Newel K. Whitney store.

On Thursday, 27 December 1832, Joseph had gathered with some recently returned missionaries and other leaders in the “translating room” upstairs in the Newel K. Whitney store, where he and Emma were living. Those in attendance at this “conference of High Priests” included Joseph Smith, Jr., Joseph Smith, Sr., Sidney Rigdon, Orson Hyde, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Newel K. Whitney, Frederick G. Williams, Ezra Thayer, and John Murdock. Joseph taught the brethren that to receive revelation, they needed “to have [their] minds ~~in~~ on god and exercise faith and become of one heart and of one mind.” To learn from the Lord about building up Zion and the duty of “the Elders,” each prayed vocally, then each one arose and recommitted themselves to keeping the commandments of God.

At that point, Joseph began to receive a revelation. It’s not known what time they started recording it, but at 9pm, the brethren broke for the evening and returned at 9am on Friday, 28 December, and Joseph finished the revelation that is now D&C 88:1-126.¹

This revelation is in contrast to the one received just two days earlier, on 25 December 1832 (D&C 87), which focused on war, destruction, and other imagery of the last days. Because this one spoke of more peaceful things, Joseph later called it “the Olive leaf which we have plucked from the tree of Paradise, the Lords message of peace to us.”²

The revelation explored complex theological themes, including light as it relates to Christ, truth, and knowledge, as well as practical commandments, such as starting to build a temple in Ohio and (combined with the 3 January 1833 portion of the revelation) starting a “school for the Prophets” to prepare men to preach the gospel and lead the Church.

Most of the last verses (127-137 in the current addition) were received on Wednesday, 3 January 1833, as an additional explanation about the functioning of the school. Through printed separately at first, they soon became associated together because of topic, and were printed together in the first Doctrine and Covenants in 1835. The association caused the first date of the first revelation to be attached to the final verses for some time, attributing the entire revelation to 27 December 1832. Research by Joseph Smith Papers scholars confirmed the separate dates, which now appear in current scriptures.³ The final four verses (138-141) were added in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, along with other edits, some of which are noted below.

¹ Minutes, 27-28 December 1832, *JSP*, D2:331-334; Revelation, 27-28 December 1832 [D&C 88:1-126], *JSP*, D2:334-336.

² Letter to William W. Phelps, 11 January 1833, *JSP*, D2:365.

³ Revelation, 3 January 1833 [D&C 88:127-137], *JSP*, D2:346-347.

Documents and Publication

Verses 1-126: The oldest copy is in Minute Book 1 (about 28 Dec 1832). Other copies include RB2 (between 22 Jan and about 27 Feb 1833); SGN (about 28 Dec 1832 to 12 June 1833); and RB1 (about early 1833). It was first published in part (sections on solemn assembly and the temple) in *The Evening and the Morning Star* (Feb 1833), then all of these verses as a broadsheet (about Jan 1834), then as Section 7:1-38 in the 1835 and then the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Verses 127-137: The oldest copy is RB2 (between 22 Jan and about 27 Feb 1833). Other copies include RB1 (about early 1833). It was first published in *The Evening and the Morning Star* (Mar 1833), then as a broadsheet (about Jan 1834), then as Section 7:39-44 in the 1835 and then 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

- Another Comforter (1-5)
- The light of Christ (6-13)
- Quickened to various glories (14-31)
- Laws of the kingdoms (32-39)
- Understanding God (40-50)
- Parable of servants in the field (51-61)
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- Warn your neighbor (81-85)
- Signs of the Second Coming (86-94)
- Angels call forth the dead (95-102)
- Angels proclaim the restoration (103-116)
- Establish a house of God (117-126)
- The School of the Prophets (127-141)

Another Comforter (1-5)

1 ***who have assembled yourselves together***. See Setting for a list of those involved in the meeting, which was a group of high priests.

2 ***the alms of your prayers***. This is a unique phrase in all of scripture to this verse. “Alms” are something one person gives to another. The implication here is that their prayers were on behalf of others, as they sought the Lord’s will for Zion.

2 ***Lord of Sabaoth***. See commentary on 87:7; Sabaoth means ‘hosts’ or ‘armies.’

2 ***the book of the names of the sanctified***. Probably the same thing as “the book of the law of God” (D&C 85:5, 7) or the book of life (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19; Alma 5:58).⁴

3 ***another Comforter***. This phrase is only found here and in John 14:16. Careful study of both shows a difference. In John, the Comforter is not yet with them because Jesus is present, but another comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, will come after he departs. To avoid confusion, we sometimes use the terms “first” and “second” comforters to distinguish them, though these terms are not in the scriptures. The first Comforter is the gift of the Holy Ghost, given at the time of confirmation. The second, other, or last Comforter, as Joseph Smith taught, is Jesus Christ, so to have another Comforter is to enjoy the presence of Jesus from time to time, with the promise of eternal life (v. 4).⁵

3 ***the Holy Spirit of promise***. From Ephesians 1:13 and D&C 76:53, this is the assurance from the Holy Spirit of the “stamp of approval upon every ordinance that is done righteously.”⁶

4 ***the glory of the celestial kingdom***. This is the third revelation to mention the celestial glory—D&C 76 when it was revealed and 78:14 previously.

⁴ JSP, D2:336-337n258.

⁵ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:97-98; Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 5.

⁶ Joseph Fielding Smith, quoted in Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:98-99.

5 *the church of the Firstborn*. See D&C 76:54, 67, 71, 94, 102; 77:11; 78:21.

The light of Christ (6-13)

6 *He that ascended*. “He” is, of course, Jesus Christ (v. 5). This verse’s doxology transitions from the announcement that Jesus is the other Comforter to the message about light, while praising the omni-nature of the Savior—he has experienced and understands all things, because he is “the light of truth.”

7 *Which truth shineth*. In D&C 84:45, Joseph learned that “truth is light.” There is something physically enlightening about truth that not only brings increased understanding but actual light into our lives. With a full embrace of total truth, we could one day be bright like the Father and the Son, who exude light, glory, and power from their persons.

7 *the light of Christ*. D&C 84:45-47 taught that all people born into the world receive light, which is the Holy Spirit speaking truth to them on some level. As they hearken to that light, “to the voice of the Spirit,” which is also called “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” because he directs it, they receive more, bringing them closer to the Father. Here that part of the Holy Spirit given to all is named: “the light of Christ.”

7 *the light of the sun*. Also, the moon (v. 8), the stars (v. 9), and the earth (v. 10). Because Jesus created all these things (v. 9) and gives them life through his personal light and power, he is “in” them and the source of their power. Without the sun, moon, and stars, we would live in total darkness.

11 *which giveth you light*. Not only planets and stars but human beings receive their personal light through the creative and sustaining power of Christ.

11 *quickeneth your understandings*. To ‘quicken’ is to make alive, so the light of Christ through the Holy Ghost makes our understanding of important eternal truths come alive to us, making it real, good, and trustworthy.

12 *to fill the immensity of space*. The idea of “outer space” did not yet exist in 1832, though they did describe the empty distance between two objects, including stars, as “space.”⁷ The concept here was likely that the empty space between any two objects is filled with the light of Christ; it is everywhere.

13 *which giveth life to all things*. The power of God through the Holy Ghost not only quickens our understandings (v. 11) but quickens everything, making all things alive. Without it, there would be only death.

13 *the law by which all things are governed*. Not only does God’s power make everything alive, but everything works according to the laws He gives—stars and planets in their orders, nature in all its manifestations, oceans, wind, and more. Only man defies God’s laws intentionally.

13 *in the bosom of eternity*. This is a unique phrase to this verse in all of scripture. This metaphorical image of eternity having a bosom—a chest that is close to the heart and symbolic of affection and tenderness—and God being in it, speaks to his own intimate association with eternal life.

Quickened to various glories (14-31)

14 *through the redemption . . . the resurrection*. The redemption is the Atonement of Christ. Even as he was raised from the dead after his own death, Jesus makes it possible for each of us to do the same.

15 *the spirit and the body are the soul of man*. This very unique definition of the “soul” is only found here. In the thought of Joseph Smith’s day, and indeed in ours, the “soul” is typically equated with the spiritual element of mankind, not the corporeal, and certainly not the combination of the two. In fact, a large number of scriptural references to the word invoke more the spirit than the body; the majority use it in a way that does not imply any specific definition.

Yet in the hundreds of uses of “soul” in the Bible or Book of Mormon, many could be used to support this concept, including Genesis 2:7, where the putting of man’s spirit into his body caused him to become “a living soul”; or Exodus 12:15, where “that soul,” meaning a living person, should be cut off for disobedience; or Ezekiel 18:27, which clearly refers to a whole person alive; or 1 Nephi 1:15, which speaks of Lehi’s soul rejoicing at his experience; or 2 Nephi 2:3, where Lehi speaks of Jacob’s soul being blessed to dwell safely with Nephi, referring to a mortal condition.

⁷ See <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/space>, definition 2.

17 ***the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it.*** See Psalm 37:11 and Matthew 5:5 which discuss the meek inheriting the earth. There is no reference to the poor inheriting the earth, though 1 Samuel 2:8 shows the Lord raising up the poor and making them “inherit the throne of glory” which is related to the “pillars of the earth” created by God.

18 ***it must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness.*** “It” here and in verse 19 refer back to the earth. Though D&C 76 discussed the characteristics and blessings of those inheriting the celestial kingdom, it did not specify its location as these verses now do. It is the earth itself that will “be prepared for the celestial glory.”

19 ***filled the measure of its creation.*** Though this phrase sounds like it ought to come from Genesis, it is unique to D&C 88 in scripture. A “measure” is a certain quantity (think measuring cup); to fill it means that the earth had a task to perform—its reason for being created—represented by the measure, which it filled up by fulfilling its tasks.

19 ***crowned with glory.*** The earth will be symbolically crowned with a celestial glory, which literally means “the presence of God the Father.”

20 ***bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it.*** Those resurrected to a celestial glory will eternally call earth home after it becomes the celestial kingdom. In fact, “for this intent was it made and created.” Our planet was created to ultimately become God’s home and the residence of his children who are exalted.

20 ***for this intent are they sanctified.*** Likewise, as the earth fills the measure of its own creation by becoming celestialized, so celestial resurrected beings are sanctified to inherit it.

21 ***sanctified through the law.*** To be sanctified means to be ‘made holy’ or ‘set apart’ to a specific purpose. We don’t typically think of sanctification as coming through a law, but the Atonement of Christ can only be applied to us as we strive to obey God’s laws to make ourselves holy and dedicated to serve God.

21 ***inherit another kingdom.*** Those who do not become sanctified by the law will be left to inherit either the terrestrial or telestial kingdom.

22 ***not able to abide the law.*** Living celestial laws brings us into compliance and changes our very nature so that we can “abide a celestial glory.” If we only live lower laws, that is the glory that we must receive (vv. 23-24).

24 ***not meet for a kingdom of glory.*** Those who cannot even abide a telestial law (which according to D&C 76:81-88, 99-112 is an extremely low bar) will be sent to a place “which is not a kingdom of glory” (cf. D&C 76:31-38).

25 ***the earth abideth the law . . . and transgresseth not.*** Using these verses and others such as Moses 7:48, some have argued that the earth itself is a living being, required baptism (the flood) and cleansing. But a close examination of these and other scriptures makes it clear that these concepts are metaphorical and not meant to apply sentence or accountability to the earth. If the earth is ‘polluted,’ it is by the people on it who sin, and any cleansing it requires is for their sake, not its own. If the earth somehow required baptism for its salvation, then by the same logic, so should animals and plants, which are clearly more sentient than the earth. Thus, when it says the earth abides the law and doesn’t transgress but fulfills the measure of its creation, that refers to its natural course of existence, without implying some kind of choice on its part.⁸

27 ***a spiritual body.*** This doesn’t mean that the righteous are raised to a non-corporeal existence, but that their resurrected bodies are no longer mortal, subject to death, disease, etc. (see Alma 11:45; 1 Corinthians 15:44). A spiritual body is one which is infused by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁹

28 ***receive the same body which was a natural body.*** To clarify the meaning of v. 27, the Lord taught that “ye shall receive your bodies” which are like our “natural” bodies but quickened (made alive) with a fullness of glory according to the law we are able to abide (vv. 29-31).

Laws of the kingdoms (32-39)

32 ***they who remain shall also be quickened.*** After the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial souls are resurrected (vv.29-31), “they who remain” will also be made alive or resurrected. These are the sons of perdition (D&C 76:30-49).

⁸ Paul Y. Hoskisson and Stephen O. Smoot, “Was Noah’s Flood the Baptism of the Earth?” in J. Spencer Fluhman and Brent L. Top, *Let Us Reason Together: Essays in Honor of the Life’s Work of Robert L. Millet* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2016).

⁹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:107.

32 *they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.* This sounds like the perfect definition of hell, because they might have had celestial glory by living that law, but instead they live eternally in darkness because “they were not willing.”

33 *he receive not the gift.* The gift of eternal life is offered to all (John 3:15; D&C 6:13; 84:54-57) but some will sadly not receive (embrace) it. Such a person will neither rejoice in the gift nor in “the giver of the gift.”

34 *governed by law . . . preserved . . . perfected and sanctified.* This gives some insight into the power of obedience to transform us into the eternal beings God wants us to be. We choose to obey, and God’s grace preserves, perfects, and sanctifies us.

35 *willeth to abide in sin . . . cannot be sanctified by law.* Those who break God’s law and remain in their sins, trying to become “a law unto [him]self” can never become holy by that law. Likewise, other eternal principles of mercy, justice, and judgment cannot save him either, because he “must remain filthy still.” “Obedience *enables*; disobedience *disables*.”¹⁰

37 *there is no space in the which there is no kingdom.* What an amazing concept! The universe is more vast than we can begin to comprehend, yet the Lord declared that there are so many kingdoms (worlds in various stages of existence) spread throughout it that there is no space where a kingdom does not exist or govern.

37 *there is no kingdom in which there is no space.* Inversely, in all of God’s kingdoms, there is still sufficient space for anyone who belongs there. ‘There is always room for more.’

39 *beings who abide not in those conditions are not justified.* To be justified means to be forgiven and free from sin. We have to be justified before we can be sanctified (made holy), and to be justified, we have to abide the conditions (laws) of the kingdom.

Understanding God (40-50)

40 *intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence.* This verse includes several attributes that show how obedient beings will be brought together in like kingdoms. Sometimes in this life we say ‘opposites attract.’ That may be true, but in eternal kingdoms, we will be drawn to and have relationships with those on the same level of obedience and sanctification as we are.

40 *judgment goeth before the face of him who sitteth upon the throne.* God may love us all but he still must judge us—or at least help us judge ourselves.¹¹

41 *all things are before him . . . round about him.* Revelation 4 gives the image of God on his throne with a sea of glass before him, surrounded by beasts full of eyes (ability to see) and wings (ability to move). This symbolic imagery represents God in all his glory and power, able to see all things and act when needed.

The doxology continues that he is above, in, through, and round about all things—he is everywhere, inside and outside of everything: in other words, “there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:20).

41 *all things are by him, and of him.* Creation is an act of God; “without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3) and “there was not any thing done save it were by his word” (1 Nephi 17:31).

42 *given a law unto all things.* God gives laws to the entire universe, which they obey so that “they move in their times and their seasons.”

44 *they give light to each other.* The stars and planets that God set in courses (v. 43) give light to each other, and their order sets seasons, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years.

44 *all these are one year with God, but not with man.* Because God doesn’t really count time in any way like we do (Alma 40:8; D&C 84:100), this symbolic reference to “one year” is meant to convey that God orders the revolutions of planets and stars according to his own wisdom and is not meant to be a mathematical formula of any kind.

45 *The earth rolls upon her wings.* In Hebrew, the earth is also a feminine noun,¹² but it is not portrayed with wings anywhere but this verse. The symbolism is apt: wings represent the “power, to move, to act, etc.” (D&C 77:4).

¹⁰ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:109 (italics in original).

¹¹ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 634.

¹² The sun is both masculine and feminine (which works with this verse, which has ‘his’ in the current version but had ‘her’ in the oldest copy), but the moon is masculine in Hebrew, which is different from the feminine pronoun here.

47 ***all these are kingdoms***. “These” probably refers to the earth, sun, moon, and stars in v. 45, and does not mean they are “kingdoms” such as the celestial, terrestrial, or telestial. The Lord is using them as illustrations of his kingdoms in a way “that [we] may understand” (v. 46).

47 ***hath seen God moving in his majesty and power***. Alma declared the existence of God, telling Korihor, “I have all things as a testimony that these things are true” (Alma 30:41).

48 ***he who came unto his own was not comprehended***. This speaks of Jesus. Compare to verse 49 and John 1:5, 10-11.

49 ***you shall comprehend even God, being quickened in him and by him***. When we are resurrected and exalted, then we will finally understand God in his power and majesty.

50 ***shall ye know that ye have seen me, that I am***. When we have that perfect comprehension, then will we realize that God was right there with us the whole time, giving us light, without which we would “not abound.”

Parable of servants in the field (51-61)

51 ***I will liken these kingdoms unto a man having a field***. Having given a more metaphorical explanation, the Lord next used a parable to provide further understanding.

51 ***he sent forth his servants into the field to dig***. The man who owned the field sent his hired servants out to dig.

52 ***unto the first; Go ye and labor***. The field owner invited twelve men to go into his field with the promise that he would visit each based on the hour he was hired (vv. 52-55).

56 ***tarried with him all that hour, and he was made glad***. As promised, the owner went into the field the first hour and spent the whole hour with the worker, which made the worker “glad with the light of the countenance of his lord.” This was repeated with each other worker in their hour, until each received the master “in his hour, and in his time, and in his season” (vv. 57-59).

60 ***that they all might be glorified***. The goal of these visits was mutual glorification for both the lord and the servants.

61 ***every kingdom in its hour, and in its time***. The explanation parallels the parable without offering much additional detail. But the explanation seems to be that since the Lord has created “worlds without number” (Moses 1:33), each one must have some time with him, and so he will go to each in its turn. In our case, we had one time with him already—his mortal ministry and immediate post-mortal ministry—and will have another in the Millennium. Other worlds will enjoy his presence at different stages of their existence. But all will be blessed with a personal visit of some duration at some appropriate, divinely-designated time.¹³

See the face of the Lord (62-73)

62 ***ponder in your hearts***. The words given in the revelation should be the source of much pondering, as they are not easily understood in one reading, or even several.

62 ***call upon me while I am near***. The previous parable combined with this admonition are intriguing: is the Savior somehow more near us now (anticipating the Second Coming) than he might have been before or will be later? Or, is this more like he is near when we are prepared to receive him?¹⁴ Regardless, the quote is from Isaiah 55:6.

63 ***Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you***. This is the only place in scripture with this reciprocating promise. However, there are passages with similar thinking (Matthew 11:28; John 7:37; John 14:23; 1 Nephi 10:18-19; 2 Nephi 26:33; 28:32).

63 ***seek . . . ask . . . knock***. Though in a different order, this is in Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 7:7-8 (and the parallel 3 Nephi 14:7-8) and Luke 11:9-10.

64 ***Whatsoever ye ask . . . that is expedient for you***. Three times in John’s gospel, a similar invitation to this verse is given, to ask the Father in Jesus’ name, and it shall be given. Here the qualifier is added, that it must be “expedient.” 3 Nephi 18:20 has two qualifiers: that what we ask “is right” and that we must be “believing.”

¹³ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 636-637, who note that such a visit might only be to chosen servants on each planet, not necessarily the whole population; also Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:113-114.

¹⁴ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:114.

65 ***it shall turn unto your condemnation.*** This is not to say that if we pray for something that is not the Lord's will, that we will be condemned for it. God doesn't expect us to be divine mind-readers. Something that is "not expedient" is something improper, selfish, ill-intended, vain or foolish.

66 ***that which ye hear is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness.*** The Lord's voice calling to us in these last days is like a voice from the wilderness calling us to prepare (Isaiah 40:3). He explained that it is in the wilderness because we cannot see him, and we know it is his voice because it is the Spirit and the truth.

66 ***truth abideth and hath no end.*** To "abide" is to rest, stay, or remain. Truth is always there in front of us, ready to be acknowledged, for all eternity. If we embrace it, "in you it shall abound."

67 ***your eye be single to my glory.*** See Matthew 6:22 (3 Nephi 13:22) and Luke 11:34. To be "single" means to be focused; the person focused on God's glory will be filled with light, which allows full comprehension of all things. The key to understanding the mysteries of the universe is to be focused on God's glory, which is helping others achieve immortality and eternal life (Moses 1:39).

68 ***sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God.*** We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit as we strive to be increasingly obedient, which leads to an increased focus to do the will of God.

68 ***the days will come that you shall see him.*** As we become increasingly sanctified and focused, we will one day, "in his own time" be able to see him face to face. Joseph Smith explained to William W. Phelps that with this, the Lord "promised us great things, yea even a visit from the heavens to honor us with his own presence."¹⁵

69 ***the great and last promise.*** Meaning, to see the face of God, which of course is not the last promise the Lord made, but "last" in the sense of recent, the one just made.

69 ***cast away your idle thoughts and your excess of laughter.*** An idle thought is one not focused on God's glory, that is without a larger purpose. Excess laughter is inappropriate laughter but does not equate with sadness, for we are still to be cheerful and glad (D&C 59:15).

70 ***call a solemn assembly.*** The term "solemn assembly" is found in the Old Testament ten times (e.g., Leviticus 23:36; Numbers 29:35; Deuteronomy 16:8). This is the first time the phrase is used in the Doctrine and Covenants. It connotes a holy gathering, usually associated with the temple and a feast or divinely-sanctioned celebration.

70 ***those who are the first laborers.*** Going back to the parable in vv. 51-61, these early brethren were likened to the first laborers who would enjoy the Lord's presence in their time (also v. 74).

71 ***ponder the warning in their hearts.*** This second command to ponder and reflect on the contents of this revelation turns them toward the warnings of the consequences of poor choices and behavior.

72 ***I will take care of your flocks.*** New converts were left behind as elders traveled, taught, and baptized. These "flocks" were of concern to them, just as Paul's were to him and why he traveled back to the same cities time and again. The Lord reassured these early missionaries that he could care for their converts and "raise up elders" to follow up with them and provide them care.

73 ***I will hasten my work.*** The work is hastened at different times. It doesn't necessarily mean that the preceding period was one of slacking off or laziness, but each hastening expands capacity and results, building on previous successes.

Be sanctified and taught (74-80)

74 ***assemble . . . organize . . . prepare . . . sanctify . . . purify . . . cleanse.*** The brethren were to perform all these actions to prepare themselves for the Lord's action: "that I may make you clean." This anticipates the coming commands to build the temple and hold the School of the Prophets.

75 ***you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation.*** Though the concept is not new (Acts 18:6), this phrase is unique to D&C 88, used here and in vv. 85 and 138.

75 ***this great and last promise.*** See v. 69.

¹⁵ Letter to William W. Phelps, 11 January 1833, *JSP*, D2:367.

76 ***continue in prayer and fasting***. These are two important elements to humility, seeking and knowing the Lord's will, and being changed by the Atonement.

77 ***teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom***. The high priests together assembled were to teach each other—anticipating the School of the Prophets later in the revelation.

78 ***Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you***. Diligent teaching among peers is a hallmark of the Church today. We are called, take our place for a time, and then another is called to lead the teaching, but we all continually learn from each other and teach with our best efforts when we are called.

78 ***instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law***. We are to teach and study theoretical things as well as practical things, doctrines (concepts) as well as laws (applications). The balance between the intellectual and the practical grounds the Church in both aspects of learning in order to be stretching but also useful.

79 ***in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth***. The quote is from Philippians 2:10, which comes from Exodus 20:4 (see also Revelation 5:3, 13; Moses 6:63). In the ancient Hebrew way of perceiving the cosmos, heaven was above us, the earth was around us, and Sheol was below us. These three constituted all things in creation.

79 ***have been . . . are . . . shortly come . . . at home . . . abroad . . . wars . . . nations . . . judgments . . . countries***. The list of things the Lord wanted the brethren to study is comprehensive—history, current events, and prophesy, national and international events, politics and war, governments, geography, and more.

80 ***That ye may be prepared in all things***. The purpose of all this learning was not for learning's sake, but to make them more fit for serving in the kingdom, for taking the gospel message to all parts of the world, and to “magnify” their callings or do the best they could at any mission given them.

Warn your neighbor (81-85)

81 ***warn his neighbor***. The role of latter-day missionaries (meaning, all of us) is to “testify and warn.” Then as each person is warned, he or she is to warn neighbors of the judgment coming upon the world.

82 ***their sins are upon their own heads***. Anciently, on the day of Atonement, the priest would lay his hands on the head of a goat (the “scapegoat”), which was taken into the wilderness, symbolically taking away the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:5-10, 20-22). By proclaiming the warning message to those around us, “they are left without excuse,” and with no surrogate to carry away their sins (because they do not accept Christ), they bear the full responsibility for them.

83 ***He that seeketh me early shall find me***. A similar phrase is found in D&C 54:10, but originally in the Psalms and Proverbs as well as some of the prophets.¹⁶ To seek early is to do so with urgency and diligence.

84 ***tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry***. The Lord called for a time of preparation, that the missionaries might be trained and better prepared before the next round of mission calls. This is explained in more detail in vv. 127-141.

84 ***go forth among the Gentiles for the last time***. Not the last mission effort of their lives or the dispensation, but as part of the effort of the last days, which is the last warning period before the Second Coming.

84 ***bind up the law and seal up the testimony***. From Isaiah 8:16 (2 Nephi 18:16), though there the nouns are reversed; it was also previously used in D&C 133:72 (given in November 1831). This refers to the act of recording an action (such as an exchange of property) and legally sealing up the document. When it is time for judgment later, the document can be opened to know just what previously transpired or was agreed to. In this case it records the action of those preaching, verifying their efforts to warn the people, which is sealed up as a testimony against their rejection.

85 ***the desolation of abomination which awaits the wicked***. In the Old Testament, the phrase is “the abomination which maketh desolate” (Daniel 11:31).¹⁷ But the phrase is changed slightly in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, to “abomination of desolation.” D&C 84:117 and this verse are the only times it is used in the Doctrine and Covenants, both of which reverse the New Testament order of words but more closely follow the sense of the Old.

¹⁶ Psalm 63:1; Proverbs 1:28; 8:17; Isaiah 26:9; Hosea 5:15.

¹⁷ Also Jeremiah 44:22; Ezekiel 33:29; Daniel 9:27; 12:11.

Signs of the Second Coming (86-94)

This section has many similarities to other chapters that speak of signs of the last days, including Matthew 24 (and Joseph Smith—Matthew), Mark 13, Revelation 7-20; Joel 2-3, and D&C 29, 45, 84, and 133, all received previous to this.

86 *Abide ye in the liberty wherewith ye are made free*. Paul used a similar phrase in Galatians 5:1, where Christ is the one that made us free. Alma (senior) used a similar phrase in his teachings (Mosiah 23:13) as did his grandson, Helaman (Alma 58:40) and Pahoran the judge (Alma 61:9). This is the only time it is used in the Doctrine and Covenants.

87 *earth shall tremble . . . sun shall hide . . . moon . . . stars*. The signs in the heavens represent warnings of judgments from God because he is the only one that can control them. Previous revelations had evoked similar images (D&C 29:14; 34:9; 43:18; 45:33, 42; 84:118; 133:22), echoing Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:10 and 3:15, and New Testament prophecies, including Matthew 24:29; Luke 21:25; and Revelation 6:12; 8:12.

87 *as a fig that falleth from off a fig tree*. Revelation 6:13.

88 *after your testimony*. The judgments will be held back until the missionaries can bear full testimony.

89 *testimony of earthquakes*. The other item clearly under God's control is what happens beneath the earth, since man cannot see or access it. Thus, earthquakes are a sign of divine displeasure, not to mention the destruction involved.

90 *thunderings . . . lightnings . . . tempests . . . waves*. Parts of these four are mentioned in many scriptures but this is the only one to combine all four into a sign or testimony of the truth of the message of the Lord to the world.

91 *men's hearts shall fail them*. Previously mentioned in D&C 45:26, this was an Old Testament (1 Samuel 17:32) and New Testament (Luke 21:26) sign of mortal weakness.

92 *angels shall fly*. Revelation 8:13 and 14:6 as well as the previously received D&C 133:36 all mention angels flying through heaven to deliver God's messages.

92 *the Bridegroom cometh*. The call to go out and meet the bridegroom comes from Matthew 25:6 and was previously used in D&C 133:10, 19. Anciently, brides waited in their homes for the bridegroom and his party to arrive, marry her, and then take her away to the new home he had built for them. His general arrival time might be known, but until the wedding party passed through the street, the exact time could not be known. Once there, the call would go out to everyone to join the party because the bridegroom was coming down the street and the wedding was imminent.

93 *a great sign in heaven*. D&C 29:14 mentioned "greater signs in heaven" and 45:40 "signs and wonders . . . in the heavens." But this singular "sign" appears to play into a later Joseph Smith comment about "one grand sign of the Son of the son of man in heaven." He taught that some would call it a planet or comet but it will be the "coming of the son of man."¹⁸

94 *That great church, the mother of abominations*. With language from 1 Nephi 14:9-17 and Revelation 17:1-5, this verse portrays the fate of those who fight against God and shed the blood of the saints. Then it is tied to the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30 and D&C 86, just received early in the same month as this), portraying Babylon as the tares to be gathered, bundled with strong bands that no man can loose, and burned.

Angels call forth the dead (95-102)

95 *silence in heaven for the space of half an hour*. Revelation 8:1 describes silence for half an hour at the opening of the seventh seal, which marks the beginning of the final judgments before the Second Coming.

95 *the curtain of heaven be unfolded, as a scroll*. From Revelation 6:14 and Isaiah 34:4; a rolled out scroll hides things underneath it. So is the curtain or veil of heaven. When it is rolled up, it reveals what is behind it, which here is "the face of the Lord."

96 *be quickened and be caught up to meet him*. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 speaks of this event, called the "rapture" by many of our Protestant friends. Scriptures such as this make clear that the tribulation of the last days happens before the rapture, making Latter-day Saints post-tribulation rapturists. Many evangelical Protestants are pre-tribulation rapturists, meaning they believe that those saved by faith in Christ will be caught up before the terrible events preceding the Second Coming.

¹⁸ "Journal, December 1842–June 1844; Book 2, 10 March 1843–14 July 1843," p. 76.

97 ***their graves shall be opened.*** Ezekiel 37:12-13 speaks of the Lord opening the graves of the dead, as does D&C 29:26. Here we learn that the resurrected dead will be caught up to meet Christ at his coming as well as the living.

98 ***the first fruits.*** The “firstfruits” were celebrated in ancient Israel each year, the first crops harvested (e.g., Exodus 23:16-19; 34:22-26; Leviticus 2:12-14; Nehemiah 10:35-37). Paul used the metaphor several times in his writings to refer to converts (e.g., Romans 16:5) but also in conjunction with his discussion of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Several Book of Mormon references use it as well (e.g., 2 Nephi 2:9; Jacob 4:11; Moroni 8:25) but this is the only use of the term in the Doctrine and Covenants.

99 ***the second trump.*** The first trump sent Babylon to its fate and called the dead and the living up into the clouds with Christ (vv. 94-98). This second trump brings for those “who have received their part in that prison which is prepared for them,” meaning those who were in prison in the spirit world but have now received the gospel and can be “judged according to men in the flesh” (see 1 Peter 4:6; D&C 76:73).

100 ***the third trump.*** The third call is to those “found under condemnation,” meaning those resurrected at the end of the Millennium but still to a kingdom of glory (v. 101; also D&C 29:22; 76:85).

102 ***the fourth trump.*** At the sounding of the fourth trump shall the sons of perdition be resurrected, they “who shall remain filthy still.”

Angels proclaim judgment (103-116)

103 ***the fifth trump.*** Though the description of the angel is compared to Revelation 14:6, the mission here is not the same; in this case, the angel is to declare that everyone should bow the knee and confess Christ because the judgment of God is coming and the whore on the many waters is fallen (v. 104).

105 ***the sixth angel.*** This angel echoes the lament of the fall of Babylon from v. 104.

106 ***the seventh angel.*** This last trump proclaims the completion of the work of the Lamb, who has overcome all things and trodden the wine-press alone (Isaiah 63:3; Revelation 14:20; 19:15; D&C 76:107).

107 ***receive their inheritance and be made equal with him.*** Angels and saints who are “filled with his glory” will finally receive their promised inheritance as Christ’s sons and daughters, which is to become “equal with him.”

108 ***the first angel again sound his trump.*** The seven angels repeat their efforts in vv. 108-110, now symbolically revealing all the acts and thoughts of men in each of the thousand years of the earth’s temporal existence (see D&C 77:6-7), plus “the mighty works of God.”

110 ***there shall be time no longer.*** Compare Revelation 10:6; D&C 84:100.

110 ***Satan shall be bound.*** Showing this is not meant as a strict chronology, the seventh angel also declares the binding of Satan and his armies for a thousand years, which happens at the beginning of the Millennium (Revelation 20:2; D&C 43:31; 45:55; 84:100), then he is “loosed for a little season” (v. 111).

112 ***Michael, the seventh angel.*** The name of the seventh angel is Michael, who the Prophet learned was Adam (D&C 27:11). He will gather the army of heaven to make battles against the devil and his armies (v. 113).

114 ***the battle of the great God.*** Revelation 19:17 calls it “the supper of the great God.” At the end of the battle, Satan and his minions are cast into outer darkness, never to bother the saints again.

115 ***For Michael shall fight their battles.*** There is some eternal poetic justice in having Michael or Adam, who was the one who started mortality with the Fall, lead the final battle by defeating that being who tempted him and Eve in the garden and who has always had as his goal to take “the throne of him with sitteth upon the throne, even the Lamb.”

116 ***they shall not any more see death.*** This is impossible to conceive of in our mortal state where death is rampant and endings are the norm, but it provides great comfort that one day death will be fully defeated by Christ.

Establish a house of God (117-126)

117 ***my friends, call your solemn assembly.*** The Lord already invited them to call a solemn assembly in v. 70, but reiterates that command by prefacing it with an endearing term “my friends.”

118 ***all have not faith***. Every person is in a different place in their faith journey. To help those who are new to the path (as well as all the rest of us), the Lord offers a series of things we can do.

118 ***seek ye diligently***. Proverbs counsels us to diligently seek God's face and good (Proverbs 7:15; 11:27) and the author of Hebrews teaches that God rewards those who diligently seek him (Hebrews 11:6). Nephi was blessed because he sought the Lord diligently with humility and wrote that the Holy Ghost was given to those who diligently seek God. In this revelation, the Saints were already promised that seeking the Lord diligently would result in them finding him (v. 63).

118 ***teach one another words of wisdom***. There is a current emphasis in the Church to have more discussion-focused lessons in our Sunday School, youth, and adult classes. But the concept of teaching each other and having a teacher that draws out revelation and learning from the whole class starts here.

118 ***seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom***. The "best books" are not just the four standard works, or even those that can be purchased at Deseret Book, as good as their collection is. We are commanded to range widely in our reading and studying, to bring the best thinking and "words of wisdom" into our lives from many sources.

118 ***by study and also by faith***. People who rely on study alone can find themselves ungrounded, subject to being whipped back and forth, depending on the current thinking of the latest scholars. Those who rely solely on faith may likewise find themselves without sufficient depth to defend their faith when challenged. There is great power in this counsel from the Lord for us to seek learning by both.

119 ***establish a house***. The Saints quickly interpreted this exactly as we view it today: a command to build a temple. The attributes of this house in the rest of the verse are worth pondering, to reflect if we find these things in our temple worship: prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, order, and God himself.

120 ***with uplifted hands unto the Most High***. In ancient Israel, many prayers, especially public ones associated with temple worship, were offered with upraised hands, to represent pleading with God for all those present. In the proposed Kirtland temple, the members were taught to enter, leave, and greet each other in that spirit of prayer.

121 ***cease from all your light speeches . . . laughter . . . lustful desires . . . pride and light-mindedness . . . wicked doings***. While not exactly a temple recommend list of questions, this list of preparatory behaviors is also worth personal introspection.

121 ***from all laughter***. "In Doctrine and Covenants 59:15, the command was that we have not 'much laughter.' In Doctrine and Covenants 88:69 we are told not to have an 'excess of laughter.' Yet in this verse the wording is to cease "from all laughter." Does this mean we are not to laugh at all? No, for the context is different in each case. Section 88 counsels us to avoid 'an excess of laughter' in our daily lives. Section 59 counsels us to avoid 'much laughter' on the Sabbath day, and this verse counsels avoiding 'all laughter' while engaged in the solemn activities of the temple."¹⁹

122 ***Appoint among yourselves a teacher***. Callings in the Church were not implemented in the way they are today, nor were Sunday services so formal with the patterns, classes, and divisions we enjoy. Still, the concepts of having a teacher lead the class for a time, then having another take his place, is a very early development. Teachers have the responsibility in such venues to "let one speak at a time and let all listen" that all may be edified and allow every person "an equal privilege" of learning, speaking, and growing. This, however, implies preparation on the part of both the teacher and the participants, because off-topic or uninformed comments would not be edifying to the group.

123 ***love one another; cease to be covetous***. Important commandments for all purposes but interesting to consider in terms of the temple and the classroom.

124 ***Cease to be idle . . . unclean . . . find fault***. Continuing the list from v. 123, the Lord counsels hard work, cleanliness, and looking for the best in others.

124 ***cease to sleep longer than needful***. A "needful" amount of sleep varies with time and circumstances in our lives, but the consistent advice to "retire to thy bed early" to avoid weariness and to "arise early" to be invigorated in body and mind is generally sound medical and cultural advice.

125 ***clothe yourselves with the bond of charity***. This phrase is unique in the D&C (here and 124:116), but the image is compelling, advocating living with charity so abundantly that it becomes like a "mantle" or coat that covers our lives. The value of charity is expounded in many scriptures, notably 1 Corinthians 13 and Moroni 7.

¹⁹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:130-131.

125 *the bond of perfectness and peace*. From Colossians 3:14-15, another way of saying is that charity binds us together perfectly in unity and peace.

126 *Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come*. See Luke 21:36 and 2 Nephi 32:9. This is a common command in the Doctrine and Covenants especially (fourteen times).²⁰

The School of the Prophets (127-141)

As mentioned in the Setting, verses 127-137 were added after the rest of the revelation, on 3 January 1833. Verses 138-141 were added at an unknown date but sometime before the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants went to press. They reflect later thinking and experience than the rest of the section.

127 *the school of the prophets*. This initial school, which ran from January to April 1833, only had about twenty-five participants, selected according to their ability to live according to the commandments set forth in this revelation.

128 *president, or teacher, shall be found standing in his place*. Joseph Smith was the president but subsequently others would be called as teachers. When it was time for a session of the school to begin, the president or teacher was to arrive first (v. 129), in order to open the school and greet all the students (vv. 132-133).

130 *into the house of God*. Anticipating that these schools would eventually be held in the temple (which they were), the president or teacher was told to “be an example” by arriving first.

131 *Let him offer himself in prayer upon his knees*. Before the class began, alone in the temple, the president or teacher would kneel in a prayer of preparation, remembering “the everlasting covenant.”

132 *with uplifted hands to heaven*. Continuing in the spirit of the prayer (v. 131), he was to raise his hands in greeting as each person entered, repeating the words of v. 133.

133 *I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Though we may not use this greeting and these words as we see each other each week in our Sunday meetings or at the temple or in our homes and neighborhoods, the spirit conveyed in them of love and support and unity is the attitude we should strive to enjoy as fellow Saints.

134 *he that is found unworthy of this salutation*. Those who cannot receive the covenant and each other in the spirit of v. 133 should not be part of the school nor come into the house of the Lord.

135 *with the same prayer and covenant, or by saying Amen*. Recognizing that the repetition of v. 133 by every person entering the room is the right feeling to evoke but could become cumbersome, the Lord allowed for a simple “Amen, in token of the same.”

136 *this is an ensample*. Again, allowing for perhaps less formality and larger groups, the Lord gives this as an example of how we should greet each other in the temple or the school, but not as a commandment in perpetuity.

137 *the Spirit shall give utterance in all your doings*. Whether in the temple or the school, they were to let the Spirit of the Lord dictate their words and actions to preserve the holiness of their activities and their locations.

138 *save he is clean from the blood of this generation*. One of the prerequisites for entering the School of the Prophets was diligence in preaching the gospel to others. This also ties to the washing ordinances discussed in the next few verses.

139 *the ordinance of the washing of feet*. Taken from the act Jesus did with his disciples at the Last Supper (John 13:3-10), which in turn was likely modeled on how priests washed their feet before serving in the temple (Exodus 30:18-21; 40:30-31), this ordinance was revealed to Joseph Smith subsequent to this original revelation but before the Doctrine and Covenants was first printed, so these verses were added to explain how it was used with the school, something they had already been practicing for some time by 1835.

Orson Pratt taught that the endowment was revealed “little by little” starting with the washing of feet. After the Kirtland temple was built, the ordinance was only administered by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve (v. 140).²¹

²⁰ This verse and 10:5; 19:38; 20:33; 31:12; 32:4; 33:17; 61:39; 75:11; 81:3; 90:24; 93:49, 50; 101:81.

²¹ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 650; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:134-135.

141 *commenced with prayer; and after partaking of bread and wine, he is to gird himself*. Joseph Smith performed this ordinance himself according to these instructions.²²

Results

The practical demands of the revelations spurred the Saints to quick action, with steps begun immediately to construct a schoolhouse for the school of the prophets and ground soon broken for the temple in Kirtland.²³ The theological elements proved less interesting at first, so much that when Phelps printed the first copy in *The Evening and the Morning Star* in Missouri, he left those parts out. It wasn't until about January 1834 when the revelation was printed in its entirety in a broadsheet.

Shortly after receiving this revelation, Joseph Smith sent a copy to William W. Phelps for printing in Missouri, with a letter that contained some reprimand:

I Send you the Olive leaf which we have plucked from the tree of Paradise, the Lords message of peace to us, for though our Brethren in Zion, indulge in feelings towards us, which is are not according to the requirements of the new covenant yet we have the satisfaction of knowing that the Lord approves of us & has accepted us, & established his name in kirtland for the salvation of the nations, for the Lord will have a place ~~for~~ from whence his word will go forth in these last days in purity, for if Zion, will not purify herself so as to be approved of in all things in his sight he will seek— another people for his work will go on untill Isreal is gathered & they who will not hear his voice must expect to feel his wraith, Let me say ~~unto~~ to you, seek to purefy ourseves, & also all the inhabitants of Zion lest the Lords anger be kindled to fierceness, repent, repent, is the voice of God, to Zion²⁴

He told Phelps that the Lord had commanded them to build a temple in Kirtland and start a School of the Prophets, and that they were determined to obey so as to merit the promised blessings. From the lessons of the Bible translation and D&C 84, he worried that the people would reject the Lord's promises and fall short of blessings.²⁵

The Kirtland temple construction began in the summer months of 1833 but faced several delays along the way, requiring a rebuke by the Lord (D&C 95). It was finally ready in 1836 for dedication and use (D&C 109). Joseph promised continued revelation of temple ordinances, starting with the washing of feet revealed here. He urged the Saints to be prepared for this fuller "endowment" that they might "be prepared and able to overcome all things." In short, the promises of D&C 88 drove many of Joseph Smith's efforts to lead the Church forward with the Lord's priorities.²⁶

Though the term "School of the Prophets" was used later in other teaching situations, the larger story is that subsequent 'schools' were created to serve larger numbers of Saints, called Schools of the Elders. The main goal was to prepare brethren for missionary work and leadership, but they also studied secular subjects, per the instructions in D&C 88. The original Lectures on Faith that appeared in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants was given in one of the schools of the elders in 1834-1835. Several instances were recorded during these schools of divine manifestations, including visions of the Savior and angels. Eventually the schools were discontinued as other educational programs came into play, such as Sunday School, Young Men and Young Women, and as Church publications and manuals met many needs.²⁷

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RB2 – Revelation Book 2, from *JSP*, MRB:407-665.

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

NKW – Newel K. Whitney papers (various Dx volumes)

SGN – Sidney Gilbert Notebook (various Dx volumes)

²² "History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," p. [270](#).

²³ Revelation, 27-28 December 1832 [D&C 88:1-126], *JSP*, D2:335, though n248 mentions that the work on the temple proceeded slowly enough that in June 1833, the Lord had to chastise them for inaction, after which the work began in earnest.

²⁴ Letter to William W. Phelps, 11 January 1833, *JSP*, D2:365-367.

²⁵ Letter to William W. Phelps, 11 January 1833, *JSP*, D2:367-368.

²⁶ Harper, *Making Sense*, 318-321.

²⁷ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 3:132-133.

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