

D&C 33-38

Lesson 7, Doctrine & Covenants, Adult Religion Class, Monday, 24 Oct 2016

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General Introduction

The missionary work in Ohio, led by the four men called to teach the Lamanites but stopping on the way to see Parley Pratt's old friend, transformed the Church. These sections represent continued calls to service to some New York Saints, such as Ezra Thayre, Northrop Sweet, and Orson Pratt, and new converts from Ohio, such as Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, who played significant roles in the early history of the Church.

But the sections that called New York Saints to pack up and move to Ohio were the most challenging and surely surprising to the young Church. This was a test of Joseph's leadership and their testimony of his calling. Would the Church not only follow him in spiritual things but in significant temporal decisions?

During this time, Joseph Smith was engaged with his new translation effort, going through the early chapters of Genesis and editing them by the power of God. The resulting learning set the stage for all the changes the Church was about to go through, and gave Joseph himself a vision of his own calling and the great destiny of the Church itself.

The lesson for us as we study these chapters lies in the same questions. Will we follow the prophets of God today in all things they ask of us? Will we leave the world behind to embrace the kingdom of God and make it the first priority in our lives? Our eternity depends on our answer.

Summary Chronology

- **Sun, 19 Sep 1830** – Parley Pratt baptized his younger brother, Orson, on Orson's birthday.
- **Early Oct 1830** – Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet were baptized.
- **Early Oct 1830** – Joseph Smith received D&C 33 for Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet.
- **Thu, 21 Oct 1830** – The work on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST) had progressed to Genesis 4:24 (Moses 5:51), with Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer as scribes.
- **Late Oct 1830** – The four missionaries to the Lamanites (Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson) left New York to begin their mission.
- **Thu, 4 Nov 1830** – Joseph Smith received D&C 34 for Orson Pratt.
- **Sun, 14 Nov 1830** – Sidney Rigdon and his wife, Phoebe, were baptized.
- **Tue, 30 Nov 1830** – The work on the JST had progressed to Genesis 5:11 (Moses 6:18), with John Whitmer as scribe.
- **Wed, 1 Dec 1830** – The work on the JST had progressed to Genesis 5:21 (Moses 6:52), with John Whitmer as scribe.
- **Mon, 6 Dec 1830** – Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge arrived in the Fayette/Manchester area to meet Joseph Smith.
- **Tue, 7 Dec 1830** – Joseph Smith received D&C 35 for Sidney Rigdon.
- **Wed, 8 Dec 1830** – Edward Partridge was baptized by Joseph Smith.
- **Thu, 9 Dec 1830** – Joseph Smith received D&C 36 for Edward Partridge.
- **Fri, 10 Dec 1830** – The work on the JST had progressed to Genesis 5:22 (Moses 7:1), with Emma Smith as scribe. Sidney Rigdon was scribe starting this date.
- **Thu, 30 Dec 1830** – Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received D&C 37, the call to gather to Ohio.
- **Sun, 2 Jan 1831** – At a Church conference in Fayette, Joseph Smith received D&C 38.
- **Jan 1831** – John Whitmer was sent to Ohio to preside and support the many new converts.
- **About Sun, 23 Jan 1831** – Joseph and Emma Smith left New York.
- **First week of Feb 1831** – Joseph and Emma Smith arrived in Kirtland, riding with Joseph Knight, Jr., in his sleigh.

D&C 33 – Open Your Mouths and They Shall Be Filled

Date and Location

Early October 1830; Fayette, NY.¹

Setting

After the 26-28 September 1830 conference but before the four missionaries to the Lamanites departed, a forty-year-old Palmyra resident by the name of Ezra Thayre (or Thayer, as it's spelled in *JSP*) came to hear Hyrum Smith give a sermon in Palmyra. He was a bridge and dam builder in the area, and had previously employed members of the Smith family, including Joseph and Hyrum. Of this experience, he wrote:

When Hyrum began to speak, every word touched me to the inmost soul. I thought every word was pointed to me. God punished me and riveted me to the spot. I could not help myself. The tears rolled down my cheeks, I was very proud and stubborn. There were many there who knew me, I dare not look up. I sat until I recovered myself before I dare look up. They sung some hymns and that filled me with the Spirit. When Hyrum got through, he picked up a book and said, "here is the Book of Mormon." I said, let me see it. I then opened the book, and I received a shock with such exquisite joy that no pen can write and no tongue can express. I shut the book and said, what is the price of it? "Fourteen shillings" was the reply. I said, I'll take the book. I opened it again, and I felt a double portion of the Spirit, that I did not know whether I was in the world or not. I felt as though I was truly in heaven.

Martin Harris rushed to me to tell me that the book was true. I told him that he need not tell me that, for I know that it is true as well as he.²

Shortly after that, Thayre had a vision which he described:

a man came and brought me a roll of paper and presented it to me, and also a trumpet and told me to blow it. I told him that I never blowed an in my life. He said you can blow it, try it. I put it in my mouth and blowed on it, and it made the most beautiful found that I ever heard. The roll of paper was the revelation on me and Northrop Sweet [D&C 33]. Oliver [Cowdery] was the man that brought the roll and trumpet. When he brought the revelation on me and Northrop Sweet, he said, here is a revelation from God for you.³

A week later, Ezra visited Joseph Smith and told him of his experience. Joseph asked him what hindered him from being baptized? Parley Pratt then baptized Ezra.

The same day another Palmyra resident was baptized, also by Parley Pratt. His name was Northrop Sweet and he was twenty-eight years old. His wife was Martin Harris' niece, to whom he had been married two years previous.

A few days later, still in early October 1830, Joseph Smith received this revelation directed at these two new converts, calling them to teach the gospel and the message of the Restoration.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in Revelation Book 1. It was first published as Chapter 35 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 55 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

1. Eleventh hour laborers (1-4)
2. The kingdom is at hand (5-18)

Commentary

Eleventh hour laborers (1-4)

1 *a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. Oliver had been told this in Section 6:16, but most of this verse is nearly a quote from Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

2 *lift up your voices as with the sound of a trump*. This is the first time this phrase is used in the Doctrine and Covenants, though it is quite common after this. This verse is like Isaiah 58:1, "...lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression." The phrasing had to remind Ezra Thayre of his vision of blowing a trumpet.

3 *it is the eleventh hour*. This is the only use of this phrase in the Doctrine and Covenants. The concept comes from Matthew 20:1-16, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. There hired laborers went out at different times of the day, including "the eleventh hour," meaning right at the end of the work day. At the conclusion of their labors, all

¹ *JSP*, D1:206.

² *The Saint's Herald*, October 1862, as quoted in Harper, *Making Sense*, 110.

³ *JSP*, D1:206.

were paid the same amount, which upset the early laborers who had worked all day. Why should those eleventh hour workers be paid the same? But the vineyard owner's comment was that he had paid them exactly what he contracted, so how could it be unfair? Likewise, other prophets, apostles, and missionaries have labored over the history of the earth, but now is the eleventh hour, near the time of the Second Coming. Thus Ezra and Northrop—and all laborers in the latter-day work—are called at the eleventh hour, and the reward shall be no less than those called in other dispensations.

4 *my vineyard has become corrupted.* Drawing on imagery from Isaiah 5 and Jacob 5, the world is described as the Lord's vineyard which is "corrupted every whit" and in which none do good "save it be a few."

4 *they err in many instances because of priestcrafts.* The Book of Mormon teaches that priestcrafts are when men "set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain, and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion" (2 Nephi 26:29). Thus the Lord is teaching here that because of the love of money and praise, many on the earth are in error today. It is a question of priorities.

The kingdom is at hand (5-18)

5 *called forth out of the wilderness.* This phrase is another singular reference in the Doctrine and Covenants. In Revelation 6:12, the woman (the Church of God, according to the JST) fled into the wilderness during the great apostasy following the days of the apostles. In these last days, the church is "called forth out of the wilderness."

6 *gather mine elect from the four quarters of the earth.* Compare this to Matthew 24:31 and Mark 13:27, which teach that the elect will be gathered from the "four winds," and Moses 7:62, which uses this phrase but which was revealed after D&C 33. To be elect is not to be special or better than others, but to be called to do something by the Lord—you are elected to serve (see commentary on D&C 25:3).

8 *Open your mouths.* Three times these men are told to open their mouths and teach the gospel (also vv. 9 and 10). The blessing they are promised is that by having the faith to speak, "they shall be filled."

you shall become even as Nephi of old. Both men had probably only read part of the Book of Mormon by this time, so the reference to Nephi at the beginning of the volume is appropriate. There were many ways they might become like Nephi—enduring hardships, journeying in the wilderness, having visions, etc. In this context, it may have more to do with Nephi's preaching abilities, especially to his murmuring brothers.

11 *repent and be baptized.* The missionary message hasn't changed since 1830—or for that matter, since Adam (see Moses 6:51-52). The focus remains on the fundamental principles that bring us first to God—faith, repentance, baptism, and the reception of the Holy Ghost.

12 *this is my gospel.* Sometimes we use the term "gospel" to refer to the entire program of the Church, including all its auxiliaries, programs, practices, and organizations. This verse (and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 and Ether 4:18, and many others) teaches that the gospel is the 'good news' of Jesus Christ, "that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

13 *upon this rock will I build my church.* The antecedent here is probably the reference to "my gospel" in v. 12, capturing that the Church is built on the message of the Atonement of Christ. The two men had both exhibited faith and repentance, and been baptized by water and the Spirit, therefore "upon this rock ye are built."

14 *remember the church articles and covenants.* This refers to Section 20.

15 *you shall confirm in my church.* Neither men were elders yet, but the promise was that they would be and thus be able to perform such confirmations. Ezra was ordained an elder sometime before 3 June 1831 at which time he was ordained a high priest. Northrop was also ordained an elder sometime before 3 June 1831 (both are mentioned as elders in the conference minutes with that date.⁴

16 *the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures.* The Book of Mormon and the Bible are given for the instruction of the Church. It is through "the power of my Spirit" that the Lord "quickeneth" or makes alive the scriptures so their stories and messages are real and relevant to us.

17 *having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you.* The reference is to Matthew 25:1-13, the parable of the ten virgins, where those prepared for the groom's coming had their lamps prepared, had adequate oil on hand, and were watching.

18 *I come quickly.* Though some Saints in that day may have interpreted it to mean that he was coming "soon," the better interpretation is that he is coming "suddenly," with a bit of an element of surprise as to how fast everything happens. In other words, we may think that the signs of the last days will unfold in an obvious and careful way, giving us plenty of time to be prepared. Instead, the Lord warns that it will come quickly, perhaps catching us by surprise. So we are to always stand prepared, not knowing when that will be.

⁴ Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 6.

Results

Ezra Thayre was given a copy of D&C 33 by Oliver Cowdery. He did serve as commanded, preaching the gospel in the area around Palmyra, even though his own wife and other family members opposed it. He gathered a large group to his own barn, enough to fill it, and the people heard Joseph, Hyrum Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David, John, and Peter Whitmer, Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson all preach “with great power.”⁵

He preached on his way to Ohio a little later. Several future revelations mention him and give him direction (52:22-23; 56:5, 8-10; 75:31), and he continued to serve missions and move with Joseph and the Church to Ohio, and Missouri. Along the way he had some struggles with his testimony, failed in a couple of assignments, and had to repent of

pride and selfishness. He even had his membership suspended in May 1835 but was reinstated. He volunteered to march with Zion’s Camp and was called a member of the Seventy. In Missouri, he helped settle Adam-ondi-Ahman and served on the high council. After being expelled from Missouri, he did not go to Nauvoo but instead went back to New York, then to Michigan. He later joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, becoming a high priest in that group.⁶

Northrop Sweet preached in the New York area as directed and moved with the Saints to Kirtland. But shortly after arriving in Kirtland in 1831, he formed his own religion called “The Pure Church of Christ.” He organized it with six members but it never grew any bigger.⁷ He remained in Ohio, then later moved to Michigan.

D&C 34 – Orson Pratt Called to the Ministry

Date and Location

Thursday, 4 November 1830; Whitmer home, Fayette, NY.⁸

Setting

After Parley Pratt was baptized, he sought out his younger brother, Orson in Canaan, upstate New York. Orson had been praying for direction, repenting of his sins, sometimes praying all night, when Parley and another elder came. Parley baptized Orson on the latter’s nineteenth birthday, 19 September 1830. Parley hurried back to Fayette for the 26 September conference, where he was called to go on the Lamanite mission with Oliver Cowdery and others. In late October, Orson journeyed 200 miles to Fayette to meet Joseph Smith. On 4 November 1830, he asked the Prophet to know the will of the Lord for his life, and Joseph’s inquiry from the Lord at the Peter Whitmer, Sr. home became D&C 34, dictated to John Whitmer while Orson stood by listening.

While Orson didn’t mention it in his own history, a man named James Van Cleave interviewed him in 1878 and wrote that Pratt told him that the Prophet used a seer stone to receive this revelation. He also asked Orson to write it down as he said it, but he was too timid to try so John Whitmer ended up being scribe.⁹ If that account is correct, this is one of the rare instances where Joseph Smith reverted to using a seer stone to receive a revelation after the publication of the Book of Mormon.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in Revelation Book 1. It was first published as Chapter 36 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 56 in the 1835 & 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

1. Orson called by Jesus Christ to preach (1-5)
2. Preparing for the Second Coming (6-12)

Commentary

Orson called by Jesus Christ to preach (1-5)

1 *text note:*

In RB1, the revelation begins, “My Son Orson hearken ye & Behold.” In the first publication (1833), it was changed to “My son Orson, hearken and hear and behold” and has remained so since. The change was made by Sidney Rigdon at an unknown date but before RB1 was taken to Missouri to print the Book of Commandments.¹⁰

1 ***Jesus Christ your Redeemer.*** The revelation came from Christ, not Joseph Smith who was dictating it to his scribe, John Whitmer. It was the voice of the Savior of the world.

2 ***light and the life of the world.*** Though the concepts are taught in John, it is possibly in the Book of Mormon that Joseph Smith first encountered this phrase (e.g., Mosiah 16:9; Alma 38:9; especially 3 Nephi 9:18 and 11:11, where Jesus applies it to himself).

⁵ JSP, D1:206.

⁶ Black, *Who’s Who*, 318-321; Cook, *Revelations*, 47-48.

⁷ JSP, D1:206.

⁸ JSP, D1:208.

⁹ JSP, D1:208.

¹⁰ JSP, MRB:61.

2 **light which shineth in darkness.** From John 1:5, which is dependent on Isaiah 9:2; also previously used in D&C 6:1; 10:58; and 11:11 as an identifier of Jesus Christ.

3 **so loved the world.** In a variation of John 3:16, Jesus says that not only did God the Father so love the world that he gave his Son, but Jesus loved the world so much that he was willing to give his own life for us.

3 **text note:**

The original revelation read, “as many as would believe might become the Sons & daughter[s] of God.” In editing the revelation for publication in the Book of Commandments, Sidney Rigdon crossed out “& daughter,” leaving it just with “the sons of God,” which is how it reads in 1833 and beyond. There is no other time “sons and daughters of God” is used in any scripture, so Rigdon’s edit makes this verse align with more than 150 other references that refer to “sons of God.”

3 **Wherefore you are my son.** Jesus’ sacrifice gives all men the opportunity to become “sons of God.” Jesus here told Orson that he had indeed believed in Christ, and now that blessing was fulfilled. Not coincidentally, Joseph Smith will shortly translate an extensive addition to the Bible, what we today call Moses 6:68 – 7:1. There he learned that Enoch taught about Adam’s experience after his own baptism, where Adam heard a voice declare, “Thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons....our father Adam taught these things, and many have believed and become the sons of God.”

5 **called of me to preach.** Newly baptized, 19 years old, Orson was called like so many are today—young, inexperienced, but willing and ready to serve. He was blessed because of his belief (v. 4) but even more blessed because he was now called of God to action.

Preparing for the Second Coming (6-12)

6 **preparing the way of the Lord for his second coming.**

Other references commonly refer to this event as his “coming,” but this is the only time the term “second coming” is used in all of scripture.

7 **I shall come in a cloud with power and great glory.** This is the first mention of Jesus coming in a cloud in the Doctrine and Covenants (others are 45:16, 44; 76:63) and it is a paraphrase of Matthew 24:30 and 26:64 (also Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; Revelation 1:7; Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:1). Many other scriptures talk about God’s presence being like or in a cloud, including the Lord being in a cloud as he went before the children of Israel (Exodus 13:21); a cloud being over the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11); a cloud on

the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:5); a cloud surrounding Jesus when he ascended (Acts 1:9); Jesus sitting on a cloud as he reigns (Revelation 14:14). In each case, the cloud represents God’s presence or the *Shechinah*.

8 **it shall be a great day.** The second coming will be great in many ways—great in what the Lord will accomplish, great in terms of its impact on the world, great in relation to the blessings that will pour out upon mankind. But it will also be a great day because of the judgments that will be meted out on the wicked and unrepentant.

9 **the sun shall be darkened...moon...stars.** See D&C 29:14 commentary.

10 **lift up your voice and spare not.** Very few could match the energy level of Orson Pratt during his work in the Church. He served on at least eighteen missions,¹¹ truly wore himself out in the service of God, and did not spare himself in any way.

10 **therefore prophesy, and it shall be given by the power of the Holy Spirit.** Orson Pratt did prophesy many times in his life to the turning of many hearts to the truth.¹²

11 **I am with you until I come.** Orson was promised the Lord’s full support in his efforts until the work was done.

12 **text note:**

The original revelation ended as follows: “& Verily Verily I say unto you I come quickly even so your Lord & your redeemer amen.” Sidney Rigdon’s edits changed it to the way we have it today, and it was so printed starting in 1833: “& Verily Verily I say unto you I come quickly ~~even so~~ <I am> your Lord & your redeemer <even so> amen.”

Results

Orson Pratt considered this revelation “almost too great for a person of as humble origin as myself ever to attain to.”¹³ He said, “I thought that was a very great and important calling...I felt, therefore, the importance of those sayings; and truly, when I looked at the magnitude and importance of the command given to me to prophesy by the power of the Holy Ghost, I felt oftentimes to tremble and shrink, for fear I never should be able to fulfill and accomplish so great a work.”¹⁴

Orson was ordained an elder on 1 December 1830¹⁵, and immediately went out preaching, and served many missions and in many leadership capacities during his life. He was the Church’s first elders quorum president. He was one of the first apostles, being twenty-three when that call came. He helped build the Kirtland and Nauvoo temples.

¹¹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:232; another commentary puts the number at twenty-seven (McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 260-261).

¹² Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:234.

¹³ Harper, *Making Sense*, 114.

¹⁴ *JSP*, D1:210.

¹⁵ *JSP*, D1:208n66.

He became a Hebrew teacher in Kirtland, also teaching English grammar. In Nauvoo he was head of the department of literature and mathematics at the University of Nauvoo. John C. Bennett led him astray for a time, and he was excommunicated in Nauvoo, but rebaptized after confessing and repenting. He journeyed west and was the first of two men to enter the Salt Lake valley. He edited *The Millennial Star* newspaper, and traveled across the ocean sixteen times on missions. In Utah, he was regent of the University of Deseret, very active in temple and family his-

tory work, and was Church historian and recorder. He edited and published new version of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants (with chapters and verses) and the first edition of the Pearl of Great price. Orson was married to at least 10 wives and had at least 42 children. He died on 3 October 1881, just after his 70th birthday and fifty-one years after joining the Church.¹⁶

Brigham Young said of Orson Pratt, “If you were to chop up Elder Pratt into inch-square pieces, each piece would cry out, ‘Mormonism is true.’”¹⁷

D&C 35 – Sidney Rigdon Called to Minister

Date and Location

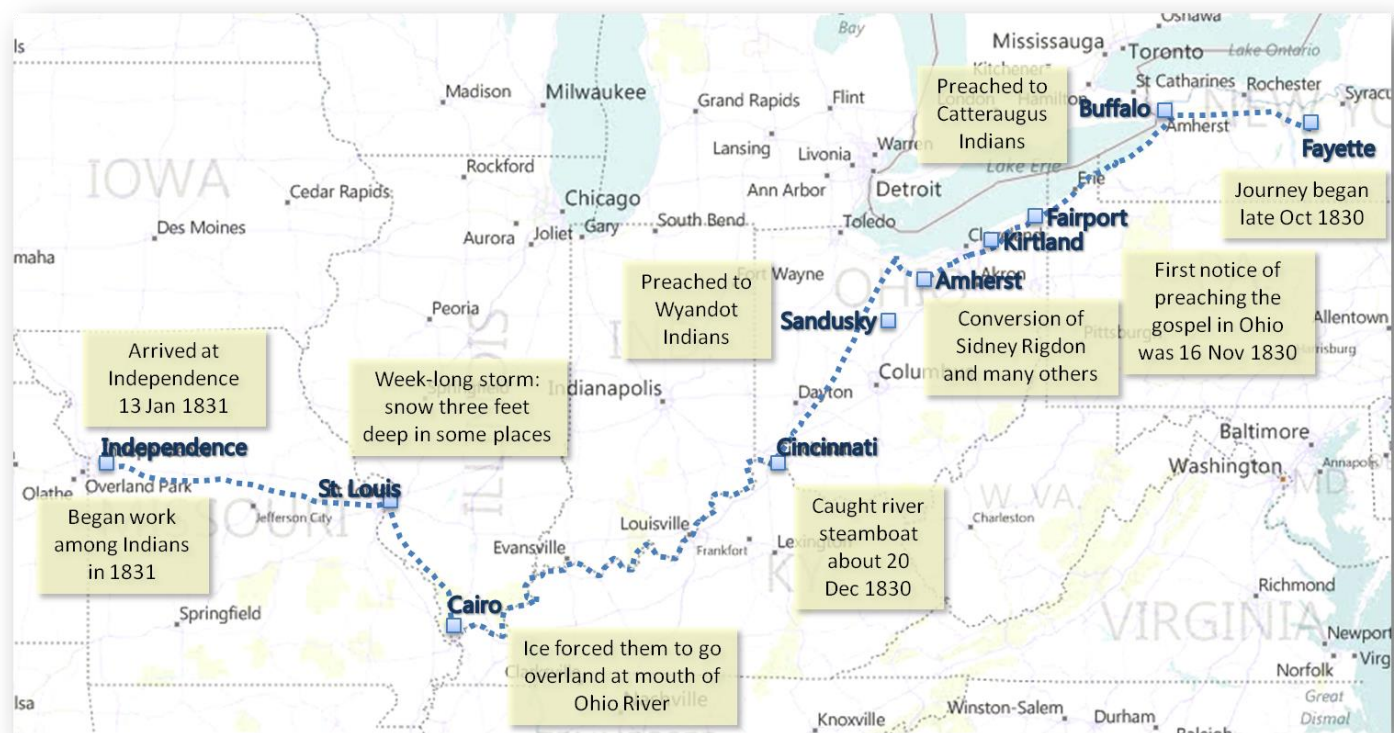
Tuesday, 7 December 1830; in or near Fayette, NY.¹⁸

Setting

In late October 1830, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson set off on the first lengthy missionary journey of the young Church—the mission to the Lamanites (see D&C 28, 30, and 32). They first went west toward Buffalo, NY, preaching to the Catteraugus Indians (part of the Seneca tribe) there and leaving copies of the Book of Mormon.¹⁹ Moving southwest, they soon

arrived in Ohio. One of their first stops was to see an old friend of Parley Pratt’s in Mentor, Sidney Rigdon.

In the 1830s, there were many people who were “seekers,” looking to a return to the New Testament church. One of these was a former Baptist preacher, turned follower of Alexander Campbell and the Disciples of Christ, by the name of Sidney Rigdon. Born in 1793, he was thirty-seven years old when his friend, Parley P. Pratt, called on him with his three friends. The men arrived in Mentor, Ohio, where Sidney was preaching, on 1 November 1830. Parley told Sidney of his conversion to a new Church of Christ and gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon. The other shared their



¹⁶ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 260-261.

¹⁷ Harper, *Making Sense*, 115.

¹⁸ *JSP*, D1:220.

¹⁹ *JSP*, D1:212

testimonies—powerful ones, since Oliver and Peter were witnesses to the book, and Oliver talked about angels restoring the priesthood to him and Joseph. Sidney was intrigued but cool at first. He allowed the four to teach his congregation and agreed to read the book.

The missionaries continued on to Kirtland, first stopping at a home to seek food and shelter, as they traveled without purse or script. The woman listened to their request and turned them out. But a young girl was working in the home, and followed the missionaries outside. She said her father would be interested in their message and took them to her father's large farm just northeast of the town. The 15-year-old girl's name was Lucy Morley, whose father, Isaac, did indeed receive the missionaries and accept their message, becoming an important convert who later allowed many migrating members to live on his property, at great personal sacrifice, including Joseph and Emma Smith.

Shortly after meeting the Morleys and their group, Oliver wrote a letter to Joseph Smith, explaining the situation. He documented fifty-five baptisms and continued interest. "There is considerable call here for books," he said, referring to the Book of Mormon, "and I wish you would send five hundred immediately here."²⁰

A few days later, Sidney came to Kirtland, two miles away, looking for the four missionaries and showing some interest. He had read the Book of Mormon and prayed to know about it, and finally received a testimony of it through vision. He and his wife, Phoebe, had talked all night, counting the cost—they would lose their income and their home.²¹ But armed with their testimonies and showing great courage, they made the decision to be baptized, which happened on 14 November 1830, right after he addressed a large congregation and explained his actions. Oliver Cowdery ordained Sidney an elder shortly after that, and he left for New York in December (arriving 7 December) with Edward Partridge to meet Joseph Smith and give him the news of what was happening in Kirtland—the four missionaries had baptized perhaps 200 people—nearly two-thirds of the adult population of Kirtland. After meeting Joseph, Sidney asked to know the will of the Lord concerning him. Joseph's inquiry resulted in D&C 35.²²

Meanwhile, the four missionaries left Isaac Morley in charge of the new church in Kirtland, added a new convert, Frederick G. Williams, to their group, and continued on, preaching to the Wyandot Indians in Sandusky, OH, then catching a riverboat in Cincinnati just before Christmas 1830. Heavy ice on the river forced them pause for a time, then walk in deep snow for several days. Finally, on 13 January 1831, they arrived in Independence, MO, and taught the people there as well as some of the Indians in the

area, before being stopped by local ministers and Indian agents who resented their actions with the tribes.

Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in Revelation Book 1. D&C 35 was first published in the *Ohio Star* (5 January 1832) and the *Painesville Telegraph* (17 January 1832) newspapers, then as Chapter 37 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 11 in the 1835 & 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

- One with God through Christ (1-2)
- Sidney Rigdon called (3-7)
- Signs and wonders by the weak of the world (8-19)

Commentary

One with God through Christ (1-2)

1 ***Alpha and Omega***. This title for Christ is only used in the book of Revelation in the Bible (e.g., Revelation 1:8). It gets one mention in the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 9:18) and thirteen in the Doctrine and Covenants. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega the last, representing Christ as the beginning and ending of all things (see also Revelation 22:13; Alma 11:39), who plan is "one eternal round, the same today as yesterday and forever."

2 ***I am Jesus Christ...crucified...believe...sons of God***.

One commentary noted that the doctrine given here by the Lord through Joseph Smith is the basis of the Lectures on Theology (or Lectures on Faith, as they are commonly called today). Sometimes those are attributed in large measure to Sidney Rigdon, and he did help edit them, but the principles are given to Joseph here first.²³

2 ***that we may be one***. D&C 35 is the beginning of a unity theme for the Church, continued in D&C 38, in anticipation of the law of consecration that will come in D&C 42. Not long after Sidney's arrival, Joseph Smith learned a great example of this, while doing his translation of the Bible: "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind" (Moses 7:18).

Sidney Rigdon called (3-7)

3 ***prepared thee for a greater work***. Sidney had been doing good work for many years, teaching the scriptures and testifying of Christ. But now the Lord called him to "a greater work," likening him to John the Baptist preparing the way for the Savior (v. 4).

²⁰ *JSP*, D1:213-214.

²¹ *JSP*, D1:213n91.

²² Harper, *Making Sense*, 116-117.

²³ McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 263.

4 before Elijah, which should come. Elijah is the forerunner to the Savior, according to Malachi 4:5. Rigdon had prepared people for the message of the fulness, just as Elijah was charged with helping the world prepare for the coming of the Savior in the flesh again.

5 they did not receive the Holy Ghost. This verse alludes to an example in Acts 19, where Paul encountered people in Ephesus who had been baptized by someone as followers of John the Baptist. Paul taught them of Christ, and recognizing the invalidity of their previous baptism, they were baptized again and this time also confirmed to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. So now would Sidney do—not follow the preparatory message any more, but the fulness of the new message.

6 they shall receive the Holy Ghost. Sidney was commanded to teach this new doctrine with his new authority, and people would be baptized properly by him, and now receive the Holy Ghost.

7 a great work in the land, even among the Gentiles. 1 Nephi 13:42 taught that in the last days, the message would go first to the Gentiles, then the Jews.

Signs and wonders by the weak of the world (8-19)

8 mine arm is not shortened. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the statement relates to the arm being shortened (here and 133:67), but in the Old Testament and Book of Mormon, it is a shortened hand that is the concern (e.g., Isaiah 50:2 and 2 Nephi 7:2, quoting Isaiah). Interestingly, some modern translations, such as the NIV, translate the phrase in Isaiah as “arm,” just like in the Doctrine and Covenants. The metaphor means that God’s arm is not shortened but always stretched out fully and powerfully for the benefit of the believers, providing “miracles, signs, and wonders.”

9 ask it in my name in faith. Sidney had taught and prepared his congregation for years that the New Testament church needed to be restored in some way. Here the Lord called out many New Testament miracles and powers of Jesus, assuring Sidney that they are all available in this generation.

10 great things are to be shown forth. The Lord assured them that the was coming when great things would be shown to the world. At this point, only a few hundred people had even heard of the Book of Mormon or Joseph Smith or the Church. Today, tens of millions have knowledge of that work in nearly every part of the world.

11 Babylon...drink the wine of the wrath. Revelation 14:8, 16:19, and 18:3 have a similar phrase about Babylon. This is the first occurrence of this phrase in the Doctrine and Covenants, with the only one ones being in D&C

88:94, 105. Babylon achieves this result by convincing many that the “wine” they consume is good, but in fact, it is “the wrath of her fornication,” referring metaphorically to any sin that pulls people away from God.

12 none that doeth good except those who are ready. Psalm 14:1, 3 (and its parallel 53:1, 3) are quoted by Paul in Romans 3:12, to reflect the wicked state of the world. Moroni closed the Book of Mormon perhaps quoting the same Psalms, predicting that in our day there would be “none that doeth good among you, no not one” (Moroni 10:25). Here the Lord offered one caveat—those who are ready to receive the message of the restored gospel, including Sidney and his followers in Kirtland—are excluded from the group not doing good.

13 I call upon the weak things of the world, those who are unlearned and despised. Sidney was learned and wise, so the Lord reminded him that Joseph Smith was still the prophet, though he was weak, unlearned, and despised. See also v. 17.

14 I will be their shield and their buckler. Another phrase from Psalms (35:2, 91:4) and the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 3:26). In this verse, the Lord made it clear that he was not only providing the protection but would make their arm his own, and he would prepare them (“I will gird up their loins”) to enable them to fight and overcome their enemies, even yielding “the sword in their behalf.”

15 they shall be looking forth. The weak of the world do the teaching, and “the poor and the meek” listen and embrace, becoming the ones that are watching for the return of Christ.

16 the parable of the fig-tree. See Matthew 24:32-33, where seeing the tender branches and new leaves on a fig tree shows that summer is nigh. Likewise, seeing these signs of the last days shows that Christ’s coming is near.

17 in weakness have I blessed him. Joseph Smith is the weak servant of the Lord who is blessed in that weakness so that people cannot say he did it by his own power but will recognize the Lord’s hand in the work.

18 things which were from the foundation of the world. Among the things hidden from the foundation were those things being revealed through the work on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. The chapters Joseph had translated thus far include the creation account in Genesis—the foundation of the world.

18 if not, another will I plant in his stead. Sidney was told that if Joseph did not abide in the Lord, another would be put in his place. This thinking is what triggered so much controversy in later times when members criticized Joseph’s actions and decisions, or when he was killed; who would be “put in his place”? Several claimed that position

during his life and after; none have proved to have that authority from God except the Council of the Twelve to whom Joseph gave the keys in Nauvoo.

19 **watch over him that his faith fail not.** Sidney was assigned to be Joseph’s support and protection against failing faith, provided he did it “by the Comforter, the Holy Ghost.”

20 **thou shalt write for him.** Oliver Cowdery left on his mission to the Lamanites in late October. John Whitmer did some scribing and Emma did some as well, but Joseph was lacking a dedicated writer to help him keep the Bible translation going. Sidney was commanded to be that scribe.

20 **The scriptures shall be given, even as they are in mine own bosom.** The translation of the Bible was many things, but one of the most important ones was to be a restoration of the Bible in its pure form or in the form desired by the Lord. Such a Bible would lead “to the salvation of mine own elect.”

21 **hear my voice...see me...abide the day of my coming.** The elect (v. 20) who are taught by the revelations of the fulness of the scriptures will receive great blessings, including hearing the voice of the Lord, seeing him, staying awake (a reference to the disciples sleeping in the garden of Gethsemane, Matthew 25:5), and abiding the Second Coming, because “they shall be purified, even as I am pure.”

22 **tarry with him, and he shall journey with you.** Joseph and Sidney were called to be, in essence, missionary companions, staying together in the many challenges they were then facing and would yet confront. This also had the very practical impact of Sidney staying in Fayette for several weeks until Joseph was ready to go to Ohio, intimated here but not a commandment to Joseph until D&C 37.

23 **inasmuch as ye do not write, behold, it shall be given unto him to prophesy.** Or, when Sidney was not writing the Bible translation for Joseph, then Joseph would be prophesying, and Sidney should presumably record that as well.

23 **unto him to prophesy; and thou shalt preach.** The Lord makes clear the division of labor—Joseph was the prophet, Sidney was the preacher. Joseph’s role was one he was rapidly growing into, and Sidney’s one that he had excelled at for several years.

23 **call on the holy prophets to prove his words.** Sidney knew the scriptures well and taught with them powerfully. The Lord commanded him to turn that knowledge and ability to proving of the words of Joseph Smith.

24 **Keep all the commandments and covenants.** Sidney had been baptized, confirmed, and ordained an elder, thus making several binding covenants and receiving many

commandments. The promise was that if he kept those, the very heavens would shake and Satan would tremble. Ultimately, Zion would rejoice and flourish.

25 **by the keys which I have given shall they be led.** The house of Israel would eventually hear the gospel message as well (see v. 7), which would be accomplished by the keys already given to Joseph Smith.

26 **Lift up your hearts and be glad.** Sidney had lost his home, lost his life’s work, and had committed everything to the religion of this young man before him. Now through Joseph Smith, the Lord commanded him to be glad. Choosing to be happy in times of adversity is a huge challenge, then and now, but the promise of such a choice is that “redemption draweth nigh.”

27 **Fear not, little flock.** The flock had grown a lot since 6 April, but it was still little, and very scattered. That was about to change.

27 **the kingdom is yours until I come.** The kingdom of God on the earth is run by those possessing the keys to do so, but they act in that duty by the authority of Christ himself. One day he will come to the earth and exercise those keys and that authority in person.

Results

Sidney Rigdon did become Joseph Smith’s scribe, jumping into the translation of the Bible in the early chapters of Genesis and doing much of the writing through 1832. Like Oliver Cowdery when he came to Joseph Smith in Harmony, PA, the two went straight to work, within just three days of when Sidney received this revelation.

The scribes for the Bible work up to this point and into the near future were as follows (adapted from Faulring, *New Translation*, 57-59):

Date	Scripture	Scribe	Location
Jun 1830	Moses 1	Oliver Cowdery	Fayette, NY or Harmony, PA
Jun to 21 Oct 1830	Gen 1:1 – 4:18 Moses 2:1 – 5:43	Oliver Cowdery	Harmony, PA and Fayette, NY
21 Oct 1830	Gen 4:18-24 Moses 5:43-51	John Whitmer	Fayette, NY
30 Nov 1830	Gen 4:25 – 5:11 Moses 5:52-6:18	John Whitmer	Fayette, NY
1 Dec 1830	Gen 5:12-21 Moses 6:19-52	Emma Smith	Fayette, NY
1-10 Dec 1830	Moses 6:52 – 7:1	John Whitmer	Fayette, NY
10 Dec 1830 – 7 Mar 1831	Gen 5:22 – 24:41 Moses 7:2 – 8:30	Sidney Rigdon	Fayette, NY and Kirtland, OH

Sidney also partnered well with Joseph Smith, traveling on many missions together, with Joseph bearing testimony of what he had seen and heard and Sidney giving powerful

sermons in Joseph's defense and using the Bible to prove that the Lord's word through Joseph Smith was true.

D&C 36 – Edward Partridge Called to Preach

Date and Location

Thursday, 9 December 1830; Fayette, NY.²⁴

Setting

When Sidney Rigdon left Ohio to meet Joseph Smith in New York, he took a traveling companion with him, Edward Partridge, whose wife had already joined the Church. Not yet converted but interested by what he had heard the four missionaries to the Lamanites teach (see D&C 35 Setting, above), the 37-year-old wanted to meet the Prophet for himself. Edward was a successful hat maker in Painesville, OH, near Kirtland. Because he was so respected, others considered Partridge their surrogate investigator, and were anxious to see what he could learn.

When he and Sidney arrived in Manchester on 7 December 1830, the Smiths were no longer there (having left their house for another in nearby Waterloo). He admired their former home and farm and spoke with several of their neighbors. Finally, arriving in Waterloo, he found Joseph preaching a sermon. At the end of the sermon, Edward declared that he had seen enough, and asked for baptism at Joseph's hand. Joseph Smith baptized him on Saturday, 11 December. However, D&C 36 was received before the baptism, on 9 December 1830, even before Edward had joined the Church. He was confirmed a member of the Church by Sidney Rigdon, and ordained an elder by the same on 15 December 1830.²⁵

Documents and Publication

The oldest complete copy is in Revelation Book 1, though a partial copy that is probably older came from the Symonds Rider family. This was first published as Chapter 38 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 57 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Commentary

1 *Mighty One of Israel.* The only time this title for Christ is used in the Doctrine and Covenants, the phrase is also found in Isaiah 1:24; 30:29; and 1 Nephi 22:12.

1 *your sins are forgiven you.* Edward had just decided to be baptized, but the ordinance itself does not guarantee forgiveness of sins—that is only accomplished with a broken heart and sincere repentance.

1 *you are called to preach my gospel.* The Lord knew Edward Partridge's heart, and called him to preach the good news of Christ's salvific Atonement before he had been baptized, confirmed, or ordained.

2 *I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant Sidney Rigdon.* Sidney had been ordained an elder soon after his baptism, giving him the authority to perform this ordinance with Edward Partridge.

2 *the peaceable things of the kingdom.* This is the first time this phrase, "the peaceable things," has appeared in the Doctrine and Covenants, but not the first time in latter-day scripture. Just a few days prior to Sidney Rigdon's and Edward Partridge's arrival, Joseph had translated a long addition to Genesis 5, which included this writing: "Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory..." (Moses 6:61). So the three instances of it in the Doctrine and Covenants (here; 39:6; and 42:61) draw on the wording learned from Enoch the prophet.

3 *declare it with a loud voice.* There is an interesting juxtaposition of declaring the "peaceable things" (v. 2) with a "loud voice." Declaring truth with a loud voice is a common theme in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, but it had just been used with Enoch crying out against wickedness (Moses 6:37) in the days prior to this revelation.

3 *text note:*

The original revelation in RB1 doesn't include the word "Hosanna." It was added later by an unknown hand,²⁶ perhaps to match the language of D&C 19:37 and 39:19. The change was made prior to the 1833 Book of Commandments and has been in all subsequent editions.

3 *Hosanna, blessed be the name of the most high God.* Melchizedek used a similar phrase when leaving his blessing on Abraham and the slaughter of Chedorlaomer (Genesis 14:17-20). The exact phrase as here is found only in 3 Nephi 11:17 and then again in D&C 39:19 (though a very similar one is in 3 Nephi 4:32).

²⁴ JSP, D1:224.

²⁵ JSP, D1:224.

²⁶ JSP, MRB:67.

4 *this calling and commandments give I unto you.* The call to cry repentance and declare gospel truths is also a commandment to all those who embrace the message of the Restoration.

5 *as many as shall come before my servants Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith.* Just days after his arrival, the leadership of Sidney Rigdon is apparent in this statement. Sidney was called to great things.

6 *Save yourselves from this untoward generation.* This is a quote from Acts 2:40, echoing Peter’s comments to the crowd assembled there, which challenge immediately led to the baptism of 3,000. “Untoward” means crooked, warped, or perverse.

6 *come forth out of the fire.* Another unique Doctrine and Covenants phrase, this somewhat resembles Revelation 20:9 where fire devours the wicked and (perhaps more closely) Jude 1:23, where some are pulled out of the fire. The warning here is to the righteous—don’t get caught up in the world and be burned, but get out of the fire and into the protection of God.

6 *hating even the garments spotted with the flesh.* Referring again to Jude 1:23, the reference is to the Jewish aversion for clothing stained with bodily fluids (see Leviticus 13:47-59). Quick action was required to either wash, tear, or even burn such garments. Likewise, Saints needed to strongly reject sins that polluted their lives.²⁷

7 *singleness of heart may be ordained and sent forth.* The Lord’s army will take all willing souls, as long as they exhibit humility (“singleness of heart”) in proclaiming the message.

8 *I will suddenly come to my temple.* A close paraphrase of Malachi 3:1, part of which chapter Moroni had quoted to Joseph Smith, this is the first reference to a temple in the Doctrine and Covenants, and to an event that won’t happen until 1836—after the move to Kirtland and the construction of the temple there (D&C 110).

Results

D&C 36 establishes the doctrine that every priesthood holder has a responsibility to be a missionary, to share the gospel message loud and clear with those in their sphere of influence. Even without a formal call, it is an inherent priesthood duty.²⁸

Edward Partridge²⁹ returned to Painesville, Ohio on 1 February 1831. Three days later, he was called as the first bishop of the Church (D&C 41). He gave up his hatting business to serve in that capacity and it launched him on a path where he gave up everything for the gospel. He went to Missouri to continue to serve as bishop there. In July 1833, he was taken by a mob who also destroyed the printing press for the Church newspaper and the Book of Commandments, and was tarred and feathered. He bore it with a meekness that astounded his attackers. He served on missions, traveling two thousand miles one year while visiting nearly thirty branches,³⁰ studied Hebrew, and was in Kirtland for the 1836 temple dedication.

Returning to Missouri, he was soon attacked and imprisoned in Liberty Jail with Joseph Smith and others, but was released sooner than the Prophet (28 November 1838), and after finding his family again in Far West, took them to Illinois. Joseph Smith wrote a letter that became D&C 121-123 particularly to Edward.

The Lord praised Edward and Isaac Morley in a revelation (not in the Doctrine and Covenants) “because of the integrity of their hearts in laboring in my vinyard for the salvation of the souls of men, Verily I say unto you their sins are forgiven them, therefor say unto them in my name that is my will that they should tarry for a little season and attend the school [of the Prophets], and also the solem assembly for a wise purpose in me, even so amen.”³¹

Partridge’s health began to fail, and he could earn no money to support his family. He was called as bishop in Nauvoo also, but while building his home, he soon collapsed from exhaustion and illness. His youngest daughter died on 17 May 1840 and Edward passed away ten days later at the age of forty-six. The Lord later said that Edward was received unto himself (D&C 124:19).

²⁷ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:248.

²⁸ Harper, *Making Sense*, 120.

²⁹ Most of this information on Edward Partridge taken from Black, *Who’s Who*, 213-216, except as noted.

³⁰ Harper, *Making Sense*, 120.

³¹ *JSP*, J1:85, 7 November 1835.

D&C 37 – Gather to Ohio

Date and Location

Thursday, 30 December 1830; Canandaigua township, NY.

Setting

As noted in the table in D&C 35 above, with Sidney Rigdon as scribed, Joseph Smith's work on the Bible progressed through the early chapters of Genesis in late 1830. Some of the material received (now Moses 6-8) taught them about the great city Enoch had organized, called Zion, and how the Lord through Enoch protected the people against their enemies and came and dwelt with them. The people united and cared for each other, and their city was called "City of Holiness," finally being caught up to be with God.

After hearing about the nearly three hundred converts in Ohio and the departure of Oliver Cowdery and the other missionaries for the west, Joseph also knew the Ohio group lacked leadership and would quickly have problems, which proved to be exactly the case. He soon sent John Whitmer to help fill the leadership vacuum.

With the work of the Bible and the news from Kirtland in mind, about three weeks after Sidney Rigdon's arrival, Joseph and Sidney had left the Whitmer home and traveled to Canandaigua to continue their work on the translation. Instead, they received a revelation, D&C 37, that directed that work to stop for a time and for the New York Saints to join the much larger group of converts in Ohio. This made specific the general command already received to gather "in unto one place upon the face of this land" (D&C 29:8).

Documents and Publication

The oldest version is in Revelation Book 1. It was first published as Chapter 39 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 58 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Commentary

1 *not expedient in me that ye should translate any more until ye shall go to the Ohio.* The Lord counseled Joseph to pause in his work on the Bible until he arrived in Ohio. From the language, it appears that Joseph already knew he was going to Ohio, just not when. Having previously sent John Whitmer, he likely expected to soon follow and meet the converts there for himself. The real revelation here appears to come in v. 3.

1 *because of the enemy and for your sakes.* Opposition had again been building in New York and the Lord warned that there was yet an unseen enemy that would make things worse. Joseph and Sidney's task now was to preach the gospel again in the area, gathering up any more who would accept the message, and strengthen and prepare the New York churches for this move to Ohio (v. 2).

2 *more especially in Colesville.* Since Joseph left Harmony in late August 1830, he had not been back to Colesville and the Knight family. They were praying in faith and the Lord wanted to give them support.

3 *they should assemble together at the Ohio.* Not only was Joseph going to Ohio, but the Lord directed the entire New York church to go there as well. They could not possibly see the blessings that this move would bring at this time—a temple, new covenants and keys, the law of consecration, the establishment of Zion, the completion of the Bible translation, the book of Abraham, the School of the Prophets, and more revelations than at any other period in the history of the Church. But the Lord could see all of that, and called them to go.

3 *Oliver Cowdery shall return unto them.* Oliver and the other three missionaries had left Ohio to work their way toward Missouri. The plan was for them to return and strengthen their Ohio converts, but it would be many months.

4 *here is wisdom, and let every man choose for himself.* Though it was "a commandment" to go to Ohio, the Lord respected their agency, so assured the members that though moving was the wise thing to do, they could still choose. But the choice was whether going was right, because the Lord had already decided that. Rather the choice was whether to obey or not.³²

Results

Joseph and Sidney immediately stopped work on the Bible, some place after Moses 8 (Genesis 7) and devoted their time to preaching and teaching. They journeyed to Colesville and strengthened the Saints there but also preached in public places and homes in Canandaigua, Palmyra, and Fayette.³³

John Whitmer was sent in January 1831 to preside in Ohio so that the new converts there would have some trusted leadership. With him he took a copy of many of Joseph's revelations to share and teach. When he arrived, he found that some had already strayed and been deceived by Satan. Meanwhile Church members in New York struggled with

³² Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:252.

³³ *JSP*, D1:226.

the command to move. It's one thing for a religion to ask you to repent and believe, it's quite another to sell your farm or business you have worked all your life to build and move to a new location where you had no work, no family,

and no support. But the Lord was working with the new Church to build faith and to decrease dependence on the world. Those who heeded the call to gather learned those lessons well.

D&C 38 – Reasons for Gathering

Date and Location

Sunday, 2 January 1830; Fayette, NY.

Setting

After D&C 37, Saints in New York were struggling with the command to leave their homes, farms, and businesses, and move to Ohio in the middle of winter. A conference of the Church was planned for early January 1831, and many gathered to the Whitmer home in Fayette, anxious to get more information on this topic. On Sunday, 2 January 1831, just three days after D&C 37, Joseph prayed, then dictated while Sidney Rigdon wrote the word of the Lord, D&C 38.

Documents and Publication

Oldest copy is in Revelation Book 1. This section was first published in the *Evening and Morning Star* (April 1833), then as Chapter 40 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 12 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

Outline

- The greatness of Christ (1-6)
- Clean, but not all (7-12)
- The gathering (13-32)
- The riches of eternity (33-42)

Commentary

The greatness of Christ (1-6)

1 *looked upon the wide expanse of eternity.* After repeating several now-familiar names (“the Great I Am, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”), this phrase was given about the nature of Christ that is unique in all scripture. The images may have come from the revelations of Enoch (Moses 7:29-41, with terms like “wide” and “eternity”). The term “expanse” will later be an important part of the translation of Abraham, the only place it is used in scripture outside of this verse.

1 *seraphic hosts of heaven.* Another phrase unique in all of scripture to D&C 38; in fact, the term “seraphic” is only

found in this verse, though the related term “seraphim” is found in Isaiah 6:2, 6 and 2 Nephi 16:2, 6)

2 *knoweth all things.* In many places where this phrase is used, it applies to the Holy Spirit or those guided by it (1 John 2:20; D&C 11:14; 35:19; 42:17; 93:28; Moses 6:61). But especially in the writings of John the apostle and Nephi, we see a ‘high christology’ where Jesus knows all things (John 16:30; 18:4; 1 John 3:20; then compare 1 Nephi 9:6; 2 Nephi 2:24; 9:20). This is the only time the phrase is used in the D&C to apply to Christ.

2 *all things are present before mine eyes.* Another unique phrase in D&C 38 in all of scripture. Later, however, Joseph Smith taught that where God lives is a “great Urim and Thummim” and the earth will also be like that one day, so that it will make “all things” pertaining to other kingdoms “manifest to those who dwell on it” (D&C 130:8-9).

3 *all things came by me.* Jesus is the creator of worlds (Moses 1:32-33).

4 *the same which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom.* For most of the Saints assembled at the conference, this was new information. Enoch had a Zion? It was not in their Old Testament. But Joseph had learned it through his work on the Bible (Moses 7:69), and the Lord could now happily reference it for him, identifying himself as the one who performed this great, ancient act.

4 *even as many as have believed in my name.* This alludes to a principle that Joseph Smith has not yet learned in terms of the Bible translation, that others were caught up to meet Enoch and his city later, including some from Melchizedek’s time: “And men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven” (JST Genesis 14:23 addition).

4 *I pleaded before the Father for them.* Jesus stands as our advocate before the Father’s judgment seat, pleading our cause, as he said, “by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt.”

5 *the wicked have I kept in chains of darkness.* Perhaps this pre-figures later revelations on the work for the dead, which Joseph Smith will learn about through revelations he received and understanding he gained in the Nauvoo period principally (D&C 128; 137). In v. 6, he taught that the way out of the chains of darkness is to hear his voice.

6 ***wo, wo, wo, is their doom.*** The triple “wo,” found only once in the Bible (Revelation 8:13) and twice in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 28:15; 3 Nephi 9:2), emphasized how the wicked, hard-hearted world will suffer, remembering the words of D&C 29 and other revelations.

Clean, but not all (7-12)

7 ***I am in your midst and ye cannot see me.*** The Lord does not create a system where he reveals himself, shares some information and gives some commandments, and then goes on vacation and is out of touch. He is present in the work, constantly with the Church, even if we do not see him. This is also a reminder that he sees our every action and knows exactly what we have been concerned about—in this case, the command to move to Ohio.

8 ***ye shall see me, and know that I am.*** The allusion is to the Second Coming, but it is also true that in Kirtland many of the Saints were privileged to see the Lord through various experiences.

9 ***he that is not purified shall not abide.*** The wicked are going to be punished, he told them (vv. 5-6) but they are also warned that such punishment might await them if they were not pure.

10 ***ye are clean, but not all.*** Quoting John 13:10, the Lord invoked the image of the last supper and the opportunity for the Saints to examine their own commitment in the face of this trial. In spite of the challenge to self-examination, he emphasized that “there is none else with whom I am well pleased.”

11 ***the powers of darkness prevail.*** Sometimes we think of such times as ‘the good old days,’ but the Lord called it a wicked day, full of darkness and corruption. He calls us to come out of such an environment and make ourselves holy. See also Isaiah 60:1-2.

12 ***which causeth silence to reign.*** Revelation 8:1 mentions that when the seventh seal was opened, “there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” Though not implying a link to the time of the seventh seal, the imagery used here is similar: heaven is silent waiting the Lord’s command to proceed with the gathering and the reaping of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30).

12 ***all eternity is pained.*** Enoch saw God weeping for the wickedness of his day (Moses 7:28-37); so it was in 1831 as well. God does not cause the wickedness of the world or even tolerate it (except as required by his respect of man’s agency), but he is tremendously pained because of it.

The gathering (13-32)

13 ***even your destruction.*** The Lord warned that secret forces were conspiring against them. They don’t see it or

know it, but he does, and will protect them. This could refer to the powers of Satan or to those of men on earth.

14 ***I will be merciful unto your weakness.*** The Saints are blessed in spite of their iniquity and unbelief, because of the grace of Christ which helps us through unworthiness to make us righteous, justified, and sanctified.

15 ***the kingdom is yours.*** The kingdom of God on the earth was in the hands of a few dozen people. It is fragile and weak but they are promised success if they will be strong and “fear not.”

16 ***I give unto you a commandment.*** The commandment won’t be revealed until v. 32, but it is not new (see D&C 37). The verses between 16 and 32 lay the groundwork to help the Saints understand the commandment.

17 ***I have made the earth rich, and behold it is my footstool.*** Though there are great riches in the earth, it all comes through the blessings of the Lord, who figuratively can use all the riches on the earth as a mere resting place for his feet, because comparatively he has so much more.

18 ***a land of promise.*** One blessing of the gathering will be combined prosperity, a land like ancient Israel with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8) and no curse (e.g., 1 Nephi 17:35-38; Ether 11:6), a land of their inheritance. But they must seek this blessing “with all your hearts” (v. 19).

20 ***forever...while the earth shall stand...in eternity.*** The language the Lord used relating to the promised inheritance evokes images of eternal blessings more than immediate temporal benefits, but the short-term promise was certainly there for those who sought it with all their hearts (v. 19).

21 ***I will be your king and watch over you.*** These were strange words to their Jeffersonian democratic way of thinking. They abhorred a kingship system. But this was not a worldly king being promised—it was God himself.

22 ***ye shall have no laws but my laws when I come.*** One of the challenges of the early Saints was that they read the first part of this phrase about having only God’s laws, but not the last: “when I come,” meaning the Second Coming when Christ is established as the ruler of the earth. In their zeal to live the laws of God, they sometimes felt the laws of man did not apply to them. Joseph Smith taught members to observe the laws of the land, but look ahead to the day when perfect rule would address the inequalities and injustices of man’s systems of government.

23 ***teach one another.*** This was never a Church that was set up with a pastor or leader who knows all and everyone else is to quit thinking. We all teach one another and learn together, even as we take our lead from inspired prophets.

24 ***esteem his brother as himself.*** Selfishness has no place in the Lord’s kingdom. He put others first and calls us to

do the same. It is so important, that he repeats himself in v. 25.

26 ***no respecter of them***. Just as a father would not give robes to one son and rags to another, providing “they serve him obediently,” so God desires us all to be treated equitably and with fairness.

27 ***be one; and if you are not one ye are not mine***. Unity is the ultimate goal of Zion—united in righteous purpose and behind God’s plan. This is a constant theme in the Doctrine and Covenants starting with D&C 29.

28 ***the enemy in secret chambers***. A repeat of the previous warning of secret forces working against them (v. 13).

29 ***great wars in far countries***. Wars and rumors of wars abound throughout the earth, but the Lord anticipates a great war right in the midst of the Saints. While this could certainly be in expectation of the Civil War in three decades, it is just as likely to be a reference to the war brought on by the secret forces in v. 28, because they do not know “the hearts of men in your own land.”

30 ***I tell you these things because of your prayers***. The warning and counsel here has come because God loved them but also because they asked. He will occasionally bless us against our will, but more often God patiently waits for us to ask, then pours out his blessings upon us.

31 ***escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people***. The Lord summarized the reason for the gathering to Ohio in two main points: be safe from their enemies and build up righteousness among them.

32 ***give unto you my law...be endowed with power***. Two promises of their obedience were given, to match the two reasons for gathering. First, God will give them a new law, which was revealed later starting in D&C 42. Second, they will be endowed with power from on high. The quote is Luke 24:49. An endowment is a gift, a blessing of some kind. This is not yet the endowment as Latter-day Saints use the term today, but a gift and blessing that will be experienced when they finally build a temple in Kirtland.

The riches of eternity (33-42)

33 ***no power shall stay my hand***. Just as the Lord worked mighty miracles in the days of Enoch and Moses, so will it be in the last days. He will gather scattered Israel “whithersoever I will” and they shall go to all nations to accomplish it.

35 ***look to the poor***. Moving to Ohio is especially hard for some who have little funds. The Lord commands certain among them who will be called (v. 34) to make sure the poor have their needs met so all can go together.

37 ***farms that cannot be sold***. With short notice and few people buying, several farms were not sold. But the Lord seemed fairly unconcerned, advising them just to rent them or even leave them. He was asking them to leave the world behind and focus on the promised blessings.

39 ***the richest of all people, for ye shall have the riches of eternity***. Lest they be confused, he clarified that he was not talking about things of this world, though they might be used to accomplish his purposes, but of the eternities.

39 ***beware of pride***. The Nephites were prideful and it led to their destruction (4 Nephi 1:24-28). So warned, the Saints are commanded to avoid that same trap.

40 ***elder, priest, teacher, and also member***. That covers all the Church leadership and membership of that time. Everyone is commanded (not just advised or asked) to work with their might and with their hands to make this happen.

41 ***in mildness and in meekness***. The voice of warning they were to raise to their neighbors should be mild and meek, always in the spirit of humility and with gratitude and recognition of the grace of God and not their own accomplishments.

42 ***go ye out from among the wicked***. Compare Isaiah 52:11.

42 ***save yourselves***. Compare Acts 2:40 and D&C 36:6.

42 ***Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord***. This is also a quote from Isaiah 52:11 (and thus also 3 Nephi 20:41). Those that bear the vessels are those charged with priesthood responsibilities, and this is another reference to the temple that will soon be commanded to be built.

Results

D&C 38 was not just an explanation for the move to Ohio, it was a call to come out of the world altogether and begin to live like a Zion society. They needed to break with the traditions of the world around them and start fresh with the Lord’s purposes in mind—unity, support, less care for property and more for each other. It also forced them to choose—would they follow the Lord and his Prophet, or stay in the world? Some doubted that this revelation was from God but was just Joseph’s idea (“in the end he might get gain,” some said³⁴)—or Sidney’s ideas influencing Joseph. But the Spirit worked with them, and at great sacrifice, they began to sell or otherwise dispose of their properties and make the move. They were preparing themselves for the law that was coming.

About 23 January 1831, in the midst of a cold and snowy winter like none could remember, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, a pregnant Emma Smith, and others left New York

³⁴ JSP, D1:230.

for Ohio. Joseph Smith would never return to the home of his youth and the place of the founding of the Church. Riding in Joseph Knight, Jr.'s sleigh the three hundred or so miles to Kirtland, he and Emma arrived on 1 February 1831 at the store of Newel and Ann Whitney. Ann remembered him introducing himself as "Joseph the Prophet," saying that they had prayed him there.

Other Saints heeded the call to move and by summer, all but one New York Saint was in Ohio. The sixty-seven Colesville Saints traveled together in a company, led by Newel Knight. In April, they packed wagons and headed toward the Erie Canal. They were delayed by persecution, including a legal matter that forced Newel back to Colesville for a time while the group waited, and by weather, the canal still being frozen over even in June.

Joseph's father and brother Hyrum came in March. Lucy Smith led the Waterloo (Fayette area) Saints west, also

struggling with the exceptionally cold spring. Thomas Marsh brought a group of about thirty, including the Whitmers, and Martin Harris headed a group of fifty or so from Palmyra. All groups converged in Buffalo, stuck until the ice would melt. Lucy led her group in prayer and song, and taught those in the nearby community. She called on her company to pray with faith that the ice would break, and when it did she got her boat through, though others such as the Colesville Saints, were not so fortunate, and had to wait a while longer.

Upon their arrival in Ohio, the Saints there received their New York brothers and sisters warmly, giving the two hundred or so travelers places to stay and food to eat. The new arrivals began to buy homes and property and settle in, and Kirtland began to serve its purpose—bring the Saints closer to God while leaving the world behind.

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