

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 27

This section was originally two separate revelations, received one to two months apart. Verses 1-4 were the first revelation which Smith received directly from an angel which appeared to him. Verses 5-18 are the second revelation, with the circumstances regarding how and why it was received being unknown. The second revelation was likely appended to the first because of related themes. Verses 5-18 were also expanded significantly between the 1833 versions and 1835 version, which changes persist to this day.

The subjects of both parts of the revelations is the Sacrament. The first part being the statement that physical details of the ordinance are largely irrelevant when compared with the spiritual meaning (v. 1-4).

The second part (v. 5-14) deals with the fulfilment of the prediction of Matt. 26:26-29 (also cp. Mark 14:22-25, Luke: 22:14-20 [especially see JST/IV on Luke 22:16] for the parallel accounts). These passages are connected to the covenant curses placed on Israel in Deut. 32 (see Deut. 32 verses 14 and 32-33 and 38, which are follow-on to Deut. 28:30, 39), and the promise of redemption in Isa. 65 (see Isa. 65:8, 11 and 21). This later passage in Isa. 65 is what Jesus is referring to as a future prophecy to be fulfilled, the source for the IV/JST on Luke 22:16.

In Deut. 32, the Lord comments on how Israel grew idolatrous because they were blessed by the Lord, eating well and drinking wine. The Lord punishes Israel's rebellion with covenant curses, taking away their abundant food and wine, sending them into captivity.

This ties in with the Passover and delivery symbolism, as Israel's rebellion and the Lord's curses result in captivity. When Israel is redeemed from their scattered state (per Isa. 65) and they graft in the Gentiles (v. 15-18, cp. Isa. 49), then all of the Lord's work will be completed. Then He can sit down with all of the great Patriarchs who hold all of the keys and enjoy a festive meal of celebration with restored Israel.

This reframes the context of the Sacrament as a reference to a past event and remembrance of that past even, and presents is also as a prefiguring of a future victorious celebration when the Lord has completed all of the work He has planned in redeeming Israel. It also calls on the relatively small number of early Saints present among the ecclesia to steel themselves

(v. 15-18) against the present adversity and focus on the Lord's long-term eternal goals.

1 LISTEN to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful. 2 For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory--remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins. 3 Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine neither strong drink of your enemies; 4 Wherefore, you shall partake of none except it is made new among you; yea, in this my Father's kingdom which shall be built up on the earth.

v1-4 The Lord (v. 1), by one of His angels, tells Smith the spiritual symbolism of the sacrament is the most important thing, not the physical aspects of the ritual (v. 2). But, while the physical aspects are discounted, the Lord admonishes Smith to exercise wisdom and not to indiscriminate in what they do use (v. 3). Rather, the Church should use new wine, or unfermented grape juice, which they have made themselves (v. 4).

v1 A standard authority statement, cp. D&C 1:1-3, 6:2.

v2 Exactly what is eaten and drunk does not matter so long as people recognize and acknowledge the implied symbolism, which in the second half of the verse is presented as:

eat → bread → body → resurrection → physical salvation
drink → wine → blood → sins forgiven → spiritual salvation

v3 The standard interpretation on this verse is the Lord is implicitly warning Smith against being poisoned by his enemies, cp. Alma 55:30-31. However, an alternate reading would be v. 3 placing constraints on the statement of v. 2. Verse 2 says "the physical aspect doesn't matter", but v. 3 then places a constraint on this statement by saying "while it doesn't matter, that doesn't mean you can be careless about it". In v. 2 the Lord is emphasizing the spiritual over the physical, then v. 3 informs us that even though this is the case that doesn't mean we shouldn't use wisdom in dealing with the physical aspects.

5 Behold, this is wisdom in me; wherefore, marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel, to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim;

6 And also with Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the

restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days;

7 And also John the son of Zacharias, which Zacharias he (Elias) visited and gave promise that he should have a son, and his name should be John, and he should be filled with the spirit of Elias; 8 Which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto the first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained even as Aaron;

9 And also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse;

10 And also with Joseph and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, your fathers, by whom the promises remain;

11 And also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days;

12 And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them; 13 Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;

14 And also with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world.

v5-14 Following themes presented in the Gospels at the institution of the sacrament (cf. Matt. 26:26-29), the Lord sermonizes on the next time He will partake of the sacrament with His people. This will be when all keys from all dispensations are committed to Him at the advent of the Millennium. All key holders throughout all dispensations will defer to Him and be with Him in His glory (v. 5-13) along with all of those who are redeemed by Him (v. 14). The Lord will have completed all things He had planned, and will therefore celebrate with a feast with his friends.

The various key holders are presented in a mostly reverse chronological order as it works through the more recent to the less recent, with the exceptions of Elias (v. 6) and Peter, James and John (v. 12-13). But, the primary purpose of these verses is to emphasize the Lord sending people to grant keys as fulfilment of covenant promises made:

Moroni...I have sent unto you...keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim

Elias...I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets

John...I have sent unto you...to ordain you unto the first priesthood

Elijah...I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts [between fathers and sons]

Joseph
Jacob
Isaac
Abraham
Adam

Peter, James and John...I have sent unto you...ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles...keys of your ministry...keys of my kingdom

Note the list in v. 10-11 of the sons and fathers falls immediately after the statement in v. 9 of Elijah having the keys of turning hearts between fathers and sons, and the list in v. 10-11 also lacks the formula of the surrounding text of name...I have sent/committed...keys/priesthood of the surrounding text. It is likely the list of v. 10-11 is connected v. 9, in that it is a list of those fathers and sons through whom the covenants were made and propagated to their children, down to the present day.

Also note the keys associated with Elias and Elijah had not yet been disbursed to the Church yet, and would not be until the events of the Kirtland Temple dedication, cf. D&C 110.

v5 "drink of the fruit of the vine", aside from the obvious sacramental theme associated with wine, the Lord is making reference to the statements in Matt. 26:24, Mark 14:25 and Luke: 22:18. Additional symbolism can be derived from cross reference with Deut. 32 and Isa. 65, with the passages in Isa. 65 being the prediction of the abundance of wine in the restored Israel.

v6 "Elias", it is unclear who this person is. Some are obviously called in the "spirit of Elijah/Elias" as was John Baptist, but there apparently is a specific person named Elias, probably from the Abrahamic dispensation (although not necessarily, he may hold the keys to the Patriarchal Priesthood, which is also called the Abrahamic Priesthood) that we don't know much about, cf. D&C 110:12. See the Church's Bible Dictionary entry for "Elias" for additional discussion on this confusing person and calling.

15 Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day, having done all, that ye may be able to stand. 16 Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you; 17 Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; 18 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me, and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also. Amen.

v15-18 These verses paraphrases Eph. 6:11-17 omitting some material and adding some new material. The pugilistic imagery is used intentionally to show the saints are in a struggle against the adversary for their spiritual lives, cf. Eph. 6:12. But, early in the Church's history they are suffering considerable harassment and persecution from their neighbors as well.

Closing the section off with a passage that has to be interpreted figuratively and spiritually, as the Lord surely doesn't intend us to gird on literal armor, emphasizes the spiritual aspects of the sacrament. He expects us to literally administer and eat the sacrament, but the spiritual symbolic meaning is what He wants to think about when we do it. Taking the sacrament and recognizing its symbolic meaning is one of the ways we put on this spiritual armor of God.

This section of text, as well as that of Eph. 6:11-17, are derived from passages from Isaiah:

Loins girt about with truth	Isa. 11:5
Breastplate of righteousness	Isa. 59:17
Feet shod...gospel of peace	Isa. 52:7
Shield of faith(implicit via Ps. 91:4)	Isa. 49:2
Helmet of salvation	Isa. 59:17
Sword of the Spirit	Isa. 49:2

The symbolism is the Lord is lending His armor to his disciples for their protection.

v15 "that ye may be able to stand", having reference to standing in holy places and not be moved by the destruction visited upon the wicked on the Day of the Lord, cp. D&C 45:32, D&C 87:8, D&C 101:22. It may also have reference to being at the Judgement

Bar if using a figurative spiritual interpretation, cf. 3 Ne.
27:20, D&C 128:24.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 27

The first excerpt clearly states when the first part of the text was received (i.e., early August), but is ambiguous as to when the second part of the revelation was received (i.e., sometime in September). The second excerpt is a quotation from Knight that indicates the two revelations comprising this section of the D&C were received at different times and at different locations.

This section was first published in The Evening and Morning Star, volume 1, number 10, page 78, dated March, 1833. It was then published in the Book of Commandments, 1833, the official complete release date of which is April 6. It was published in the Kirtland edition Doctrine and Covenants in 1835. It was published in Times and Seasons, volume 4, number 8, pages 117-118, dated March 1, 1843. It was published in the Millennial Star, volume 4, number 10, page 151, dated February, 1844.

Excerpt from History of the Church

Early in the month of August Newel Knight and his wife paid us a visit at my place in Harmony, Pennsylvania; and as neither his wife nor mine had been as yet confirmed, it was proposed that we should confirm them, and partake together of the Sacrament, before he and his wife should leave us. In order to prepare for this I set out to procure some wine for the occasion, but had gone only a short distance when I was met by a heavenly messenger, and received the following revelation, the first four paragraphs of which were written at this time, and the remainder in the September following:

[text of D&C 27 quoted]

In obedience to the above commandment, we prepared some wine of our own making, and held our meeting, consisting only of five, viz., Newel Knight and his wife, myself and my wife, and John Whitmer. We partook together of the Sacrament, after which we confirmed these two sisters into the Church, and spent the evening in a glorious manner. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us, we praised the Lord God, and rejoiced exceedingly. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, pages 106-108)

Excerpt from Journal History of the Church

In the beginning of August 1, in company with my wife, went to make a visit to Brother Joseph Smith, Jun., who then resided

at Harmony, Penn. We found him and his wife well, and in good spirits. We had a happy meeting. It truly gave me joy to again behold his face. As neither Emma, the wife of Joseph Smith, nor my wife had been confirmed, we concluded to attend to that holy ordinance at this time, and also to partake of the sacrament, before we should leave for home. In order to prepare for this, brother Joseph set out to procure some wine for the occasion, but he had gone only a short distance, when he was met by a heavenly messenger, and received the first four verses of the revelation given on page 138, of the Doctrine and Covenants (new edition), the remainder being given in the September following at, Fayette, New York.

In obedience to this revelation we prepared some wine of our own make, and held our meeting, consisting of only five persons, namely, Joseph Smith and wife, John Whitmer, and myself and wife. We partook of the sacrament, after which we confirmed the two sisters into the Church, and spent the evening in a glorious manner. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us. We praised the God of Israel and rejoiced exceedingly. (Newell Knight, "Newel Knight's Journal," [Classic Experiences and Adventures](#), Bookcraft, 1969, chapter 5, paragraphs 1-2)

Comparison of Original 1833 Text with Emended 1835 Version

We know from both Joseph Smith and Newell Knight that v. 1-5 of the 1833 version (which is v. 1-4 of the 1835 and subsequent versions) was received separate from the subsequent text, and are therefore two revelations placed together because of related themes. No change occurs in the text of the first revelation between the 1833 Book of Commandments and 1835 Doctrine & Covenants revelations.

The Book of Commandments version is the same as Evening and Morning Star version, which was published one month earlier.

Substantial changes in content occur in the second portion of text, which is the second revelation. The changes consist of significant expansions in the 1835 version of themes only briefly introduced in the 1833 version. Theologically, the 1833 and 1835 editions are the same, with the 1835 version making explicit what is implied in the 1833 version.

The verse numbering in the 1835 D&C below is that of the contemporary 1981 LDS edition for ease of use. The textual emendations occurred in the 1835 Kirtland edition of the Doctrine & Covenants.

1833 Book of Commandments

1 Listen to the voice
of Jesus Christ,
your Lord,
your God and
your Redeemer,
whose word is
quick and powerful.
2 For behold I say unto you,
that it mattereth not
what ye shall eat, or
what ye shall drink,
when ye partake
of the sacrament,
if it so be that ye do it
with an eye
single to my glory;
3 Remembering unto the Father
my body which was laid down
for you, and

1835 Doctrine & Covenants

1 LISTEN to the voice
of Jesus Christ,
your Lord,
your God, and
your Redeemer,
whose word is
quick and powerful.
2 For, behold, I say unto you,
that it mattereth not
what ye shall eat or
what ye shall drink
when ye partake
of the sacrament,
if it so be that ye do it
with an eye
single to my glory--
remembering unto the Father
my body which was laid down
for you, and

my blood which was shed
for the remission of your
sins:

4 Wherefore a commandment
I give unto you,
that you shall not
purchase wine,
neither strong drink
of your enemies:

5 Wherefore you shall
partake of none,
except it is made new
among you,
yea, in this
my Father's kingdom
which shall be built up
on the earth.

6 Behold this is wisdom in me,
wherefore marvel not,
for the hour cometh
that I will drink of
the fruit of the vine
with you, on the earth, and

my blood which was shed
for the remission of your
sins.

3 Wherefore, a commandment
I give unto you,
that you shall not
purchase wine
neither strong drink
of your enemies;

4 Wherefore, you shall
partake of none
except it is made new
among you;
yea, in this
my Father's kingdom
which shall be built up
on the earth.

5 Behold, this is wisdom in
me; wherefore, marvel not,
for the hour cometh
that I will drink of
the fruit of the vine
with you on the earth, and
with Moroni,

whom I have sent unto you
to reveal the Book of Mormon,
containing the fulness
of my everlasting gospel,
to whom I have committed
the keys of the record
of the stick of Ephraim;
6 And also with Elias,
to whom I have committed
the keys of bringing to pass
the restoration of all things
spoken by the mouth
of all the holy prophets
since the world began,
concerning the last days;
7 And also John
the son of Zacharias,
which Zacharias
he (Elias) visited and
gave promise
that he should have a son, and

his name should be John, and
he should be filled
with the spirit of Elias;
8 Which John I have sent
unto you, my servants,
Joseph Smith, Jun., and
Oliver Cowdery,
to ordain you
unto the first priesthood
which you have received,
that you might be called and
ordained even as Aaron;
9 And also Elijah,
unto whom I have committed
the keys of the power
of turning the hearts of
the fathers to the children,
and the hearts of the children
to the fathers,
that the whole earth
may not be smitten
with a curse;
10 And also with Joseph and
Jacob, and
Isaac, and
Abraham,
your fathers,
by whom the promises remain;
11 And also with Michael, or
Adam, the father of all,
the prince of all,
the ancient of days;
12 And also with
Peter, and James, and John,
whom I have sent unto you,
by whom I have ordained you
and confirmed you to be
apostles, and especial
witnesses
of my name, and
bear the keys of your ministry
and of the same things
which I revealed unto them;
13 Unto whom I have committed
the keys of my kingdom, and

with all those
whom my Father
hath given me
out of the world:
7 Wherefore
lift up your hearts and
rejoice, and gird up your
loins and

a dispensation of
the gospel for the last times;
and for the fulness of times,
in the which I will
gather together in one
all things,
both which are in heaven, and
which are on earth;

14 And also
with all those
whom my Father
hath given me
out of the world.

15 Wherefore,
lift up your hearts and
rejoice, and gird up your
loins, and
take upon you my whole armor,
that ye may be able to
withstand the evil day,
having done all,
that ye may be able to stand.

16 Stand, therefore,
having your loins
girt about with truth,
having on the breastplate
of righteousness, and
your feet shod
with the preparation of
the gospel of peace,
which I have sent mine angels
to commit unto you;

17 Taking the shield
of faith
wherewith ye shall be able
to quench all the fiery darts
of the wicked;

18 And take the helmet
of salvation, and
the sword of
my Spirit,
which I will pour out upon
you, and my word
which I reveal unto you, and
be agreed

be faithful until I come:--

even so. Amen.

as touching all things
whatsoever ye ask of me, and
be faithful until I come,
and ye shall be caught up,
that where I am
ye shall be also.
Amen.

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