

Come Follow Me Lesson 19

May 3-9
D&C 46-48

D&C 46

All faithful members of the Church can receive gifts of the Spirit. God gives gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of His children. We should seek and cultivate gifts of the Spirit.

The fact that the gifts of the Spirit are mentioned in three sets of scriptures indicates how important they are to us.

(Bruce R. McConkie: From the writings of Paul (1 Cor. 12; 13; 14), and of Moroni (Moro. 10), (see below for these other scriptures) and from the revelations received by Joseph Smith (D. & C. 46), we gain a clear knowledge of spiritual gifts and how they operate. **Among others, we find the following gifts named either in these three places or elsewhere in the scriptures: the gift of knowing by revelation "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world" (D. & C. 46:13), and also the gift of believing the testimony of those who have gained this revelation; the gifts of testimony, of knowing that the Book of Mormon is true, and of receiving revelations; the gifts of judgment, knowledge, and wisdom; of teaching, exhortation, and preaching; of teaching the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge; of declaring the gospel and of ministry; the gift of faith, including power both to heal and to be healed; the gifts of healing, working of miracles, and prophesy; the viewing of visions, beholding of angels and ministering spirits, and the discerning of spirits; speaking with tongues, the interpretation of tongues, the interpretation of languages, and the gift of translation; the differences of administration in the Church and the diversities of operation of the Spirit; the gift of seership, "and a gift which is greater can no man have." (Mosiah 8:16; Alma 9:21; D. & C. 5:4; 43:3-4; Rom. 12:6-8.) And these are by no means all of the gifts. In the fullest sense, they are infinite in number and endless in their manifestations.** Mormon Doctrine, p. 314)

(Marvin J. Ashton: **Let us review some of these less-conspicuous gifts: the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost. We must remember that to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. It is our right and responsibility to accept our gifts and to share them. God's gifts and powers are available to all of us.** Ensign, Nov, 1987.)

Joseph Smith Papers – 125

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1831. HC 1: 163—165. In this early time of the Church, (the Church is not quite a year old at this time.) there had not yet developed a unified pattern for the conducting of Church services. However, a custom of admitting only members and earnest investigators to the sacrament meetings and other assemblies of the Church had become somewhat general. This revelation expresses the will of the Lord relative to governing and conducting meetings. (This revelation was given through the Prophet Joseph at Kirtland, Ohio, 8 March 1831. It addresses two matters of considerable importance to the infant Church. First, the

matter of who, if any, should be excluded from meetings. Second, the discerning of spirits so that the Saints might avoid the host of spiritual counterfeits common in the world. Its doctrinal significance, however, reaches far beyond these two issues in that it restores to the earth the doctrine of spiritual gifts. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 360. 3 Nephi 18: 22 And behold, ye shall ^ameet together oft; and **ye shall not forbid any man from coming unto you when ye shall meet together, but suffer them that they may come unto you and forbid them not**; 23 But ye shall ^apray for them, **and shall not cast them out**; and if it so be that they come unto you oft ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name. 24 Therefore, hold up your ^alight that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the ^blight which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do. Behold ye see that I have prayed unto the Father, and ye all have witnessed.)

1—2, Elders are to conduct meetings as guided by the Holy Spirit; 3—6, Truth seekers should not be excluded from sacramental services; 7—12, Ask of God and seek the gifts of the Spirit; 13—26, An enumeration of some of these gifts; 27—33, Church leaders are given power to discern the gifts of the Spirit.

1 HEARKEN, O ye people of my church; for verily I say unto you that these things were spoken unto you for your ^aprofit and learning.

2 But notwithstanding those things which are written, it always has been given to the ^aelders of my church from the beginning, and ever shall be, to ^bconduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit. (The presiding officer in the meeting should always conduct the meeting according the promptings of the Spirit.)

3 Nevertheless ye are commanded never to ^acast any one out from your public ^bmeetings, which are held before the world.

4 Ye are also commanded not to cast any one who belongeth to the church out of your sacrament meetings; nevertheless, if any have trespassed, let him ^anot ^bpartake (of the sacrament) until he makes reconciliation.

5 And again I say unto you, ye shall not cast any out of your sacrament meetings who are earnestly ^aseeking the kingdom—I speak this concerning those who are not of the church.

6 And again I say unto you, concerning your ^aconfirmation meetings, (Sec 20: members were confirmed several weeks after baptism. Confirmation meetings were different from sacrament meetings in the 1830's.) that if there be any that are not of the church, that are earnestly seeking after the kingdom, ye shall not cast them out.

7 But ye are commanded in all things to ^aask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do (There is a way by which persons can keep their consciences clear before God and man, and that is to preserve within them the Spirit of God, which is the spirit of revelation to every man or woman. It will reveal to them even in the simplest matters, what they shall do by making suggestions to them. We should try to learn the nature of this spirit, that we may understand its suggestions, and then we will always be able to do right. This is the grand privilege of every Latter-day Saint. . . . From the time we receive the Gospel, go down into the waters of baptism and have hands laid upon us afterwards for the gift of the Holy Ghost, we have a friend, if we do not drive it from us by doing wrong. That friend is the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, which partakes of the things of God and shows them unto us. This is the grand means that the Lord has provided for us, that we may know the light, and not be groveling continually in the dark. (CR, October 1899, p. 52.)) in all ^bholiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, ^cconsidering the end of your salvation, **(In all of our choices and decisions we might well ask, Is this in harmony with the covenants I have made, does this lead me closer to God? If our answer is in the affirmative, we have, in the language of this revelation, considered the end of our salvation.** Revelations of the Restoration, p. 362) doing all things with prayer and ^dthanksgiving, that ye may not be ^eseduced by evil ^fspirits, or doctrines of devils,

or the ^gcommandments of men; for some are of men, and others of devils.

8 Wherefore, beware lest ye are deceived; and that ye may not be deceived ^aseek ye earnestly the best gifts, (Well might it be asked, **Of all the gifts of the Spirit which are the "best" or the ones most to be desired? To which we readily answer, The gift or gifts most needed in your circumstances and situation. The best gift is the gift best suited to enable you to bless those with whom you have been called to labor.** To the young mother, it may be patience, love, and understanding; to the aged woman, the ability to endure; to the newly called missionary, the gift of tongues; to the bishop, the gift of discernment; to the teacher, knowledge; to the priesthood leader, the gift of administration, and so forth. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 363-64. George Q. Cannon: If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. **Have I imperfections? I am full of them. What is my duty? To pray to God to give me the gifts that will correct these imperfections.** If I am an angry man, it is my duty to pray for charity, which suffereth long and is kind. Am I an envious man? It is my duty to seek for charity, which envieth not. So with all the gifts of the gospel. They are intended for this purpose. No man ought to say, "Oh, I cannot help this; it is my nature." He is not justified in it, for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things, and to give gifts that will eradicate them. If a man lack wisdom, it is his duty to ask God for wisdom. The same with everything else. That is the design of God concerning His Church. He wants His Saints to be perfected in the truth. For this purpose He gives these gifts, and bestows them upon those who seek after them, in order that they may be a perfect people upon the face of the earth, notwithstanding their many weaknesses, because God has promised to give the gifts that are necessary for their perfection. (MS, April 23, 1894, 56:260-61.)) always remembering for what they are given;

9 For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; (Who has rightful claim to the gifts of the Spirit? The Lord teaches us that it is those who love him and keep all of his commandments. The difficulty here is that none of us keep all of the commandments; at least we do not keep them perfectly. Attesting to the mercy and grace of heaven comes this phrase, which extends hope to all: "And him [or her] that seeketh so to do." Each of heaven's gifts is within our grasp, if we will but reach. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 364) that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a ^asign that they may ^bconsume it upon their lusts. (**There are no private gifts, each is given that we might aid and serve others. To seek gifts for self-gratification is contrary to the Spirit from which they come and the purpose for which they have been ordained.** Similarly, Joseph F. Smith said: "Show me Latter-day Saints who have to feed upon miracles, signs and visions in order to keep them steadfast in the Church, and I will show you members of the Church who are not in good standing before God, and who are walking in slippery paths. It is not by marvelous manifestations unto us that we shall be established in the truth, but it is by humility and faithful obedience to the commandments and laws of God" (Conference Report, April 1900, 40). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 364)

10 And again, verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your ^aminds what those ^bgifts are, that are given unto the church. (Gifts are given for the benefit of individuals and the church.)

11 For all have not every ^agift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. (Elder Orson Pratt taught that **"whenever the Holy Ghost takes up its residence in a person, it not only cleanses, sanctifies, and purifies him, in proportion as he yields himself to its influence, but also imparts to him some gift, intended for the benefit of himself and others. No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a spiritual gift. A person who is without a spiritual gift has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, in a sufficient degree, to save him; he cannot be called a Saint, or a child of God; for all Saints who constitute the Church of Christ, are baptized into the same Spirit; and each one, without any exception, is made a partaker of some spiritual gift. . . . "Each member does not receive all these gifts; but they are distributed through the whole body [of the Church], according to the will and**

wisdom of the Spirit. Institute Manual, 100)

12 **To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby. (Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Ghost to those who have rightful claim upon his companionship through the waters of baptism and by the laying on of hands. Thus they are the exclusive providence of members of the Church** (v. 10). These are spiritual talents given to bless those of the household of faith and to aid in the declaration of the gospel. They find their manifestation in service to others. By contrast, the myriad of talents with which the generality of humankind have been blessed can be used in a host of ways and for a great variety of purposes. **Talents can be used in any cause, be it good or evil.**

Spiritual gifts are talents given and consecrated for the Lord's purpose. All spiritual gifts edify the soul and testify of Christ. The talents of men may or may not be used for such purposes. In the world, artists, musicians, and writers labor for different masters and for different rewards. Whereas righteousness and obedience are requisites for the use of spiritual gifts, this is not always the case with other talents. Talents may find expression without the attendant aid of the Spirit, and even in opposition to it. Certainly, there are gifted artists in many fields outside of the Church who have responded to the light of Christ and to revelation from the Holy Ghost. We would liken the expression of such gifts to the labors of the great reformers who paved the way for the Restoration. We can only suppose that their offering will find acceptance by the God of heaven. We would further suppose that such gifts, as marvelous as they may be, will in a future day be enhanced by the greater light and power that the fulness of the gospel brings with it. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 364-65)

13 **To some it is given by the ^aHoly Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. ((Testimony)** Joseph Fielding Smith: We all have a right to know the truth. It is a requirement the Lord makes of every member of the Church that he know for himself and have a testimony of the truth in his own heart and not be under the necessity of depending upon anyone else to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God or that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. (CR, October 1952, p. 60.) “This knowledge is placed first among the special gifts, because it is obtained only by revelation. To *believe* that Jesus of Nazareth was the Anointed One, the Messiah, and that He was crucified for the sins of the world, is not to *know* it. Knowledge is a special gift.” (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 274.) Concerning the gift to know, President Joseph Fielding Smith counseled: “When Spirit speaks to spirit, the imprint upon the soul is far more difficult to erase. Every member of the Church should have impressions that Jesus is the Son of God indelibly pictured on his soul through the witness of the Holy Ghost.” (“The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1966, p. 979.)

14 **To others it is given to ^abelieve on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.** (For those without a testimony, believe on the testimony of another until yours is strengthened. Every member of the Church is expected to have a personal assurance or testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Such a testimony comes only by the spirit of revelation; and thus when shared with others in company with the Spirit by which it came it may have a very electrifying effect. Nevertheless, there are those who are specially gifted in the bearing of testimony, who, like the soloists in a great choir, thrill our souls and raise the level of our faith beyond that which others can do. In like manner, to some it has been given to testify with special power of the mission and ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith, of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, or of some particular gospel principle in such a manner that it has a more powerful effect upon our souls than that which we normally experience when others bear like testimony. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 365)

15 **And again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know the ^adifferences of administration, as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord, according as the Lord will, suiting his ^bmercies according to the conditions of the children of men.** (“What is meant by differences of administration? By referring to the Greek text of 1 Corinthians 12:5, where the Apostle Paul is speaking about the same thing, we may get a suitable answer. Apparently by ‘differences of administration’ is meant the distinctive varieties of service and ministration by which things are accomplished in the Church. The Lord seems to be saying

(vs. 15) that while there are diversities of services and ministers or agents, such as Apostles, High Priests, Seventies, and the like in the Church, they all depend on the same Lord and Savior, who is the head of the whole Church. One who has the gift by the Holy Ghost to know differences of administration is one who discerns correctly the services and agencies by which the Lord works.” (Sperry, *Compendium*, p. 196.)

16 And again, it is given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the **diversities of operations**, whether they be of God, that the manifestations of the ^aSpirit may be given to every man to profit withal. (The diversity of gifts found in the community of Saints suggests that there are a host of tasks that need doing and a variety of ways in which they can be done. **It is expected that all faithful Saints will labor in their callings, using the gifts that God has given them. For this reason people are called to serve in various capacities for a time when their gift or gifts are particularly needed.** We find the apostle Paul saying, "I have planted, Apollos watered" (1 Corinthians 3:6), to which it might be added, another pruned, and still another harvested, each doing that for which he was best suited. Surely, this has been true with those men called to stand at the head of the Church. Each has been endowed with the particular gifts needed during the time of his administration. **The Prophet Joseph laid the foundation of this dispensation as no other man could. Yet, perhaps he would not have been Brigham's match in leading the Saints across the plains and colonizing the Great Basin. And so it has been with one prophet after another, each specially prepared to meet the challenges of that time for which he was called.** The "diversity of operations" could also be understood to embrace different ways particular gifts are manifest. The gift of healing, for instance, finds expression in one person's ability to administer healing herbs, the ability of another to heal through a priesthood blessing, and in still another the power to say, "Rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Indeed, we read of one who was healed by simply touching the hem of the Master's garment (Matthew 9:20-23). *Revelations of the Restoration*, p. 366)

17 And again, verily I say unto you, to some is given, by the Spirit of God, the word of ^a**wisdom**.

18 To another is given the word of ^a**knowledge**, that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge. (The question has often been asked, Are teachers born, or are they made? Some are born to teach just as others are born to a thousand other things: some to sing, others to write, still others to lead, to heal, to build, to nurture, and so on, each with talents enhanced by good training but not originating in that training. Gifts do not originate in books or in classes. True it is that such efforts may well improve a particular person's ability to do one thing or another, but they cannot grant them that ability in the first place. So it is in the realm of spiritual things. **Teaching is a spiritual gift and, as this revelation suggests, some have received it and others have not.** Teaching this principle, Moroni said, "For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom; and to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit" (Moroni 10:9-10). Similarly, we might say to one it is given to teach children of Primary age, to another to teach teenagers, and to yet another to teach adults. What then happens when we are called to labor in an assignment in which we have no gift? We can but respond that if the call came from the Lord—and such calls do—and if we thrust in our sickle with all our might, he will sustain us and bless our efforts so that his purposes will be accomplished. *Revelations of the Restoration*, p. 366-67)

19 And again, to some it is given to have ^a**faith to be healed**;

20 And to others it is given to have **faith to ^aheal**. (It is expected that every member of the Church have sufficient faith to be healed and that every holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood have sufficient faith to utilize the power of that priesthood to heal those who are sick. To say that some have the gift to be healed and others the gift to heal is to say that they have power beyond that known to the generality of faithful Saints. **It is supposed among some that the higher the office one holds in the priesthood the greater the blessing they can give. This is simply not the case.** To illustrate this principle Brigham Young said that he was hounded constantly by people asking if he would come and give a blessing; "I only go occasionally, because it is the privilege of every father, who is an Elder in Israel, to have faith to heal his family, . . . and if he does not do it he is not living up to his privilege. It is just as reasonable for

him to ask me to cut his wood and maintain his family, for if he had faith himself he would save me the trouble of leaving other duties to attend to his request" (Journal of Discourses, 3:46). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 367)

21 And again, to some is given the **working of ^amiracles**;

22 And to others it is given to **^aprophecy**; (According to Elder McConkie, this is the greatest gift of the Spirit. See below for further comment.)

23 And to others the **^adiscerning of spirits**. ("Nothing is a greater injury to the children of men," said Joseph Smith, "than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 205). A bishop is called to be "a judge" in Israel (D&C 64:40) and thus by virtue of his office has a special right to importune the heavens for this gift in order that he judge wisely and not be deceived by counterfeit gifts. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 367-68)

24 And again, it is given to some to **speak with ^atongues**; ("Be not so curious about tongues," the Prophet Joseph Smith counseled, "do not speak in tongues except there be an interpreter present; the ultimate design of tongues is to speak to foreigners, and if persons are very anxious to display their intelligence, let them speak to such in their own tongues. The gifts of God are all useful in their place, but when they are applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare and a curse instead of a blessing" (History of the Church, 5:31-32).

25 And to another is given **the interpretation of tongues**. (The gift of tongues is given for the purpose of testifying of Christ and teaching the gospel. The interpretation of tongues is given in order that language will not be a barrier to hearing and understanding the heaven-sent message. Joseph F. Smith said: "There is perhaps no gift of the spirit of God more easily imitated by the devil than the gift of tongues. Where two men or women exercise the gift of tongues by the inspiration of the spirit of God, there are a dozen perhaps who do it by the inspiration of the devil. . . . I believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit unto men, but I do not want the gift of tongues, except when I need it. . . . So far as I am concerned, if the Lord will give me ability to teach the people in my native tongue, or in their own language to the understanding of those who hear me, that will be sufficient gift of tongues to me. Yet if the Lord gives you the gift of tongues, do not despise it, do not reject it. For if it comes from the Spirit of God, it will come to those who are worthy to receive it, and it is all right" (Conference Report, April 1900, 41). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 368. David O. McKay: **The occasion was a conference held at Huntley, New Zealand, a thousand people assembled. Before that time I had spoken through interpreters in China, Hawaii, Holland, and other places, but I felt impressed on that occasion to speak in the English language. In substance I said, "I have never been much of an advocate of the necessity of tongues in our Church, but today I wish I had that gift. But I haven't. However, I am going to speak to you . . . in my native tongue and pray that you may have the gift of interpretation of tongues. We will ask Brother Stuart Meha, who is going to interpret for me, to make notes, and if necessary he may give us a summary of my talk afterwards."** Well, the **outpouring of the gift of tongues on that occasion was most remarkable. Following the end of my sermon Brother Sid Christy, who was a student of Brigham Young University, a Maori, who had returned to New Zealand, rushed up and said, "Brother McKay, they got your message!" Well, I knew they had by the attention and the nodding of their heads during the talk. I said, "I think they have but for the benefit of those who may not have understood or had that gift, we shall have the sermon interpreted."** While Brother Meha was interpreting that or giving a summary of it in the Maori language some of the natives, who had understood it, but who did not understand English, arose and corrected him in his interpretations. President George Albert Smith and Brother Rufus K. Hardy visited New Zealand several years after that event, and Brother Hardy, hearing of the event, brought home testimonies of those who were present, and he took the occasion to have those testimonies notarized. So it is the gift of interpretation rather than the gift of tongues, that was remarkable. (Gospel Interpretations, 1958, p. 352.))

26 And all these **^agifts come from God, for the benefit of the ^bchildren of God**. (The working of

miracles, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, and speaking in tongues are here listed as illustrations of spiritual gifts. **It is not to be supposed that these, with the other gifts mentioned in this revelation, constitute an exhaustive list of the gifts that God has chosen to give his children.** That is not the design or purpose of the revelation. The gifts of God are as diverse as are those to whom they have been given. Like fingerprints, they are individual and distinctive. **The genius of this is that it binds us together as a community of Saints, everyone having something to contribute that no one else can do as well. Each of us is in a position to bless and to be blessed. For this reason we have been commanded to "meet together often" that we might succor and strengthen each other. It is not intended in the gospel plan that we be saved separate and singly. Salvation is in many respects a community affair.** Revelations of the Restoration, p. 368-69)

27 **And unto the ^abishop of the church,** (Stephen L. Richards: The gift of discernment is essential to the leadership of the Church. I never ordain a bishop or set apart a president of a stake without invoking upon him this divine blessing, that he may read the lives and hearts of his people and call forth the best within them. The gift and power of discernment in this world of contention between the forces of good and the power of evil is essential equipment for every son and daughter of God. CR, Apr 1950, p. 163) **and unto such as God shall appoint and ordain to watch over the church and to be elders unto the church,** are to have it given unto them to ^bdiscern all those gifts lest there shall be any among you professing and yet be not of God. (This revelation was given some years before the development of wards and stakes. The bishop referred to would be the equivalent of the presiding bishop today. In like manner, the reference to elders would be to those holding positions of presidency. The idea is that those in positions of presidency must be able to discern the legitimate gifts of God from counterfeit gifts common to false religion and to discipline and direct the proper use of the gifts given of God to the Saints. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 369 **The gift of discernment is not just to detect an evil spirit or evil intent in someone, but also to detect the good in others that they themselves may not even be aware of.**)

28 (Here is how we obtain these gifts.) **And it shall come to pass that he that asketh in ^aSpirit shall receive in Spirit;**

29 **That unto some it may be given to have all those gifts, that there may be a head, in order that every member may be profited thereby.** (The president of the Church not only presides over all of its members but also over all of the gifts given them of God to aid in the building of his earthly kingdom. Under the direction of the prophet countless calls are made to utilize those gifts in sharing the gospel with all the nations and peoples of the earth and in teaching and strengthening those already in the Church. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 369. D&C 107:92: Behold, here is wisdom; yea, to be a ^aseer, a ^brevelator, a translator, and a ^cprophet, having all the ^dgifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church.)

30 (How are we to act?) He that ^aasketh in the ^bSpirit asketh according to the ^cwill of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh. (Joseph Fielding Smith: All members of the Church should seek for the gift of prophecy, for their own guidance, which is the spirit by which the word of the Lord is understood and his purposes made known. Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:184)

31 (In whose name and by what power do these gifts come?) And again, I say unto you, all things must be done in the name of Christ, whatsoever you do in the Spirit;

32 (What must a person constantly remember to do?) And ye must give ^athanks unto God in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing ye are blessed with.

33 (What must we practice in our daily life?) And ye must practise ^avirtue and holiness before me continually. Even so. Amen.

D&C 47

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1831. HC 1: 166. Prior to this time Oliver Cowdery had acted as Church historian and recorder. John Whitmer had not sought

an appointment as historian, but, being asked to serve in this capacity, he had said that he would obey the will of the Lord in the matter. He had already served as a secretary to the Prophet in recording many of the revelations received in the Fayette, New York, area.

1—4, John Whitmer is designated to keep the history of the Church and to write for the Prophet.

(John Whitmer's reluctance to accept this calling may explain the meager results of his labors. He began his duties by his own account on 12 June 1831 and served in this capacity, though not always with exemplary diligence, until his excommunication on 10 March 1838. In those seven years he produced only a hundred pages of text, four of which have since been torn out and lost. At the time John Whitmer left the Church, he took the historical records that were in his possession with him, and they eventually became the property of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. From that source several editions of his work have been published. Doctrine and Covenants 69:2–8 also gave John additional instructions on his duties as Church historian. A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, 84)

1 BEHOLD, it is expedient in me that my servant John (One of the eight witnesses) should write and keep a regular ^ahistory, and assist you, my servant Joseph, in transcribing all things which shall be given you, until he is called to further duties. (John was reluctant to serve in this calling.)

2 Again, verily I say unto you that he can also ^alift up his voice in meetings, whenever it shall be expedient.

3 And again, I say unto you that it shall be appointed unto him to keep the church ^arecord and history continually; for Oliver Cowdery I have appointed to another office. (Oliver was called as a missionary to the Lamanites.)

4 Wherefore, it shall be given him, inasmuch as he is faithful, by the ^aComforter, to write these things. Even so. Amen. (John Whitmer was Church historian for about seven years. Then on 10 March 1838, he lost his membership in the Church. At that time he was serving as a counselor to his brother David in the Missouri presidency. "Because he and W. W. Phelps, the other counselor, had taken personal title to the gathering site of Far West, the resentment of the Missouri members resulted in criticism and then formal suspension of that presidency from office. Declining to be called to account economically or to personally appear at high council trials," they were excommunicated (Anderson, *Investigating*, 127). When he left the Church, John Whitmer refused to surrender the history he had written. Later, when the brethren were compiling the history of the Church in Nauvoo he advised them that his history could be acquired "at a fair price." He was advised that they could get along quite well without it. In 1893, some years after his death, the Church obtained a copy of his history. His writings, which included revelations given by Joseph Smith during that seven-year period, were only eighty-five pages in length. Joseph Smith in a meeting with the Twelve some years after this revelation spoke as follows about the importance of accurate records and the writing of the history of the Church: **"If I now had in my possession, every decision which had been had upon important items of doctrine and duties since the commencement of this work, I would not part with them for any sum of money; but we have neglected to take minutes of such things, thinking, perhaps, that they would never benefit us afterwards; which, if we had them now, would decide almost every point of doctrine which might be agitated. But this has been neglected, and now we cannot bear record to the Church and to the world, of the great and glorious manifestations which have been made to us with that degree of power and authority we otherwise could, if we now had these things to publish abroad. Since the Twelve are now chosen, I wish to tell them a course which they may pursue, and be benefited thereafter, in a point of light of which they are not now aware. If they will, every time they assemble, appoint a person to preside over them during the meeting, and one or more to keep a record of their proceedings, and on the decision of every question or item, be it what it may, let such decision be written, and such**

decision will forever remain upon record, and appear an item of covenant or doctrine. An item thus decided may appear, at the time, of little or no worth, but should it be published, and one of you lay hands on it after, you will find it of infinite worth, not only to your brethren, but it will be a feast to your own souls. Here is another important item. If you assemble from time to time, and proceed to discuss important questions, and pass decisions upon the same, and fail to note them down, by and by you will be driven to straits from which you will not be able to extricate yourselves, because you may be in a situation not to bring your faith to bear with sufficient perfection or power to obtain the desired information; or, perhaps, for neglecting to write these things when God had revealed them, not esteeming them of sufficient worth, the Spirit may withdraw and God may be angry; and there is, or was, a vast knowledge, of infinite importance, which is now lost. What was the cause of this? It came in consequence of slothfulness, or a neglect to appoint a man to occupy a few moments in writing all these decisions. Here let me prophesy. The time will come, when, if you neglect to do this thing, you will fall by the hands of unrighteous men. Were you to be brought before the authorities, and be accused of any crime or misdemeanor, and be as innocent as the angels of God, unless you can prove yourselves to have been somewhere else, your enemies will prevail against you; but if you can bring twelve men to testify that you were in a certain place, at that time, you will escape their hand. Now, if you will be careful to keep minutes of these things, as I have said, it will be one of the most important records ever seen; for all such decisions will ever after remain as items of doctrine and covenants" (*History of the Church*, 2:198-99). Revelations of the Restoration, 370-72)

D&C 48

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 1831. HC 1: 166–167. The Prophet had inquired of the Lord as to the mode of procedure in procuring lands for the settlement of the saints. This was an important matter in view of the migration of members of the Church from the eastern United States, in obedience to the Lord's command that they should assemble in Ohio. See 37: 1–3; 45: 64.

(This revelation is introduced in the Book of Commandments as "A Revelation to the bishop, and the church in Kirtland, Ohio, March, 1831." It came in response to the Prophet's inquiry as to where those coming from the east should settle and how they should obtain the necessary lands (see Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:166). The revelation is interesting for both what it does and does not reveal. All are anxious to know where the city of Zion will be built. The Lord will not be rushed in answering. His response is confined to the immediate moment. Those arriving from upstate New York are instructed to purchase lands in eastern Ohio "as seemeth them good." RR, 373)

1–3, The saints in Ohio are to share their lands with their brethren; 4–6, The saints are to purchase lands, build a city, and follow the counsel of their presiding officers.

1 IT is necessary that ye should remain for the present time in your places of abode, as it shall be suitable to your circumstances.

2 And inasmuch as ye have lands, ye shall ^aimpart to the ^beastern brethren; (When the Colesville Saints arrived in Ohio, they settled in the township of Thompson, as Leman Copley had offered to let the Saints occupy his land there; at Thompson they were to be organized under the law of consecration and stewardship (D&C 54). RR, 373)

3 And inasmuch as ye have not lands, let them buy for the present time in those regions round about, as seemeth them good, for it must needs be necessary that they have places to live for the present time.

4 It must needs be necessary that ye ^asave all the money that ye can, and that ye obtain all that ye can in righteousness, that in time ye may be enabled to ^bpurchase ^cland for an ^dinheritance, **even the city.** (New

Jerusalem. Ether 13:3-8 had spoken of New Jerusalem, so the Saints were anxious to know of its whereabouts. They would have to wait until July 1831 to know its location.)

5 The ^aplace is not yet to be ^brevealed; but after your brethren come from the east there are to be certain men appointed, and to them it shall be given to know the place, or to them it shall be revealed. (The place of gathering referred to in this revelation was subsequently revealed to be the land of Missouri (D&C 57:1-4). RR, 373)

6 And they shall be appointed to ^apurchase the lands, and to make a commencement to lay the foundation of the city; and then shall ye begin to be gathered with your families, every man according to his ^bfamily, according to his circumstances, and as is appointed to him **by the presidency and the bishop of the church**, according to the laws and commandments which ye have received, and which ye shall hereafter receive. Even so. Amen. (As published in the Book of Commandments, this phrase read, "Bishop and elders of the church." It would be another year before the first presidency was formed (D&C 81; 90). Thus in the Doctrine and Covenants, which was published in August 1835, the Prophet changed this section to reflect that development in the organization of the Church. RR, 373)