

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 104

This section again addresses the Law of Consecration and the United Order, and again admonishes the Saints to observe it. Before leaving for Independence, MO, traveling as Zion's Camp, Smith saw the need to make sure the Church was financially solvent before leaving.

Based upon subject, the text can be arranged as follows:

Intro (v. 1-2)

On breaking covenants (v. 3-10)

A - (v. 3) Unfaithful are nigh unto cursing

B - (v. 4) Some have not kept the commandment

C - (v. 5) Transgressor shall be cursed

A - (v. 6) I will not be mocked

B - (v. 7) Division of just and unjust

C - (v. 8-9) Transgressors cannot escape, they are cut off

D - (v. 10) Unrepentant transgressors given to Satan

On Stewardships (v. 11-18)

E - (v. 11a-b) It is wisdom in me to command you

F - (v. 11c-12) Each to have and account for stewardship

G - (v. 13-14) The earth was prepared for stewardship

E - (v. 15) It is my purpose to provide for my Saints

F - (v. 16a-c) To be done in Mine own way

G - (v. 16d-17) The earth is full with enough to spare

D - (v. 18) Those who impart not will go to hell

Various specific stewardships extended (v. 19-46)

Division of United Order (v. 47-53)

On Stewardship, the treasury, and debt (v. 54-86)

Introduction (v. 54-59)

The treasury (v. 60-77)

Debt (v. 78-86)

1 VERILY I say unto you, my friends, I give unto you counsel, and a commandment, concerning all the properties which belong to the order which I commanded to be organized and established, to be a united order, and an everlasting order for the benefit of my church, and for the salvation of men until I come-- 2 with promise immutable and unchangeable, that inasmuch as those whom I commanded were faithful they should be blessed with a multiplicity of blessings;

v1-2 Introduction to the revelation. The purpose of the United Order is to bless the faithful with many different blessings, cp. D&C 78:17-22, D&C 82:18.

3 But inasmuch as they were not faithful they were nigh unto cursing. 4 Therefore, inasmuch as some of my servants have not kept the commandment, but have broken the covenant through covetousness, and with feigned words, I have cursed them with a very sore and grievous curse. 5 For I, the Lord, have decreed in my heart, that inasmuch as any man belonging to the order shall be found a transgressor, or, in other words, shall break the covenant with which ye are bound, he shall be cursed in his life, and shall be trodden down by whom I will;

6 For I, the Lord, am not to be mocked in these things-- 7 And all this that the innocent among you may not be condemned with the unjust; and that the guilty among you may not escape; because I, the Lord, have promised unto you a crown of glory at my right hand. 8 Therefore, inasmuch as you are found transgressors, you cannot escape my wrath in your lives. 9 Inasmuch as ye are cut off for transgression, ye cannot escape the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption.

10 And I now give unto you power from this very hour, that if any man among you, of the order, is found a transgressor and repenteth not of the evil, that ye shall deliver him over unto the buffetings of Satan; and he shall not have power to bring evil upon you.

v3-10 Covenant breakers are punished. The Lord has no qualms about executing punishment on those who break their covenants. Note in v. 7 the Lord wants to separate the sheep from the goats, cp. v. 53. Verse 9 refers to these people as participating in the Second Resurrection, as they will be tormented in hell during the Millennium until they are redeemed from their agony by being resurrected.

v4 For examples, "covetousness" can be taken to refer to W. W. Phelps, and "feigned words" can be taken as a reference to A. Sydney Gilbert. Both of whom are omitted from the stewardships allotted in v. 19-30. Note specifically the printing is transferred away from Phelps in v. 29, and the mercantile is transferred away from Gilbert in v. 40-41.

11 It is wisdom in me; therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship; 12 That every man may give an account unto me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him. 13 For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. 14 I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

15 And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. 16 But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low. 17 For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

18 Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.

v11-18. Stewardship over earthly possessions is the purpose of the earth. The Lord wants all people to have stewardships so they all may be accountable to Him (v. 11-13). He created the earth for this purpose, so He might provide (meaning provide material things as well as opportunities for stewardship) for them (v. 14-15). However, the Lord wants it done His way such that all persons have enough, as there is more than enough on the earth for everyone (v. 16-17).

v17 "agents unto themselves", the Lord's way, referenced in v. 16, is that people make their own decisions and learn from it.

v18 Those who fail to share the bounty they receive from the Lord will go to hell, cp. v. 10.

19 And now, verily I say unto you, concerning the properties of the order-- 20 Let my servant Sidney Rigdon have appointed unto him the place where he now resides, and the lot of the tannery for his stewardship, for his support while he is laboring in my vineyard, even as I will, when I shall command him. 21 And let all things be done according to the counsel of the order, and united consent or voice of the order, which dwell in the land of Kirtland. 22 And this stewardship and blessing, I, the Lord, confer upon my servant Sidney Rigdon for a blessing upon him, and his seed after him; 23 And I will multiply blessings upon him, inasmuch as he will be humble before me.

24 And again, let my servant Martin Harris have appointed unto him, for his stewardship, the lot of land which my servant John Johnson obtained in exchange for his former inheritance, for him and his seed after him; 25 And inasmuch as he is faithful, I will multiply blessings upon him and his seed after him. 26 And let my servant Martin Harris devote his moneys for the proclaiming of my words, according as my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., shall direct.

27 And again, let my servant Frederick G. Williams have the place upon which he now dwells. 28 And let my servant Oliver

Cowdery have the lot which is set off joining the house, which is to be for the printing office, which is lot number one, and also the lot upon which his father resides. 29 And let my servants Frederick G. Williams and Oliver Cowdery have the printing office and all things that pertain unto it. 30 And this shall be their stewardship which shall be appointed unto them. 31 And inasmuch as they are faithful, behold I will bless, and multiply blessings upon them. 32 And this is the beginning of the stewardship which I have appointed them, for them and their seed after them. 33 And, inasmuch as they are faithful, I will multiply blessings upon them and their seed after them, even a multiplicity of blessings.

34 And again, let my servant John Johnson have the house in which he lives, and the inheritance, all save the ground which has been reserved for the building of my houses, which pertains to that inheritance, and those lots which have been named for my servant Oliver Cowdery. 35 And inasmuch as he is faithful, I will multiply blessings upon him. 36 And it is my will that he should sell the lots that are laid off for the building up of the city of my saints, inasmuch as it shall be made known to him by the voice of the Spirit, and according to the counsel of the order, and by the voice of the order. 37 And this is the beginning of the stewardship which I have appointed unto him, for a blessing unto him and his seed after him. 38 And inasmuch as he is faithful, I will multiply a multiplicity of blessings upon him.

39 And again, let my servant Newel K. Whitney have appointed unto him the houses and lot where he now resides, and the lot and building on which the mercantile establishment stands, and also the lot which is on the corner south of the mercantile establishment, and also the lot on which the ashery is situated. 40 And all this I have appointed unto my servant Newel K. Whitney for his stewardship, for a blessing upon him and his seed after him, for the benefit of the mercantile establishment of my order which I have established for my stake in the land of Kirtland. 41 Yea, verily, this is the stewardship which I have appointed unto my servant N. K. Whitney, even this whole mercantile establishment, him and his agent, and his seed after him. 42 And inasmuch as he is faithful in keeping my commandments, which I have given unto him, I will multiply blessings upon him and his seed after him, even a multiplicity of blessings.

43 And again, let my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., have appointed unto him the lot which is laid off for the building of my house, which is forty rods long and twelve wide, and also the inheritance upon which his father now resides; 44 And this is the beginning of the stewardship which I have appointed unto him, for a blessing upon him, and upon his father. 45 For behold, I have reserved an inheritance for his father, for his support; therefore he shall be reckoned in the house of my

servant Joseph Smith, Jun. 46 And I will multiply blessings upon the house of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., inasmuch as he is faithful, even a multiplicity of blessings.

v19-46 Various specific stewardships dispensed to various leading members of the Church: Sidney Rigdon (v. 19-23), Martin Harris (v. 24-26), Frederick G. Williams and Oliver Cowdery (v. 27-33), John Johnson (v. 34-38), Newel K. Whitney (v. 39-42), and Joseph Smith (v. 43-46).

47 And now, a commandment I give unto you concerning Zion, that you shall no longer be bound as a united order to your brethren of Zion, only on this wise-- 48 After you are organized, you shall be called the United Order of the Stake of Zion, the City of Kirtland. And your brethren, after they are organized, shall be called the United Order of the City of Zion. 49 And they shall be organized in their own names, and in their own name; and they shall do their business in their own name, and in their own names; 50 And you shall do your business in your own name, and in your own names.

51 And this I have commanded to be done for your salvation, and also for their salvation, in consequence of their being driven out and that which is to come. 52 The covenants being broken through transgression, by covetousness and feigned words-- 53 Therefore, you are dissolved as a united order with your brethren, that you are not bound only up to this hour unto them, only on this wise, as I said, by loan as shall be agreed by this order in council, as your circumstances will admit and the voice of the council direct.

v47-53 The single United Order is broken up due to transgression, cp. D&C 105:8, D&C 119. The ideal United Order is a centrally administered one, where regardless of geography the members are united. Note v. 53 indicates the order was dissolved so they would not all suffer the fate of the transgressor, cp. v. 7. See also D&C 101:72-75 where multiple Zions are allowed.

54 And again, a commandment I give unto you concerning your stewardship which I have appointed unto you. 55 Behold, all these properties are mine, or else your faith is vain, and ye are found hypocrites, and the covenants which ye have made unto me are broken; 56 And if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards; otherwise ye are no stewards.

57 But, verily I say unto you, I have appointed unto you to be stewards over mine house, even stewards indeed. 58 And for this purpose I have commanded you to organize yourselves, even to print my words, the fulness of my scriptures, the revelations

which I have given unto you, and which I shall, hereafter, from time to time give unto you-- 59 For the purpose of building up my church and kingdom on the earth, and to prepare my people for the time when I shall dwell with them, which is nigh at hand.

v54-59 The theme from v. 11-18 is repeated and emphasized.

60 And ye shall prepare for yourselves a place for a treasury, and consecrate it unto my name. 61 And ye shall appoint one among you to keep the treasury, and he shall be ordained unto this blessing. 62 And there shall be a seal upon the treasury, and all the sacred things shall be delivered into the treasury; and no man among you shall call it his own, or any part of it, for it shall belong to you all with one accord. 63 And I give it unto you from this very hour; and now see to it, that ye go to and make use of the stewardship which I have appointed unto you, exclusive of the sacred things, for the purpose of printing these sacred things as I have said. 64 And the avails of the sacred things shall be had in the treasury, and a seal shall be upon it; and it shall not be used or taken out of the treasury by any one, neither shall the seal be loosed which shall be placed upon it, only by the voice of the order, or by commandment. 65 And thus shall ye preserve the avails of the sacred things in the treasury, for sacred and holy purposes. 66 And this shall be called the sacred treasury of the Lord; and a seal shall be kept upon it that it may be holy and consecrated unto the Lord.

67 And again, there shall be another treasury prepared, and a treasurer appointed to keep the treasury, and a seal shall be placed upon it; 68 And all moneys that you receive in your stewardships, by improving upon the properties which I have appointed unto you, in houses, or in lands, or in cattle, or in all things save it be the holy and sacred writings, which I have reserved unto myself for holy and sacred purposes, shall be cast into the treasury as fast as you receive moneys, by hundreds, or by fifties, or by twenties, or by tens, or by fives. 69 Or in other words, if any man among you obtain five dollars let him cast them into the treasury; or if he obtain ten, or twenty, or fifty, or an hundred, let him do likewise;

70 And let not any among you say that it is his own; for it shall not be called his, nor any part of it. 71 And there shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the treasury, only by the voice and common consent of the order. 72 And this shall be the voice and common consent of the order--that any man among you say to the treasurer: I have need of this to help me in my stewardship-- 73 If it be five dollars, or if it be ten dollars, or twenty, or fifty, or a hundred, the treasurer shall give unto him the sum which he requires to help him in his stewardship-- 74 Until he be found a transgressor, and it is manifest before the council of the order plainly that he is an

unfaithful and an unwise steward. 75 But so long as he is in full fellowship, and is faithful and wise in his stewardship, this shall be his token unto the treasurer that the treasurer shall not withhold.

76 But in case of transgression, the treasurer shall be subject unto the council and voice of the order. 77 And in case the treasurer is found an unfaithful and an unwise steward, he shall be subject to the council and voice of the order, and shall be removed out of his place, and another shall be appointed in his stead.

v60-77 The Lord institutes the use of Church treasuries and indicates they are to be operated by voluntary donations and withdrawals can only be made by common consent (v. 71). Two treasuries are to be established, one for meeting the Church's expenses (v. 60-66) and one for meeting the member's needs (v. 67-69). The order for paying into and withdrawing from the member's treasury is established (v. 70-75). If the Treasurer does not fulfil their obligations appropriately, they are to be dismissed and replaced (v. 76-77).

Verses 68-69 seem to suggest people were to donate all money they earned from improving their lot, and not just their disposable income, into the treasury. Then they could appeal for a sum according to their needs.

v76-77 The treasurer has no power in and of himself to disburse monies without the consent of the ecclesia. If he is found unworthy he is removed and replaced.

78 And again, verily I say unto you, concerning your debts--behold it is my will that you shall pay all your debts. 79 And it is my will that you shall humble yourselves before me, and obtain this blessing by your diligence and humility and the prayer of faith. 80 And inasmuch as you are diligent and humble, and exercise the prayer of faith, behold, I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, until I shall send means unto you for your deliverance.

81 Therefore write speedily to New York and write according to that which shall be dictated by my Spirit; and I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, that it shall be taken away out of their minds to bring affliction upon you. 82 And inasmuch as ye are humble and faithful and call upon my name, behold, I will give you the victory. 83 I give unto you a promise, that you shall be delivered this once out of your bondage.

84 Inasmuch as you obtain a chance to loan money by hundreds, or thousands, even until you shall loan enough to deliver yourself from bondage, it is your privilege. 85 And

pledge the properties which I have put into your hands, this once, by giving your names by common consent or otherwise, as it shall seem good unto you. 86 I give unto you this privilege, this once; and behold, if you proceed to do the things which I have laid before you, according to my commandments, all these things are mine, and ye are my stewards, and the master will not suffer his house to be broken up. Even so. Amen.

v78-86 Instructions on how to deal with debts they have accrued. The Lord tells them to pay all their debts, and if they humble themselves He will provide a way to deal with those debts (v. 78-80). They should write to those whom they are debt to and the Lord will soften their hearts, if they are faithful to Him (v. 81-83). And, they are to use the land they own as collateral to borrow money (v. 84-86).

v80 This verse speaks volumes when it says the Lord interacts with other people for the benefit of the Saints.

v86 This verse closes off the section with a blunt statement. It implies their failure to keep His commandments is resulting in His house being broken up, and He refuses to allow them to do that.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine and Covenants 104

This section was first published in the Kirtland edition Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, pages 240-245. It was published in Times and Seasons, volume 6, number 19, pages 1061-1063, dated December 15, 1845. It was published in the Millennial Star, volume 15, number 4, pages 51-53, dated January 22, 1853.

Excerpt from History of the Church

Assembled in Council with Elders Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Newel K. Whitney, John Johnson, and Oliver Cowdery; and united in asking the Lord to give Elder Zebedee Coltrin influence over Brother Jacob Myres, to obtain the money which he has gone to borrow for us, or cause him to come to this place and bring it himself. I also received the following:

[text of D&C 104 quoted]

(Joseph Smith, History of the Church, volume 2, page 54)

Excerpt from The Life of Heber C. Kimball

"Gather up the strength of my house, and go up and redeem Zion!" Such was the burden of God's command to Joseph and his brethren in Kirtland. Such was their interpretation of the divine message and call.

Bidding farewell to his family and friends, whom he hardly dared hope he would ever meet again in the flesh, Heber enrolled himself in the little band of heroes who set out from Kirtland early in May, 1834. They were about one hundred strong, well armed and equipped, and were led by the Prophet Joseph in person. Subsequently their number increased to two hundred and five souls. But Heber will tell his own story of that eventful pilgrimage. Says he:

Brother Joseph received a revelation concerning the redemption of Zion, part of which remains to be fulfilled. He sent messengers to the east and to the west and to the north and to the south, to gather up the Elders, and he gathered together as many of the brethren as he conveniently could, with what means they could spare, to go up to Zion, to render all the assistance that we could to our afflicted brethren. We gathered clothing and other necessaries to carry up to our brethren and sisters who had been plundered; and

putting our horses to the wagons, and taking our firelocks and ammunition, we started on our journey; leaving only Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and a few aged workmen who were engaged on the temple; so that there were very few men left in Kirtland. Our wagons were about full with baggage, etc., consequently we had to travel on foot.

We started on the 5th of May (1834), and truly this was a solemn morning to me. I took leave of my wife and children and friends, not knowing whether I would see them again in the flesh, as myself and brethren were threatened both in that country and in Missouri by enemies, that they would destroy us and exterminate us from the land.

There were about one hundred brethren in our company who started for Zion. These brethren were nearly all young men, and nearly all Elders, Priests, Teachers and Deacons. The second day we arrived at New Portage, being about forty miles, at which place on the 7th we made regulations for traveling, and appointed a paymaster, whose name was Frederick G. Williams, and put all our monies into a general fund. Some of the brethren had considerable, and others had little or none, yet all became equal.

(Orson F. Whitney, The Life of Heber C. Kimball, pages 39-40)

Excerpt from Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Section 104 is an important revelation giving instructions to members of the United Firm. The headnote for section 104 in the "Kirtland Revelation Book" states that the section is a "revelation given April 23d 1834, appointing to each member of the United firm their stewardships."

Prior to the Prophet's leaving for Missouri in May 1834, he desperately sought to borrow or collect by donation two thousand dollars to pay pressing debts incurred by the United Firm.

On 26 February 1834 Joseph Smith and others journeyed to New York to seek volunteers to help redeem the Jackson County Saints and to obtain money "for the relief of the brethren in Kirtland." While the Prophet's group was in Avon, New York, a Church council voted that several elders should "exert themselves to obtain two thousand dollars for the present relief of Kirtland," and that Orson Hyde should "tarry and preach in

the regions round about, till the money should be obtained." On 7 April 1834, having returned to Kirtland unsuccessful in obtaining the needed money, the Prophet met with Newel K. Whitney, Frederick G. Williams, Oliver Cowdery, and Heber C. Kimball and prayed that the Lord would "furnish the means to deliver the [United] Firm from debt." That same day, in a letter to Orson Hyde, Joseph Smith wrote that unless the money could be obtained, he could not go to Missouri.

On 10 April 1834, unable to secure the needed funds, members of the United Firm met and agreed that the "Order" should be dissolved and each member have his stewardship set off to him.

Section 104 gives the particulars of the division of the United Firm among the members living in Kirtland, and also directs the two branches of the firm (i.e., the Missouri branch and the Kirtland branch) to become separate entities.

Focusing on the Kirtland branch of the United Firm, section 104, verses 20-45, explains the procedure of division:

1. Sidney Rigdon was to have the place where he resides plus the lot of the tannery.
2. Martin Harris was to have the lot that John Johnson received in exchange for his former inheritance.
3. F.G. Williams was to have the place where he dwells.
4. Oliver Cowdery was to have both the lot which adjoins the printing house and the lot where his father dwells.
5. Oliver Cowdery and F.G. Williams were to have the printing house and accessories.
6. John Johnson was to have the house in which he lives plus "the inheritance" except for the lots which have been designated for sacred buildings and the lots given to O. Cowdery.
7. Newel K. Whitney was to have the houses and the lot where he now resides plus the lot and building on which the mercantile establishment stands, plus the lot which is on the corner south of the mercantile establishment, plus the lot on which the ashery is located.
8. Joseph Smith was to have the lot on which "my house" is to be built: 40 rods long and twelve rods wide, plus the inheritance upon which his father resides.

As a further step in the dissolution of the United Firm, another revelation, received the same day (23 April 1834) required "every one of what was then called the firm to give up

all notes & demands that they had against each other and all be equal."

A document in the Newel K. Whitney collection reveals the amounts of the notes in question:

Amt. of Balances due from the following persons the 23d day of Apl. 1834 at which time Joseph said it was the will of the Lord the accounts v.s. [against] those persons should be balanced (up to the above date) in full without any value recd; amts as follows Viz.

Balance due from F.G. Williams & Co	23dApl 1834 was	\$ 584.14
Balance due from Joseph Smith Jr.	do do	1151.31
Balance due from Oliver Cowdery	do do	68.57
Balance due from Sidney Rigdon	do do	777.98
Balance due from F.G. Williams	do do	485.67
Balance due from Jno. Johnson	do do	567.68
		\$3635.35

Concerning the division of the Kirtland branch and the Missouri branch of the United Firm, an unpublished revelation dated Kirtland, 28 April 1834, further explains the nature of the division:

Verily thus saith the Lord concerning the division and settlement of the United Firm. Let there be reserved three thousand Dollars for the right and claim of the Firm in Kirtland for inheritances in due time, even when the Lord will, and with this claim, to be had in remembrance when the Lord shall reveal it for a right of inheritance, ye are made free from the Firm of Zion, and the Firm in Zion is made free from the Firm in Kirtland: Thus saith the Lord. Amen.

Textual Note. The following lines, which follow verse 59 in the "Kirtland Revelation Book," are not part of the present text of section 104 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

Therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall take the right of books of Mormon and also the scrip-right, and also the copy-right which others may shall be secured of the Articles and Covenants in which covenants all upon my commandments which it is my be printed, as it shall be made unto you; and also the copy-right the new translation of ture; and this I say that not take the blessings away you which I have conferred you will should be printed, shall

(Lyndon W. Cook, Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith)

Excerpt from Church History and Modern Revelation

The Church being in dire distress financially, brethren had been sent out to see if they could not collect funds for its relief, both in Kirtland and for Zion. A strong appeal to Orson Hyde was issued April 7, 1834. (See D.H.C. 2:48.) In the minutes of a conference held at Norton, Medina County, Ohio, the deliverance of Zion was earnestly discussed. The Prophet Joseph Smith who was present said in the course of his remarks that "if Zion is not delivered, the time is near when all of this Church, wherever they may be found, will be persecuted and destroyed in like manner;" that is in the manner in which the saints in Jackson County were destroyed. Destruction in this sense means to be persecuted, mobbed and scattered, their property being lost to them.

On the 10th of April, a council of the United Order was held. It was there agreed that the Order, as it was then organized, be dissolved, and each member have his stewardship set off to him. Previously to this time, the United Order of Zion and of Kirtland stood as one unit. On April 23, 1834, the Prophet received an important revelation concerning the "Order of the Church for the benefit of the poor." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, volume 3, page 23).

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