

## Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 63

This and the following section form a complimentary pair of revelations both in thesis and rhetorical structure. D&C 63 represents the judgmental aspect of the Lord, while D&C 64 represents the merciful aspect of the Lord. In this section, the Lord makes it clear He is not happy about the current situation within the ecclesia (see the historical material below for why). In D&C 64 however, we have a lengthy discussion on the doctrine of forgiveness. A similar theme of justice versus mercy runs through the chapters of Isaiah 42-44, and some material from Isaiah 48 is paraphrased as well.

The text for this section can be arranged as follows:

- Opening Authority Statement (v. 1-6)
- Warning to hypocrites in the ecclesia, the Thesis (v. 7-21)
  - On signs and faith (v. 7-12)
  - On adultery (v. 13-16)
  - On those who qualify for the First Resurrection (v. 17-21)
- Segue (v. 22-23)
- The Lord's will for the ecclesia, the Praxis (v. 24-58)
  - Introduction (v. 24)
  - Obtaining lands for Zion (v. 25-31)
  - Lift up voice of warning among the wicked (v. 32-37)
  - Various particulars (v. 38-58)
    - Parenthesis on "these things" from v. 46 (v. 47-54)
- Conclusion (v. 59-66)

1 Hearken, O ye people, and open your hearts and give ear from afar; and listen, you that call yourselves the people of the Lord, and hear the word of the Lord and his will concerning you. 2 Yea, verily, I say, hear the word of him whose anger is kindled against the wicked and rebellious; 3 Who willeth to take even them whom he will take, and preserveth in life them whom he will preserve; 4 Who buildeth up at his own will and pleasure; and destroyeth when he pleases, and is able to cast the soul down to hell. 5 Behold, I, the Lord, utter my voice, and it shall be obeyed. 6 Wherefore, verily I say, let the wicked take heed, and let the rebellious fear and tremble; and let the unbelieving hold their lips, for the day of wrath shall come upon them as a whirlwind, and all flesh shall know that I am God.

v1-6 A rather harsh set of accusations against the people in the Church. Similar reprimands have come before (cp. D&C 41:1, D&C 45:1-2, D&C 50:4-9, D&C 56:1-4), but this one goes well beyond its predecessors.

v1 This verse is presented as a summons to the Church to hear the allegations against them.

"open your hearts and give ear", implies they are hard hearted and have stopped their ears, indicative of personal apostasy, cp. Isa. 6:9-10.

"You that call yourselves the people of the Lord", derivative of Isa. 48:1-2. This polemic implies that aside from the name they have applied to themselves, there is little else identifying them as the Lord's people, cp. Luke 4:64.

v3-4 Note the positive statement despite the surrounding negative text:

preserveth in life them whom he will preserve;  
Who buildeth up at his own will and pleasure;

v5 "my voice...it shall be obeyed", this seems like a curious insertion as the context is people who refuse to obey His voice. What is intended here is more the effect of the voice than what the voice says, cp. Isa. 55:10-11, D&C 58:30-33, D&C 64:31. It is not that when the Lord utters His voice men will always do His will, it is that the effects thereof always play out to meet the Lord's ends.

v6 "the day of wrath shall come as a whirlwind", compare D&C 112:24-26 and note it is aimed primarily at those within the Church.

7 And he that seeketh signs shall see signs, but not unto salvation. 8 Verily, I say unto you, there are those among you who seek signs, and there have been such even from the beginning; 9 But, behold, faith cometh not by signs, but signs follow those that believe. 10 Yea, signs come by faith, not by the will of men, nor as they please, but by the will of God. 11 Yea, signs come by faith, unto mighty works, for without faith no man pleaseth God; and with whom God is angry he is not well pleased; wherefore, unto such he showeth no signs, only in wrath unto their condemnation. 12 Wherefore, I, the Lord, am not pleased with those among you who have sought after signs and wonders for faith, and not for the good of men unto my glory.

v7-12 This section addresses those who have attached themselves to the Church so they might see signs. There have always been sign seekers (v. 8), and they will see signs, but that will not cause them to change (v. 7), because signs do not promote faith (v. 9). Signs come because people's faith leads them to great works, but they still comes at the Lord's discretion (v. 10-11c). The Lord is angered at those without faith, the signs

they see will ultimately result in condemning them (v. 11). Thus, the Lord is angry at those among the church who seek signs, because they are not for the benefit of those who need miracles or to honor the Lord (v. 12).

During his mortal ministry, Jesus was hostile towards those who followed him just to see the miracles. The Gospel of John is particularly hard on sign seekers, cp. John 6:14-15.

v8 "even from the beginning", probably referring to the nature of mankind throughout all of its existence as opposed to the making reference to the beginning of the latter-day church.

13 Nevertheless, I give commandments, and many have turned away from my commandments and have not kept them. 14 There were among you adulterers and adulteresses; some of whom have turned away from you, and others remain with you that hereafter shall be revealed. 15 Let such beware and repent speedily, lest judgment shall come upon them as a snare, and their folly shall be made manifest, and their works shall follow them in the eyes of the people. 16 And verily I say unto you, as I have said before, he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear.

v13-16 In "the law of the Church" in D&C 42:22-25, the sin of adultery receives particular emphasis in a recounting of the Decalogue. This is certainly what v. 13 and 16 are referring to in specific, and generally all of the other scriptural prohibitions that preceded it. One must also recall that the Semitic view of "adultery" contained both the literal act as well as the figurative acts. Figurative adultery is generally equated with idol worship as the people were being unfaithful to their God with other gods (cf. Isa. 50:1, Hosea 4). Thus, the adultery here can include spiritual unfaithfulness to the Lord as well as physical marital infidelity, though the latter appears to be the primary point.

17 Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. 18 Verily I say, that they shall not have part in the first resurrection. 19 And now behold, I, the Lord, say unto you that ye are not justified, because these things are among you. 20 Nevertheless, he that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall come; 21 When the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fulness ye have not yet received.

v17-21 Who will (v. 20) and who will not (v. 17-19) participate in the First Resurrection (v. 21).

v17 "Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful [i.e., those who fear man more than the Lord, cp. D&C 60:2], and the unbelieving [i.e., faithless], and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie [see below], and the whoremonger [i.e., fornicators and/or male prostitutes per KJV on Eph. 5:5, Rev. 22:15], and the sorcerer [i.e., false prophet per KJV Acts 13:6, or a diviner per KJV Rev. 22:15], shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death [i.e., damnation]." This verse is a paraphrase of Rev. 22:15.

"whosoever loveth and maketh a lie", this statement is based on KJV Rev. 22:15. The Greek term there for "lie" is "pseudos", meaning a falsehood, or perverse, impious, or deceitful precepts. "Pseudos" is used as a prefix in the NT for "pseudoprophetes" (false prophet), "pseudomartur" (false witness), "pseudomai" (to speak a deliberate falsehood), "pseudologos" (false teaching), "pseudodidaskalos" (false teacher), "pseudapostolos" (false apostle). It would appear that the more general usage of the term "pseudos" would act as a catch-all for any type of deliberately deceptive self-promoting behavior. Thus, anyone who "loveth and maketh a 'pseudos'", can be anyone who would employ or shelter themselves in any kind of deceit for any number of purposes. These are people who love darkness rather than light, cp. John 3:19-21.

22 And now, verily I say unto you, that as I said that I would make known my will unto you, behold I will make it known unto you, not by the way of commandment, for there are many who observe not to keep my commandments. 23 But unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life.

v22-23 A segue to the second half of the section, but note the manner in which the Lord presents it. He states it is not by way of commandments because there are those who will ignore it regardless (cp. D&C 58:26-29), and those who do listen will observe it regardless of this title. The latter group are those who will be led to do the Lord's will by the Spirit (cp. D&C 46:28-30, D&C 50:26-30).

v23 "the mysteries of the kingdom", see Alma 12:9, D&C 42:61,

D&C 84:19, 107:19, also see D&C 76:7, D&C 89:18-19.

24 And now, behold, this is the will of the Lord your God concerning his saints, that they should assemble themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste, lest there should be confusion, which bringeth pestilence.

v24 The introduction to the praxis, or "applied religion", material of v. 25-58. The subjects addressed herein are obviously ones that the people had been having problems observing, in addition to those identified in the earlier text, hence the repetition and restate. The admonitions here differ from those of the preceding text because they pertain to establishing Zion in a corporate sense. That preceding was aimed directly at individual sins, but here all of the points are aimed at general and specific things to be done in the organization of the Church to build Zion which needed additional attention. Verses 25-37 generally apply to the Church, and v. 38-58 are for specific people and situations (but note there are no personal sins addressed, only particular people's stewardships towards the cause Zion).

"pestilence", the literal usage of the word has reference to disease or plague. The figurative has reference to anything that is morally or ethically noxious or offensive. It would seem both usages would be applicable as they were attempting to found a society from scratch in the wilder regions of the country and a massive influx of people in a short time would have created physical, and subsequently spiritual, chaos.

25 Behold, the land of Zion--I, the Lord, hold it in mine own hands; 26 Nevertheless, I, the Lord, render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. 27 Wherefore, I the Lord will that you should purchase the lands, that you may have advantage of the world, that you may have claim on the world, that they may not be stirred up unto anger. 28 For Satan putteth it into their hearts to anger against you, and to the shedding of blood. 29 Wherefore, the land of Zion shall not be obtained but by purchase or by blood, otherwise there is none inheritance for you. 30 And if by purchase, behold you are blessed; 31 And if by blood, as you are forbidden to shed blood, lo, your enemies are upon you, and ye shall be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue, and but few shall stand to receive an inheritance.

v25-31 This section restates and summarizes previously made statements concerning obtaining lands for Zion, cp. D&C 48:4, D&C 58:21, D&C 58:52-53.

32 I, the Lord, am angry with the wicked; I am holding my Spirit from the inhabitants of

the earth. 33 I have sworn in my wrath, and decreed wars upon the face of the earth, and the wicked shall slay the wicked, and fear shall come upon every man; 34 And the saints also shall hardly escape; nevertheless, I, the Lord, am with them, and will come down in heaven from the presence of my Father and consume the wicked with unquenchable fire. 35 And behold, this is not yet, but by and by. 36 Wherefore, seeing that I, the Lord, have decreed all these things upon the face of the earth, I will that my saints should be assembled upon the land of Zion; 37 And that every man should take righteousness in his hands and faithfulness upon his loins, and lift a warning voice unto the inhabitants of the earth; and declare both by word and by flight that desolation shall come upon the wicked.

v32-37 These verses restate and summarizes comments previously made on the necessity of preaching the gospel, cp. D&C 29:4-8, D&C 42:4-9. The lack of zeal a number of the missionaries exhibited was certainly the cause of this, see the historical material for sections 59-62.

v35 This verse indicates the events described in v. 32-34 are not imminent, but are not all that far off. It further emphasizes that they are initiators of some long-term works, cp. D&C 58:7, D&C 64:32-33.

38 Wherefore, let my disciples in Kirtland arrange their temporal concerns, who dwell upon this farm. 39 Let my servant Titus Billings, who has the care thereof, dispose of the land, that he may be prepared in the coming spring to take his journey up unto the land of Zion, with those that dwell upon the face thereof, excepting those whom I shall reserve unto myself, that shall not go until I shall command them. 40 And let all the moneys which can be spared, it mattereth not unto me whether it be little or much, be sent up unto the land of Zion, unto them whom I have appointed to receive. 41 Behold, I, the Lord, will give unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., power that he shall be enabled to discern by the Spirit those who shall go up unto the land of Zion, and those of my disciples who shall tarry. 42 Let my servant Newel K. Whitney retain his store, or in other words, the store, yet for a little season. 43 Nevertheless, let him impart all the money which he can impart, to be sent up unto the land of Zion. 44 Behold, these things are in his own hands, let him do according to wisdom. 45 Verily I say, let him be ordained as an agent unto the disciples that shall tarry, and let him be ordained unto this power; 46 And now speedily visit the churches, expounding these things unto them, with my servant Oliver Cowdery. Behold, this is my will, obtaining moneys even as I have directed.

47 He that is faithful and endureth shall overcome the world. 48 He that sendeth up treasures unto the land of Zion shall receive an inheritance in this world, and his works shall follow him, and also a reward in the world to come. 49 Yea, and blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, when the Lord shall come, and old things shall pass away, and all things become new, they shall rise from the dead and shall not die after, and shall receive an inheritance before the Lord, in his holy city. 50 And he that liveth when the Lord shall come, and hath kept the faith, blessed is he; nevertheless, it is appointed to him to die at the age of man. 51 Wherefore, children shall grow up until they become old; old men shall die; but they shall not

sleep in the dust, but they shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. 52 Wherefore, for this cause preached the apostles unto the world the resurrection of the dead. 53 These things are the things that ye must look for; and, speaking after the manner of the Lord, they are now nigh at hand, and in a time to come, even in the day of the coming of the Son of Man. 54 And until that hour there will be foolish virgins among the wise; and at that hour cometh an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked; and in that day will I send mine angels to pluck out the wicked and cast them into unquenchable fire.

55 And now behold, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, am not pleased with my servant Sidney Rigdon; he exalted himself in his heart, and received not counsel, but grieved the Spirit; 56 Wherefore his writing is not acceptable unto the Lord, and he shall make another; and if the Lord receive it not, behold he standeth no longer in the office to which I have appointed him. 57 And again, verily I say unto you, those who desire in their hearts, in meekness, to warn sinners to repentance, let them be ordained unto this power. 58 For this is a day of warning, and not a day of many words. For I, the Lord, am not to be mocked in the last days.

v38-58 Various particulars.

v47-54 This parenthesis can be taken as "these things" which Knight and Cowdery are to expound unto the churches. The text here is largely an expansion on v. 20-21, and conjures up some very NT themes in recounting the preaching of apostles and some prominent NT parables. The intent in citing the ancient apostles is probably to encourage these modern apostles to be like the ancient ones in their efforts.

The text in this parenthesis may even be something of a preview of "the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fullness [we] have not yet received" (v. 21).

v48 Compare D&C 64:23.

v49 Compare D&C 42:46-47.

v57-58 Compare D&C 36:4-7.

59 Behold, I am from above, and my power lieth beneath. I am over all, and in all, and through all, and search all things, and the day cometh that all things shall be subject unto me. 60 Behold, I am Alpha and Omega, even Jesus Christ. 61 Wherefore, let all men beware how they take my name in their lips-- 62 For behold, verily I say, that many there be who are under this condemnation, who use the name of the Lord, and use it in vain, having not authority. 63 Wherefore, let the church repent of their sins, and I, the Lord, will own them; otherwise they shall be cut off. 64 Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit; and in this there is no condemnation, and ye receive the

Spirit through prayer; wherefore, without this there remaineth condemnation. 65 Let my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon, seek them a home, as they are taught through prayer by the Spirit. 66 These things remain to overcome through patience, that such may receive a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, otherwise, a greater condemnation. Amen.

v59-66 These verses conclude the section with a series of authority statements (v. 59-60) and admonitions (v. 61-64).

v61-62 Addressed are the issues of hypocrisy in covenant making (v. 61, cp. v. 1-23) and of false prophecy (v. 62, cp. D&C 46:7-8, D&C 50:2, D&C 64:39).

v63 Just because you are in the Church doesn't mean the Lord will claim you His, cp. D&C 1:30-31, also cp. Matt. 7:21-23.

v64 Those who speak, presumably to govern the Church, are to do so with care and by inspiration. Failure to speak with care and inspiration results in condemnation.

v65 This is a curious inclusion that seems more suitable in with the particulars of v. 38-58. However, the rhetorical connection of receiving by the Spirit through prayer connects this to v. 64, and it may therefore be an example to Smith and Cowdery of the kinds of things which should be approached soberly per the v. 64 admonition.

v66 A restate of the substance of v. 19-20 to close off the section. That the Lord is telling them to be patient in their overcoming these difficulties implies He is already anticipating the need for His own patience with them.



## **Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 63**

Joseph and the others went south to Missouri while Hyrum, his mother Lucy Mack and others as well also left Kirtland and traveled to Detroit. The result was there was no seasoned leadership present at Kirtland for about a month, and people went off track. Joseph returned, and had to deal with the problems.

With respect to the historical material below, first is Smith's comments, which were written some years after the revelation and do little to shed light on the immediate context. Second is John Whitmer's comments, which shed greater light on the immediate situation Smith found himself in when returning to Kirtland. The third is a historical commentary that sheds additional light on the situation, and the fourth excerpt is from the minutes kept by the early church of their proceedings, which is quoted to support the historical commentary. The fifth and final excerpt is a quote from Lucy Mack Smith's history.

This revelation was first published in the Evening and Morning Star, volume 1, number 9, pages 70-71, dated February, 1833. It was published in the Book of Commandments, pages 150-157, in 1833. It was published in the Kirtland edition Doctrine and Covenants, pages 141-145, in 1835. It was published in Times and Seasons, volume 5, number 6, pages 465-467, dated March 15, 1844. It was published in the Millennial Star, volume 5, number 10, 147-149, dated March, 1845.

### **Excerpt from History of the Church**

In these infant days of the Church, there was a great anxiety to obtain the word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation; and as the land of Zion was now the most important temporal object in view, I enquired of the Lord for further information upon the gathering of the Saints, and the purchase of the land, and other matters, and received the following:

[text of D&C 63 quoted]

### **Excerpt from Book of John Whitmer**

There was much trouble and unbelief among those who call themselves disciples of Christ: some apostatized, and became enemies to the cause of God, and persecuted the Saints.

Now after the elders that were commanded to go to Missouri had arrived, they held a conference upon that land according to revelation given in a preceding commandment. And thus they rejoiced together upon the land of Zion. And offered their sacraments and oblations unto the Lord, for his mercy and goodness which endureth for ever.

When they had held their sacrament meetings, and the laying of the foundation of the City, and cornerstone of the temple, the Lord gave commandments to return.

I here give a copy of the proceedings of the laying of the first logs of the city of Zion. As written by Oliver Cowdery:

"After many struggles and afflictions, being persecuted by our enemies, we received intelligence by letter from our brethren; who were at the east. That Brother Joseph and Sidney, and many other elders, were commanded to take their journey to this land, the land of Missouri. Which was promised unto us should be the land of the inheritance of the Saints, and the place of the gathering in these last days. Which intelligence cheered our hearts, and caused us to rejoice exceedingly. And by the special protection of the Lord, Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., and Sidney Rigdon, in company with eight other elders, with the Church from Colesville, New York, consisting of about sixty souls, arrived in the month of July and by revelation the place was made known where the temple shall stand, and the city should commence. And by commandment twelve of us assembled ourselves together, viz., Elder Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Newel Knight, William W. Phelps, and Ezra Booth who denied the faith.

"On the 2nd day of August 1831, Brother Sidney Rigdon stood up and asked saying: Do you receive this land for the land of your inheritance with thankful hearts from the Lord? answer from all, we do. Do you pledge yourselves to keep the laws of God on this land, which you never have kept in your own lands? we do. Do you pledge yourselves to see that others of your brethren who shall come hither do keep the laws of God? we do. After prayer he arose and said, I now pronounce this land consecrated and dedicated to the Lord for a possession and inheritance for the Saints (in the name of Jesus Christ having authority from him.)

And for all the faithful servants of the Lord to the remotest ages of time. Amen. "The day following, eight elders, viz., Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Frederick G. Williams, Wm. W. Phelps, Martin Harris, and Joseph Coe, assembled together where the Temple is to be erected. Sidney Rigdon dedicated the ground where the city is to stand: and Joseph Smith, Jr., laid a stone at the northeast corner of the contemplated temple in the name of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth. After all present had rendered thanks to the great ruler of the universe, Sidney Rigdon pronounced this spot of ground wholly dedicated unto the Lord forever: Amen."

Some of the elders who traveled to the land of Missouri and preached by the way, tarried here in this land, among whom is the Bishop E. [Edward] Partridge, Isaac Morley and John Corrill. Some were sick on their way to the land, but all were restored to health. Among those who were sick were John Murdock, Parley P. Pratt and Thomas B. Marsh--They all tarried until after they attended a conference in this land. They have since all gone to preach the gospel and call sinners to repentance.

There were some Churches built by the way as they journeyed to this land (Missouri) and the people were warned of the danger they were in, if they did not repent.

And now when the elders had returned to their homes in Ohio, the churches needed much exhortation in the absence of the elders many apostatized: but many have returned again to the fold from whence they had strayed--And many mighty miracles were wrought by the elders--one in particular which I shall here notice--which was wrought by elders Emer Harris, Joseph Brackenberry and Wheeler Baldwin. Is an infirmity in an old lady who had been helpless for the space of eight years confined to her bed. She did not belong to this church, but sent her request to the elders--who immediately attended to her call, and after their arrival prayed for her, and laid their hands on her, and she was immediately made whole and magnified and praised God, and is now enjoying perfect health.

And thus the churches again prospered and the work of the Lord spread.

Shortly after Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon returned Sidney wrote a description and an epistle according to commandment. And Oliver Cowdery and Newel K. Whitney--were commanded to go and visit the Churches speedily--

as you will see by reading the revelation given August thirty at Kirtland--The following is a copy of the epistle written by [Sidney] Rigdon's own hand:

"I, Sidney, a servant of Jesus Christ by the will of God the Father and through the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ unto the Saints who are scattered abroad in the last days, may grace, mercy and peace, rest upon you from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who is greatly to be feared, among his Saints and to be had in reverence of all them who obey him.

"Beloved Brethren,--

"It has pleased God even the Father to make known unto us in these last days, the good pleasure of his will concerning his Saints; and to make known unto us, the things which he has decreed upon the nations even wasting and destruction. Until they are utterly destroyed, and the earth made desolate by reason of the wickedness of its inhabitants according as he has made known in times past by the prophets and apostles, that such calamities should befall the inhabitants of the earth in the last days, unless they should repent and turn to the living God. And as the time is now near at hand, for the accomplishment of his purposes and the fulfillment of his prophecies, which have been spoken by all the holy prophets ever since the world began, he has sent and signified, unto us by the mouths of his holy prophets, that he has raised up in these last days--the speedy accomplishment of his purposes which shall be accomplished, on the heads of the rebellious of this generation--among whom he has been pleased in much mercy and goodness to send forth the fullness of his gospel in order that they might repent and turn to the living God, and be made partakers of his Holy Spirit. But by reason of their wickedness and rebellion against him, and wicked and unbelieving hearts the Lord withdrew his spirit from them, and gives them up to work all uncleanness with greediness, and to bring swift destruction on themselves--and through their wickedness to hasten the day of calamity, that they may be left without excuse in the day of vengeance.

"But it has pleased our Heavenly Father to make known some better things, concerning his Saints, and those who serve him in fear and rejoice in meekness before him, even things which pertain to life everlasting, for godliness has the promise of the life, that now is, and that which is to come; Even so it has pleased our Heavenly Father to make provisions for his Saints in

these last days of tribulation that they through faith and patience, and by continuing in well-doing may preserve their lives; and attain unto rest and endless felicity--but by no other means, than that of a strict observance of his commandments and teachings in all things as there is and can be no ruler or lawgiver in the kingdom of God save it be God our Savior himself--and before him he requires that all his saints and those who have named the name of Jesus, should be careful to depart from iniquity--and serve him with fear, rejoicing and trembling, least he be angry and they perish from their way.

"According to the prediction of the ancient prophets that the Lord would send his messengers in the last days, and gather his elect (which is the elect according to the covenant, viz., those who like Abraham are faithful to God and the word of his grace) from the four winds even from one end of the earth to the other as testified of by the Savior himself--so in these last days, he has commenced to gather together, into a place provided before of God and had in reserve in days of old being kept by the power and providence of God, for this purpose and which he now holds in his own hands, that they through faith, and patience may inherit the promises--a land which God by his own commandment has consecrated to himself where he has said that his laws shall be kept, and where his saints can dwell in safety, through their perseverance in well-doing, and their unfeigned repentance of all their sins, our Heavenly Father has provided this land himself because it was the one which was the best adapted for his children, where Jew and Gentile might dwell together: for God has the same respect to all those who call upon him in truth and righteousness whether they be Jew and Gentile; for there is no respect of person with him.

"This land being situated in the center of the continent on which we dwell with an exceeding fertile soil and ready cleared for the hand of the cultivator bespeaks the goodness of our God, in providing so goodly a heritage, and its climate suited for persons from every quarter of this continent, either East, West, North and South. Yea I think I may say, for all constitutions from any portion the world, and its productions nearly all varieties of both grain and vegetables which are common in this country, together with all means, clothing: in addition to this it abounds with fountains of pure water, the soil climate at surface are all adapted, to health indeed I may say that the whole properties of the country invite the Saints to come, and partake of their blessings, but what more need I say about a

country which our Heavenly Father holds in his hands, for if it were unhealthy he could make it healthy and if barren he could make it fruitful. Such is the land which the Lord has provided for us, in the last days for an inheritance, and truly it is a goodly land, and none other as well suited for all the Saints as this and all those who have faith and confidence in God who has ever seen this land will bear the same testimony. In order that you may understand the will of God respecting this land and the way and means of possessing it, I can only refer you to commandments which the Lord has delivered by the mouth of his prophets which will be read, to you, by our brethren Oliver Cowdery and Newel K. Whitney whom the Lord has appointed, to visit the Churches and obtain means for purchasing this our inheritance that we may escape in the day of tribulation which is coming on the earth. I conclude by exhorting you to hear the voice of the Lord your God who is speaking to you in much mercy and who is sending forth, his word and his revelation in these last days, in order that we may escape impending vengeance; and the judgments which await this generation, and which will speedily overtake them--brethren pray for me, that I may be counted worthy to obtain an inheritance in the land of Zion and to overcome, the World through faith, and dwell with the sanctified, forever, and ever Amen.

Written at Kirtland, Ohio August 31, 1831.

(John Whitmer, Book of John Whitmer, chapter 9, paragraph 9)

#### **Excerpt from Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith**

Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, from Missouri on 27 August 1831. The following day Oliver was ordained to the High Priesthood. Two days later section 63 was received. Items contained in this revelation as well as in section 64 (received on 11 September 1831) reflect the uneasy spirit of some of the members of the Church in Kirtland at the time. Joseph's absence from Kirtland during the summer of 1831 left the Mormon community without adequate leadership. This, combined with the dissatisfaction of some of the elders who went to Missouri with the Prophet, resulted in the apostasy of a number of the Saints. Although the dissension appears not to have been widespread, by October 1831 it was being referred to as "the falling away" at Kirtland. The Prophet's preface to this revelation, written several years

later, did not comment on the dissension, but focused on the high interest in gathering to Missouri. (Lyndon W. Cook, Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith)

**Excerpt from Far West Record**

August 28, 1831. [footnote 14]

At a Church meeting held in Kirtland, Ohio, Oliver Cowdery was ordained to the High Priesthood by the voice of the Church & command of the Lord under the hand of br. Sidney Rigdon [footnote 15]

John Whitmer

September 1, 1831

Minutes of a Conference held in Kirtland Geauga County Ohio, Sept. 1. 1831.

Elders Present

Joseph Smith jr.

Oliver Cowdery

Sidney Gilbert

Ezra Thayer

Joseph Smith

Joseph Coe  
Emer Harris

William W. Phelps

Frederick G. Williams

Br. Newel K. Whitney was ordained an agent [footnote 16] unto the Disciples in this land under the hand of br. Oliver Cowdery. Upon testimony given satisfactory to this Conference it was voted that our brethren Edison Fuller & William Carter be silenced from holding the office of Elders in this Church. By

request of br. Lorin Page the Conference received his licence as a Priest. [footnote 17]

Oliver Cowdery, Clerk of Con.

September 6, 1831

Minutes of a Conference held in Nelson Portage County Ohio, Sept. 6, 1831. [footnote 18]

Elders present: Joseph Smith, jr. Oliver Cowdery, Christian Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon, Sylvester Parker, (denied the faith)

Upon testimony satisfactory to this conference it was voted that Ezra Booth be silenced from preaching as an Elder in this Church. [footnote 19]

Oliver Cowdery Ck. of Con.

September 12, 1831

Minutes of a Conference held in Kirtland Geauga County, Ohio Sept. 12, 1831. [footnote 20]

Elders Present.

Joseph Smith jr.

Oliver Cowdery

John Whitmer

Sidney Rigdon

Frederick G. Williams  
Ezra Thayer

Sidney Gilbert.

Upon sufficient or satisfactory testimony to this Conference, it was voted that our brethren George Miller, [footnote 21] a Priest in the church of Shalersville, [footnote 22] John Woodard



an Elder in the Church of Orange, and Benjamin Bragg a Priest in the Church of Warrensville, be silenced from ministering in their respective offices.

Oliver Cowdery. Clerk of Conference.

Footnotes:

14. Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, from Missouri on August 27, 1831. (See History of the Church 1:216.)

15. At the June 3, 1831, conference, Joseph, Sidney, and others had been ordained to the high priesthood, and now Oliver, upon his return from the Lamanite mission, was also ordained. Note the use of the minute book to record ordinations.

16. As an agent, Whitney and others transacted business for the Church. While the business was essentially temporal, i.e., related to the mercantile establishment, this was an ecclesiastical position. See Doctrine and Covenants 63:45.

17. Here three brethren were subjected to two forms of discipline not presently used in the Church. Elders Fuller and Carter were "silenced," i.e., not allowed to function as elders, while Lorin Page gave up his license to act as a priest.

18. Nelson Township, organized in 1817, is located in Portage County about five miles east of Hiram. John Whitmer and Lyman Wight built a branch of the Church there in February-March of 1831. It is possible that the brethren held their meetings in the home of Charles Hulet, an early convert and resident of Nelson.

19. See History of the Church 1:215.

20. Joseph Smith moved with his family on this day from Kirtland to Hiram and took up residence in the home of John Johnson. See History of the Church 1:215.

21. This is not the George Miller who figured prominently in Nauvoo and the trek west. See Biographical Appendix.

22. The branches are referred to as the "Church of Shalersville," etc.; this is similar to New Testament usage.

These branches were located in northern Ohio.

(Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844, pages 9-12)

**Excerpt from History of Joseph Smith by His Mother**

We remained two weeks at Mr. Morley's, then removed our family to a farm which had been purchased by Joseph for the Church. On this farm my family were all established with this arrangement, that we were to cultivate the farm, and, from the fruits of our labor, we were to receive our support; but all over and above this was to be used for the comfort of strangers or brethren, who were traveling through the place.

About this time Joseph was requested by Parley P. Pratt and his company, who were then in Missouri, to send some Elders to assist them. He inquired of the Lord, and received the revelation contained in the Times and Seasons, vol. v., p. 416, in which Samuel H. Smith and Reynolds Cahoon were appointed to go together to Missouri. They departed immediately on their mission. Before they had proceeded far, they called at a town, the name of which I do not remember, where they found William E. McLellin, who was employed as a clerk in a store. After making a little inquiry, they found that Mr. McLellin was anxious to hear them preach, and that he was willing to make some exertion to obtain a house and congregation for them, for the name of Latter-day Saint was new to him, and he felt curious to hear what the principles of our faith were. So, by his interposition, they soon had a large congregation seated in a comfortable room. They preached that evening, and the next morning they pursued their journey.

Shortly after they left, Mr. McLellin became very uneasy respecting his new acquaintances; he felt that it was his duty to have gone with them and assisted them on their journey. This feeling worked so strongly in his breast, as to deprive him of rest all the ensuing night; and, before morning, he concluded to set out for Missouri, at the hazard of business, character, and everything else. Accordingly, after settling with his employer, he started in pursuit of Samuel, and Brother Cahoon. He passed them on their way, and got to Missouri, and was baptized before they arrived there.

On their route, Samuel and Brother Cahoon suffered great privations, such as want of rest and food. At the time that they started for Missouri, near fifty others also set out for the same place, all taking different routes. When they arrived, they dedicated the spot for the Temple. About this time, or soon after, a number of revelations were received which the reader will find by following the History of Joseph in the Times and Seasons, vol. v., from p. 448 to 466. A clause in one of these reads as follows: "Let my servant Reynolds Cahoon, and my servant Samuel H. Smith, with whom I am well pleased, be not separated until they return to their homes, and this for a wise purpose in me." p. 465. And here, let me say, that Samuel was never censured by revelation, to my knowledge, for he always performed his missions faithfully, and his work was well approved.

#### CHAPTER XLI.

##### LUCY SMITH VISITS DETROIT.

As Hyrum, my eldest son, was directed to go to Missouri by the way of Detroit, I thought it would be a good opportunity to visit the family of my brother, General Mack. Accordingly, my niece, Almira Mack, Hyrum,--brothers Murdock, Lyman Wight, and Corril and I, set out together for Detroit.

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