

# D&C 20-26

Lesson 5, Doctrine & Covenants, Adult Religion Class, Monday, 10 Oct 2016

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## General Introduction

With the Book of Mormon translation complete and Grandin signed up, the printing process began. Obstacles arose during that time, including Abner Cole illegally printing excerpts. The book went on sale at the end of March 1830 and was immediately used in missionary endeavors. A few days later, following the laws of the state of New York, the Church was organized. During the rest of that spring and summer, more revelations were received, conferences were held, and several went on missions, growing the membership of the new and small Church.

### Summary Chronology

- **Fall 1829** – Oliver Cowdery authored “The Articles of the Church of Christ.”
- **Late Jan 1830** – Joseph Smith won arbitration against Abner Cole who had copied excerpts from the Book of Mormon he discovered at Grandin’s print shop into his own newspaper, *The Reflector*, on 2, 13, and 22 Jan 1830.
- **Early 1830** – Joseph Smith received a revelation agreeing to Hyrum’s plan to sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon in Canada, in order to raise money to help with the printing. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery go to Kingston with that goal, but return unsuccessful.
- **Mar 1830** – Meetings were reportedly held in Palmyra where people agreed to boycott the sale of the Book of Mormon. Binding of the book began.
- **About Sun, 14 Mar 1830** – Joseph Smith wrote the Preface to the Book of Mormon.
- **Fri, 19 Mar 1830** – Grandin stated in *The Wayne Sentinel* that the Book of Mormon would soon be available for sale.
- **Fri, 26 March 1830** – The Book of Mormon was advertised for sale at Grandin’s bookstore in *The Wayne Sentinel*.
- **Late March 1830** – Solomon Chamberlain took 8-10 copies of the Book of Mormon and went preaching. He sold one copy.
- **Mon, 29 March 1830** – Hyrum and Samuel Smith are suspended from the Presbyterian church in Palmyra for non-attendance.
- **Tue, 6 April 1830** – The Church of Christ was organized in Peter Whitmer, Sr.’s home. D&C 21 was received and recorded. Joseph Smith, Sr., Lucy Smith, and many others were baptized.
- **Sun, 11 April 1830** – The first Sunday meeting of the Church was held at the Whitmer home in Fayette, with Oliver Cowdery giving the first sermon. Six people were baptized.
- **Between Tue, 6 and Mon, 11 April 1830** – Joseph Smith received D&C 23.
- **Fri, 16 April 1830** – Joseph Smith received D&C 22.
- **Sun, 18 Apr 1830** – Seven more people were baptized into the Church by Oliver Cowdery.
- **Sun, 25 April 1830** – Joseph Smith cast a devil out of Newel Knight.
- **June 1830** – Joseph Smith began translating the Bible, starting with what is now Moses 1.
- **Before Wed, 9 June 1830** – Joseph Smith dictated the final version of “The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ” (D&C 20).
- **Wed, 9 June 1830** – First conference of the Church; The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ were first publicly read and accepted by the conference; eleven were baptized, including three of Joseph Smith’s siblings.
- **Mon, 28 June 1830** – Emma Smith and twelve others were baptized by Oliver Cowdery at the Joseph Knight farm in Colesville, while a group of fifty antagonistic people looked on.
- **Mon, 28 June to Fri, 2 July 1830** – Joseph was arrested for being a “disorderly person.” He was acquitted by the judge, but then immediately arrested again—and acquitted again.
- **Wed, 30 June 1830** – Samuel Smith departed on a mission to Ontario, Monroe, and Livingston counties, New York, during which he left a Book of Mormon with John P. Green and another with Phinehas Young, both related to Brigham Young.
- **Shortly after Sat, 3 July 1830** – Joseph Smith received D&C 24, 26, and 25.

# Historical Background

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There is a jump of several months between D&C 19 and D&C 21, which is next chronologically. Because much was happening in those months that isn't directly related to any of the revelations in this lesson, a bit of historical background helps cover that gap and explain important events in late 1829-spring 1830.<sup>1</sup>

After securing the copyright for the Book of Mormon and signing up Grandin as the printer, Joseph Smith returned to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to work his farm. The task of supervising the printing of the Book of Mormon fell mainly to Oliver Cowdery and Hyrum Smith. Oliver had started making a copy of the manuscript to give to the printer in the summer of 1829; the brethren did not want to surrender the one and only original manuscript and risk losing it as Martin had done with the Book of Lehi. This was, of course, the second time that Oliver Cowdery had written nearly the entire Book of Mormon out in longhand (Oliver wrote about 84%; another unknown scribe wrote about 15%; and Hyrum Smith wrote about 1%<sup>2</sup>).

John Gilbert was the lead typesetter at Grandin's shop. Oliver or Hyrum brought him a few pages of the copy at a time, and he would mark it up with punctuation and small corrections, then begin setting the type for the pages. Generally, Oliver seems to have been able to keep up with the pace of copying, but for some of the printing (5 of 21 gatherings), they fell behind and had to give the original manuscript to Gilbert, or because they needed the manuscript for the Canadian copyright effort.<sup>3</sup>

During this period, Joseph and Oliver corresponded through letters, which are preserved in the Joseph Smith Papers Documents series.

The first was written on 22 October 1829 from Joseph to Oliver. He commented on his arrival in Harmony on 4 Oct, that he just bought a horse, and that Josiah Stowell is nearly ready to spend "five or six hundred dollars" buying books (there is no evidence he was able to arrange that). He was very anxious to hear from Oliver on the progress of the printing.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Most of this material is found in MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light*, 199-228, and won't be cited individually unless a specific quote is used.

<sup>2</sup> *JSP*, R3, Part 1:8.

<sup>3</sup> *JSP*, R3, Part 1:9.

<sup>4</sup> *JSP*, D1:96-97.

<sup>5</sup> Later Marsh came to Palmyra and met Martin Harris and Oliver, taking back a sheet from the printing, and shortly thereafter joining the Church. Others also received sheets from the printer

Oliver wrote back on 6 November 1829, spending much of the letter writing about his desires to serve God and his gratitude for salvation and desire to be prepared for the Second Coming. Oliver said the printing work had been somewhat delayed because of illness at Grandin's (perhaps with John Gilbert) but Grandin still hoped to be done by early February 1830. He mentioned a letter from Thomas B. Marsh, from Boston, who had heard about the book and expressed interest.<sup>5</sup> In a PS, Oliver stated that he had copied the printer's manuscript to Alma speaking to his son, so about Alma 36-42.<sup>6</sup>

On 28 December 1829, Oliver wrote again. He told Joseph that he had "So Soon become a printer" by setting several pages of type for the project.<sup>7</sup> He had been pondering his mission and had experienced "many long Struglings in prayr of Sorrow for the Sins of my fellow beings."<sup>8</sup>

Shortly after this letter, a man named Abner Cole, who was printing a newspaper in Palmyra and using Grandin's print shop in the evenings and on weekends to do it, began to take type set for the Book of Mormon and reset it for his own paper, printing excerpts from the book. Hyrum and Oliver discovered him working on it one Sunday evening, and insisted he stop because it was a copyrighted work, but Cole went on printing it in his paper. In his paper, he also derided Joseph Smith and the whole project, working to turn his readers against the Prophet.

When Joseph heard about Cole's effort from his father, who came to Harmony to inform him, he immediately came to Palmyra and confronted Cole. As a former attorney, Cole knew the law, so when Joseph forbid him to print any more of the book that he possessed the copyright to, Cole's only reaction was rage and challenging Joseph to a fight. Finally, Cole agreed to arbitration. The details are unknown, but after printing two more editions of his paper with Book of Mormon quotations, he quit. However, he later published a fictional satire called the Book of Pukei that continued to mock the story of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith.

In the meantime, Martin Harris continued to be concerned about how he was going to recover his \$3,000 mortgage.

at this time, including the Hyde family (Orson Hyde was later an apostle) and Solomon Chamberlain, who took his sheets preaching; see MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light*, 200-202.

<sup>6</sup> *JSP*, D1:98-101.

<sup>7</sup> This experience later played a role in Oliver taking the lead on printing several Church projects.

<sup>8</sup> *JSP*, D1:103-104.

Initially his financing the book was seen as a gift, but Harris told the visiting Joseph that he hoped to recover some of his investment through book sales. On 16 January 1830, Joseph and Martin signed an agreement that gave Martin the right to sell copies of the Book of Mormon until he collected the amount of his mortgage. The books did not sell well, and later Martin continued to try and sell them in Ohio. It's not certain if he ever made enough, but one late account quoted him as saying, "I never lost one cent. Mr. Smith...paid me all that I advanced, and more too."<sup>9</sup>

Another interesting event happened early in 1830, perhaps as a result of the copyright confrontation with Cole, when Joseph received a revelation (unpublished) directing them to obtain copyrights for the Book of Mormon "upon all the face of the Earth." Accordingly, Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Knight, Sr. Hiram Page, and Josiah Stowell went to Canada to attempt to do that. The men were not successful, mainly due to the fact that Canada was still under British rule at

that time and copyright had to be obtained in England, and was poorly enforced in Canada until more than a decade later. Thus no one was interested in purchasing the book's copyright and having the rights to print it in Canada.<sup>10</sup> Of course, later the Church pursued copyrights for all its scriptures in various nations and continues to protect the books using such methods today.

Finally, in late March 1830, the first books came from Luther Howard's bindery, located on the second floor of Grandin's building. Palettes of printed pages were lowered by a pulley system out the window from the third to second floor, for binding by Howard and his men. The finished books were then lowered to the first floor in the same way, for sale in Grandin's store and for distribution to Joseph Smith and others. The books were immediately used for missionary purposes, and in just a few months, Oliver was writing from Ohio telling Joseph Smith to send 500 copies because the Book of Mormon was in great demand.

## D&C 20

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### Setting

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After the publication of the Book of Mormon was under way, sometime in the second half of 1829, Oliver Cowdery began to work on a document that became known as the "Articles of the Church of Christ."<sup>11</sup> This was based on instructions he received in D&C 18:3-5. The intent of this document was to provide a handbook, of sorts, for governing the affairs of the church that was soon to be formed. Written as early as June 1829, Cowdery's document drew heavily on the Book of Mormon text (more than half of the document) and early revelations to Joseph Smith, using yet unpublished manuscripts of both. Yet he also wrote it in the voice of the Lord, demonstrating that as the Second Elder and an ordained apostle, he was receiving revelation for the Church.

The Articles became part of the official Church records until 1831, when Symonds Ryder took (stole) it and other early documents as he angrily left the Church over his name being misspelled (ironically, it is still misspelled in the Doctrine and Covenants today; in D&C 52:37, his first name should have a "y," as in Symonds). In 1960, a non-LDS descendent donated the lost documents to the Church, after they were discovered in an old dresser. The document was published and analyzed in Faulring, *Examination*. John

Whitmer had made a copy of it in Revelation Book 1, which today still includes most of the document (some of its content is lost), which is now published in *JSP*, R1:17-20. Oliver's copy (taken by Ryder) can be found in *JSP*, D1:368-377 and Faulring, *Examination*, 76-79.

The Articles was a precursor (or as Richard Lloyd Anderson called it, a "forerunner")<sup>12</sup> to D&C 20. As Oliver's attempt to codify several Church policies and practices, the Articles had a short life, replaced in the spring of 1830 with a new revelation through Joseph Smith.

Sometime between late March and 9 June 1830, while Joseph was up for an extended visit from Harmony, he and Oliver got together and produced what is today D&C 20, and which was called by the early Saints, "The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ." Revelation Book 1 records the date as 10 April 1830.<sup>13</sup> As with other efforts, Joseph dictated while Oliver wrote. The document does not speak in the voice of the Lord, as others of Joseph's revelations, but the principles within it were received by revelation, Joseph said in his history.<sup>14</sup>

### Documents and Publication

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The document was first published by Eber D. Howe in his paper, the *Painseville Telegraph*, on 19 April 1831, called

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<sup>9</sup> *JSP*, D1:105-108.

<sup>10</sup> *JSP*, D1:108-112.

<sup>11</sup> See Faulring, *Examination*, and *JSP*, D1:368-370 for details about the creation and use of the Articles of the Church of Christ.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Organization Revelations (D&C 20, 21, and 22), in Millet and Jackson, *Studies in Scripture*, 114.

<sup>13</sup> *JSP*, MRB:75.

<sup>14</sup> *JSP*, H1:336 (Draft 2).

by him “The Mormon Creed.” Also published in *The Evening and Morning Star*, June 1832.<sup>15</sup> It was Chapter 24 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 2 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

D&C 20 in its present form differs in many places from the oldest copies we have, and would likely differ more from the original. Like today’s *General Handbook*, this was a living document that was edited and changed as the organization of the Church filled out. Some of those differences are noted below.

Note: Because Howe and the *Star* publication appended D&C 22 with D&C 20 with no separation, labeling both “The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ,” some have thought both sections should indeed bear that title. But the other early manuscripts, such as Revelation Book 1, and the earliest Church publications of the revelations, separate them, and among Church members at the time, only D&C 20 was given that title. See D&C 22 below.

## Outline

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D&C 20 is naturally divided into two sections, 1-36 with historical and doctrinal statements, and 37-84, with procedures and ordinances.<sup>16</sup> The first section is also clearly divided into five subsections (per the outline below), with each one ending in “Amen.”

1. Joseph and Oliver first and second elders (1-4)
2. The role of the Book of Mormon (5-12)
3. So great witnesses (13-16)
4. Creation, fall, and atonement (17-28)
5. Justification and sanctification (29-36)
6. Baptism and priesthood duties (37-74)
7. Sacramental prayers and membership (75-84)

## Commentary

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The first verse today should be considered more like a section heading; this is reflected in the current edition by inserting a short dashed line between verses 1 and 2.

### Joseph and Oliver first and second elders (1-4)

1 ***The rise of the Church of Christ.*** This was the name of the Church in 1830 when it was first founded. Later it was

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<sup>15</sup> *JSP*, D1:120; According to analysis of the texts, Howe’s publication seems older and closer to the original and is the one used in this volume.

<sup>16</sup> Faulring, *Examination*, 71-72.

<sup>17</sup> Larry Porter, “A study of the origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the states of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816-1831,” Dissertation available at BYU Library; cited in Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:129.

changed to our current name (see Setting for D&C 21 below).

1 ***regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country.*** The Prophet and his associates had researched what was required for the state of New York when organizing a church and followed those laws precisely. The relevant statute was from 1813, entitled “an act to provide for the incorporation of Religious Societies” which required between three and nine men to start an organization.<sup>17</sup>

1 ***sixth day of the month which is called April.*** Normally we might expect the Church to be organized on a Sunday, but 6 April 1830 was a Tuesday, so that argues for exact guidance from the Lord. In fact, Joseph Smith is clear in his history that the date of the organization of the Church was given to him by revelation. The language of verse 1 shows that they are here reporting the event, not calling for it in the future. Thus D&C 20 documents the “rise of the Church of Christ” and was not the source of the commandment to organize the Church. Such a revelation was not recorded, to our knowledge. Joseph Smith never explained why the Lord had selected this date.

President Harold B. Lee expressed the belief that the sixth of April was chosen because it was “the anniversary of the birth of the Savior, our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ” (*Ensign*, July 1973, 2). So did President Spencer W. Kimball (*Ensign*, May 1980, 54). Elder Bruce R. McConkie expressed a similar belief (*Mormon Doctrine*, 131; *Mortal Messiah*, 1:349-350). However, Church leaders have also noted that the language of D&C 20:1 merely represents the common way the year was identified and so should not be used to point to Jesus’ birth date. Scholarly analysis of all sources points more to a birthdate in the winter or spring of 5 BC. In other words, Jesus’ birthday *may* have been on 6 April, but may have been a different date, and certainly was not in AD 1.<sup>18</sup>

2 ***an apostle of Jesus Christ.*** This is the first mention of this office sequentially in the Doctrine and Covenants, though as we will see, it is not the first chronologically (see D&C 21:1). Here Joseph Smith was applying a title to himself and Oliver that the Lord had given them in that other revelation.

2 ***first elder.*** Titles in the Church would change as more understanding was gained. At this early date, Joseph Smith

<sup>18</sup> Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From Bethlehem Through the Sermon on the Mount* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 383-394; McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 155.

was simply known as the first elder, and Oliver as the second. In that day (and today in many churches), elders are those who lead the Church.

**2 text note:**

The title “first elder” (and “second elder” for Oliver Cowdery in verse 3) was not used typically until 1835, probably for clarity as to their roles, something the 1830 Church understood instinctively by current events; the early copies of this revelation just refer to them both as “elder.” Note, though, that the use of “first elder” in verse 5 was in the oldest copies, but was probably a clarification about who received the manifestation and not pertaining to his leadership position (e.g., of the two elders mentioned, Joseph was mentioned first).

**2 text note:**

<b>D1</b> Joseph Smith, jun. who was called of God and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church	<b>RB1</b> Joseph <del>the seer</del> , who was called of God & ordained an Apostle of Jesus Christ, an Elder of the[is] Church	<b>1833</b> Joseph, who was called of God and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of this church	<b>1835</b> Joseph Smith jr. who was called of God and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church
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Typically, the oldest records use only first names. It was with the 1835 edition that full names were given, as Church membership grew and the need for clarity arose. So the use of “Joseph Smith, jun.” in Howe’s printing might be his own insertion, since he was publishing to an audience that would not know the Prophet. In RB1, John Whitmer first wrote “Joseph the seer,” which was his usual way of writing the Prophet’s name, then it was crossed out by Oliver Cowdery, who probably had access to the original or an early copy.

**3 ordained under his hand.** Oliver Cowdery was ordained under Joseph’s hand and vice versa on the 6 April meeting when the Church was organized, according to the commandment they had previously received.<sup>19</sup>

**4 according to the grace of our Lord.** Everything that had happened to Joseph and Oliver was a gift from God; they had not assumed any authority on their own.

**The role of the Book of Mormon (5-12)**

**5 he had received a remission of his sins.** This is the first clear, public reference to the First Vision. In 1830, at least, forgiveness was the main purpose of the First Vision in Joseph Smith’s life. Later, in retrospect and as he gained understanding, it would become more of the beginning of his call, which is certainly how the modern Church approaches

<sup>19</sup> This commandment was received by “the word of the Lord” in the chamber of Father Whitmer (meaning upstairs where Joseph and Oliver were translating) according to Joseph’s history; see “History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834],” p. 27, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed March 2,

it. But here and in two of his early accounts, the blessing he came away from the vision with was forgiveness of sins.

**6 text note:**

<b>D1</b> but after truly repenting, God visited him	<b>RB1</b> but after truly Repentent God ministered unto him	<b>1833</b> But after truly repenting, God ministered unto him	<b>1835</b> but after repenting, and humbling himself, sincerely, through faith, God ministered unto him
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The 1835 edition enhances our picture of Joseph’s situation prior to Moroni’s visit. It was more than just repentance, and it required deep humility and faith before he had a manifestation of additional forgiveness and the blessing of the appearance of the angel.

**6 an holy angel.** This was, of course, Moroni, who came after Joseph first became “entangled again in the vanities of the world” (verse 5) and repented and humbled himself.

**7-8 text note:**

<b>D1</b> commandments which inspired him from on high, and gave unto him power	<b>RB1</b> Commandments which inspired him from on high & gave unto him power	<b>1833</b> commandments which inspired him from on high, and gave unto him power	<b>1835</b> commandments which inspired him, and gave him power from on high
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The shifting of “from on high” from the “inspired” phrase to the “power” phrase emphasizes the source of Joseph’s power to translate the Book of Mormon. He always declared that it was done by the gift and power of God, which this 1835 change highlights.

**7 commandments which inspired him.** Moroni didn’t just give Joseph tasks but gave him inspiring commandments. They were hard commandments and he struggled with many of them, but they inspired him to be better and greater than he was. Of course, in the earliest days, Joseph’s first revelations were also referred to as “commandments” (hence the name of the first publication, *The Book of Commandments*), so this language could simply be referring to those early revelations.

**8 by the means which were before prepared.** A subtle reference to the Nephite interpreters and Joseph’s seer stones, or as he later called them all, the Urim and Thummim.

2021, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/33>.

**9 record of a fallen people.** Few had read the Book of Mormon at this time, since it was just coming off the press, so this summary of its message by the Prophet captures the key points. It is a record of a people long passed away.

**9 the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.** It is also a record that contains the message of salvation through Christ, who suffered, died, and was resurrected (e.g., 1 Nephi 19:9-10; Alma 7:11-13).

**10 text note:**

Note: This entire verse is not in the early copies or publications of this revelation, but was added in 1835.

**10 confirmed to others by the ministering of angels.** Referring to the three witnesses' experience, who then declared it unto the world.

**11 Proving...that the holy scriptures are true.** This is the first of three significant purposes of the Book of Mormon given in these verses. In a day when the Bible is ignored or neglected, or turned into a mere collection of stories and fables, the Book of Mormon boldly declares not only the gospel of Christ and the reality of God, but that “the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.” The Book of Mormon “shall establish the truth of the first [the Bible]”(1 Nephi 13:39-40).

**11 God does inspire men and call them.** The second purpose of the Book of Mormon is to affirm that God is able to call prophets and apostles today, just as is recorded in scripture. He instructs them by the Holy Spirit and brings truth to the earth through these chosen servants. Thus the book testifies of the mission of Joseph Smith and his successors.

**11 text note:**

<b>D1</b> in these last days, as well as in days of old	<b>RB1</b> in these last days as well as in days of old	<b>1833</b> in these last days as well as in days of old	<b>1835</b> in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old
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In all revelations recorded up to this section, “last days” had always referred to the day of judgment (see 4:2; 5:35; 9:14; 17:8; 18: 24; 19:3). D&C 20 shifts the meaning slightly to the sense we most often use today—the last days before the Second Coming of Christ (verse 1), which is a day of judgment (verse 13), so it was removed here and replaced with words that indicated their present day. In the 1835 edition, it shifted to the term “generations,” a word used nearly 100 times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

**12 he is the same God.** The third purpose of the Book of Mormon stated here is to show that God is unchanging from one age to the next.

## So great witnesses (13-16)

**13 so great witnesses.** Referring to the witnesses already cited—Joseph, Oliver and the other two Book of Mormon witnesses, the Book of Mormon itself, and even the Bible—God has let people in this time know these truths, and the world shall be judged according to their acceptance thereof. Those who receive it, “receive a crown of eternal life” (verse 14), while those whose hearts are hard will be condemned (verse 15).

**13-15 text note:**

<b>D1</b> hereafter receive this work, either to faith and righteousness, or to the hardness of heart in unbelief to their own condemnation	<b>RB1</b> hereafter receive this work either faith & righteousness or to the hardness of heart in unbelief to their own condemnation	<b>1833</b> hereafter receive this work, either to faith and righteousness, or to the hardness of heart in unbelief, to their own condemnation	<b>1835</b> hereafter come to a knowledge of this work; and those who receive it in faith and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life but those who harden their hearts in unbelief and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation
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These three verses were substantially reworked in 1835, putting the focus on those who have a knowledge of the Restoration, not just the world in general.

**16 we, the elders of the Church, have heard and bear witness.** Though this could refer just to Joseph and Oliver as the named “elders” of the Church, the six founding elders in the legal documentation were also those who knew this to be true by divine manifestation, and bore record of it.

## Creation, fall, and atonement (17-28)

This section outlines several key doctrines from a Latter-day Saint perspective. This particular section is likely why Howe labeled the whole revelation “The Mormon Creed.”

**17 text note:**

Howe’s publication has an added phrase at the end of this verse not in Revelation Book 1, the 1833 Book of Commandments, or the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants: “...and that he is all power, and all wisdom, and all understanding.” However, some other early personal copies have a similar phrase.<sup>20</sup> It is likely that Whitmer’s copy in RB1 dropped the phrase (his eye skipped a line or something) and that error was carried over in the published versions of the revelation.

<sup>20</sup> JSP, D1:122n54.

17 *by these things we know that there is a God*. This refers to all the witnesses just cited, such as the priesthood restoration by divine messengers, an angel appearing to Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon itself, and more. All these things testify that there is a God in heaven who loves his children and reveals himself unto them for their salvation.

18 *he created man, male and female*. The second key doctrine after the existence of God is the divine creation of earth and mankind, in the image of God. The emphasis on “image” and “likeness” not only matches that of Genesis, but aligns with the Prophet’s own learning from his experience in the sacred grove.

19 *love and serve him*. The Genesis account does not include any such phrases, but later in the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis, this is a key theme, as Adam and Eve strive to teach their children to love and serve God, and Satan lures them away, especially Cain.

19 *text note*.

**D1** and that he gave unto the children of men a commandment that they should love and serve him the only being whom they should worship

**RB1** & that he gave unto the Children of men a commandment<s> that they should love & serve him the only being whom they should worship

**1833** And that he gave unto the children of men commandments, that they should love and serve him the only being whom they should worship

**1835** and gave them commandments that they should love and serve him the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being who they should worship

This verse was also reworked quite a bit in 1835, removing the long phrase “children of men” and clarifying who it is they should worship.

20 *by the transgression of these holy laws*. More than just the Fall itself, this phrase sums up man’s departure from God after the Fall, as Satan led them away from the Lord and to a truly fallen state.

20 *sensual and devilish*. This is a description of the state of man from the Bible (James 3:15) and the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 16:3; Alma 42:10). It showed up later this same year in the JST (Moses 5:13).

21 *God gave his Only Begotten Son*. Only John and Hebrews use this phrase in the New Testament, and the Book of Mormon uses it in about the same number (five quotes

each). It is found ten times in the Doctrine and Covenants, starting here.

22 *suffered temptations but gave no heed*. Another phrase that appears in the New Testament (Hebrews 2:18) but more strongly in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 3:7; 15:5; Alma 7:11). Jesus was tempted but never fell into sin.

23 *crucified, died, and rose again*. This is the core of the gospel message, the good news about Jesus Christ, also according to Paul (Romans 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:14). The fact that the first declarations are focused on Christ and use language that any Christian of that day or this would embrace argues strongly for the Christianity of the restored gospel.

24 *on the right hand of the Father*. After successfully completing the Atonement, Jesus took his place of honor on the Father’s right hand.<sup>21</sup>

25 *believe...be baptized...endure in faith*. Though it is certainly Biblical, combining these phrases was new doctrine—enduring, especially—different from the Protestant churches all around them. Compare to verse 29 and see verse 32 below.

26 *text note*:

**D1** yea, even as many as were before he came in the flesh, from the beginning, which believed in the words of the holy prophets, which were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, which truly testified of all things

**RB1** yea even as many as were before he came in the flesh from the beginning which believed in the words of the Holy Prophets which were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost which truly testify of him in all things

**1833** Yea, even as many as were before he came in the flesh, from the beginning, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, which truly testified of him in all things

**1835** not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things, should have eternal life,

<sup>21</sup> See Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrew 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Moroni 9:26.

26-27 *in the meridian...beginning...come after*. Christ atonement applies to all people in every age, not just those in his day, and not just those since his day, but “all those from the beginning.” All prophets in all ages taught these truths and guided people toward eternal life.

28 *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God*. Similar phrases in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 31:21; Mosiah 15:5; Alma 11:44; Mormon 7:7) can sometimes confuse people, since we also emphasize that the Father and Son are separate and distinct. In our doctrine, they are individual beings but are fully united, acting and speaking as one in all things.<sup>22</sup>

### Justification and sanctification (29-36)

29 *repent and believe*. More than just believing (verse 29), salvation in God’s kingdom requires a change of heart and a change of life—repentance.

30 *justification...is just and true*. Justification or being made righteous is achieving forgiveness of sins and being made clean before God, and is only through the grace or great gift of Jesus Christ.

31 *sanctification...is just and true*. Likewise, sanctification or being pure, holy, and set apart, is a true doctrine, and is also only achieved through the grace of God.

32 *man may fall from grace*. Many of the declarations of doctrine are intentionally phrased to highlight how this new church was different from all others. Other churches of that day (and ours) taught that it was impossible to fall from grace once saved, or that a person could depart from grace for a time and sin, but God would still save him or her. Here, the Prophet was boldly declaring that enduring to the end in faithfulness (see verse 25) is a necessary component of salvation. Without it, we can fall from the grace that justifies (verse 33) and sanctifies (verse 34) and brings us into the presence of God.

33 *take heed and pray always*. The remedy to keep from falling from grace is to “take heed,” meaning to always be obedient, and continue in constant prayer.

34 *who are sanctified take heed also*. This counsel was not just for sinners. Sanctified individuals are still at risk because they might be pure and holy, but embracing even small sin can quickly change that.

35 *neither adding to, nor diminishing from*. Referring to Revelation 22:18-19, which is still cited by some today as reason to reject the Book of Mormon and modern prophets, it is clear that nothing discussed adds to or takes away from “the holy scriptures,” meaning the Bible.

35 *revelations of God which shall come*. Building on the revelations of previous prophets, the Lord speaks today by

the Holy Ghost, by his own voice, and by the voice of angels, to bring truth again to the earth. There would be many more in Joseph Smith’s lifetime and in the lives and ministries of subsequent prophets.

36 *honor, power and glory be rendered to his holy name*. A doxology (praise text), thanking God for his merciful plan of redemption and salvation in our behalf.

### Baptism and priesthood duties (37-74)

37 *the manner of baptism*. Taking its cues from Moroni 6:2-3, the preparation required of a new convert was outlined, which included humility, a desire for baptism, a broken heart and contrite spirit, true repentance, and a willingness to serve Christ. More about this starting with verse 68.

38 *elders, priests, teachers, deacons*. These were the only priesthood offices in the Church in 1830, and even then, there was no record of deacons being ordained until 1831.<sup>23</sup> The full organization of the Church came over time and as circumstances warranted it. It would have done no good to give to a church of a few dozen people an organization that included all the quorums of the First Presidency, the Twelve, the Seventy, and the offices required to run stakes, wards, and auxiliaries today. They simply would have been overwhelmed by it all. The offices listed in this verse were common among other churches of that day and were good starting points to both make the Church functional in that day and easily transition to the full Church organization later. Unlike today, young men did not hold the offices below elder in the earliest days, but adult men were ordained to these various offices to cover the needed functions of the Church, as outlined in the verses that follow. Elders: 38-45; priests: 46-52; teachers: 53-59; no specific duties for deacons are called out though their duties overlap with teachers somewhat (verses 57-59).

38 *An apostle is an elder*. An “elder” is a holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood, so Apostles, Seventies, and High Priests are correctly referred to as elders, even today. In 1830, an elder was a common term that also referred to a church leader, independent of any priesthood. Thus another way to potentially read this phrase is, ‘an apostle is a church leader.’ Other churches may have used the titles of elder, priest, etc., but apostle was unique to the Church of Christ.

#### 40-41 text note:

<b>D1</b> and to administer the flesh and blood of Christ according to the scriptures	<b>RB1</b> & to administering the flesh & blood of Christ according to the scriptures	<b>1833</b> and to administer the flesh and blood of Christ according to the scriptures	<b>1835</b> and to administer bread and wine—the emblems of the flesh and blood of
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<sup>22</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:135.

<sup>23</sup> *JSP*, D1:124n65.



Christ—and to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures

47 *visit the house of each member*. The seeds of the home teaching program were planted nearly 200 years ago.

47 *pray vocally and in secret*. Praying vocally was a challenge for many people in that day; some feared that Satan would hear their sincere prayers and work to thwart them. Joseph Smith had prayed many times in his life before the First Vision, but that was his first vocal prayer (JS-H 1:14). Other members expressed their difficulty with the concept, but were encouraged by the Prophet to pray out loud.

49-50 *text note*:

**D1** and to take the lead in meetings; but none of these offices is he to do when there is an elder present, but in all cases is to assist the elder, &c.

**RB1** & take the lead in meetings but none of these offices is they <are> <is he> to do when there is an Elder present, but in all cases are <is> to assist the Elders &c

**1833** and take the lead of meetings; but none of these offices is he to do when there is an elder present, but in all cases is to assist the elder.

**1835** and he is to take the lead of meetings when there is no elder present, but when there is an elder present he is only to preach, teach, exhort, and baptize, and visit the hour of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties. In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires.

The 1835 clarification that bread and wine (today water, per the later D&C 27) are the emblems of the flesh and blood help set the symbolic aspect of the sacrament not take the church down the path of transubstantiation in the Catholic Church. Verse 41 today was not in the early versions but was added in 1835. It is a clearer but somewhat redundant version of the content in v. 43.

40 *to administer bread and wine*. Elders blessed and passed the sacrament at the beginning, though priests also had the task (verse 46).

43 *to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands*. Confirming someone a member of the Church and giving them the gift of the Holy Ghost was not something done before the organization of the Church in April 1830. In fact, the Lord told them not to ordain others, administer the sacrament, or give the gift of the Holy Ghost until that time.<sup>24</sup>

45 *text note*:

**D1** The elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost

**RB1** The Elders are to conduct the Meetings according as they are led by the Holy Ghost

**1833** The elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost

**1835** The elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost, according to the commandments and revelations of God.

Leading by the Holy Ghost is important and mentioned first, but as the Church matured, it was important that those leading the meetings also followed the previously received commandments and revelations to promote consistency and order in meetings.

45 *elders are to conduct the meetings*. There were no high priests in the Church at this time, or presidencies or any kind, so the presiding authority was an elder.

This lengthy 1835 addition clarifies that priests are still very engaged and not just waiting for an elder to tell them what to do if an elder is presiding. The recitation of duties is redundant with vv. 46-47 but emphasizes the priest's role in strengthening the Church.

53 *watch over the church*. Elders presided and went to conferences and priests visited members' homes, but teachers were to stay home and be watchmen over the church. Compare the later revelation in D&C 84:111.

55 *see that all the members do their duty*. The teachers were the 'policemen' of sorts, charged with keeping iniquity at bay, keeping members from lying, backbiting, and

<sup>24</sup> JSP, H1:326.

evil-speaking, and to keep members on task with their assignments and responsibilities.

58 text note:

<b>D1</b> But neither the teacher nor the deacon has authority to baptize nor administer the sacrament	<b>RB1</b> but neither <del>the</del> <the> Teachers nor <del>the</del> Deacons have authority to Baptize nor administer the Sacrament	<b>1833</b> But neither the teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize nor administer the sacrament	<b>1835</b> but neither teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize, administer the sacrament, or lay on hands
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Adding “lay on hands” in 1835 clarifies the statement in v. 41 that only the elders have the role of confirming members and giving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**60 to be ordained.** This draws on the language of Moroni 3:4.

61-62 text note:

<b>D1</b> meet at each of its meetings to do church business, whatsoever is necessary, &c.	<b>RB1</b> meet in conference on in three Month <or from time to time as they Shall direct o appoint—> to <do> business whatsoever is nessessary &c	<b>1833</b> meet in conference once in three months, or from time to time as they shall direct or appoint, to do church business whatsoever is necessary.	<b>1835</b> meet in conference once in three months, or from time to time, as said conferences shall direct or appoint: and said conferences are to do whatever church business is necessary to be done at the time.
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Initially, no timeframe for the conferences were established, but very quickly the three-month rhythm was established, with other meetings possible as needed to conduct business. The 1835 change clarified that it was the decision of the conferences to determine the next time they should meet.

**61 meet in conference once in three months.** Conferences in the early Church were conducted for priesthood leaders and mainly for conducting business (verse 62), but there was teaching and instruction, too. The first conference was 9 June 1830 and they had them at least quarterly, sometimes more frequently. Eventually, conferences were held twice a year on a general level and twice a year on a stake

level, thus matching this revelation to meet four times per year.

63 text note:

Verse 63 was added in 1835 to establish how elders were to receive their licenses to preach, a necessary change as the number of elders proliferated and the Church began to spread across the country.

**63 receive their licenses.** In a day when communication was challenging across distances, the method determined was to give paper certificates and licenses to those who were baptized and ordained to the various offices. If you went from one part of the Church to another, you presented your certificate to the presiding authority, then you would receive a sustaining vote and become part of that new area. We still give such certificates today, even though our Church-wide computer system tracks it all for us. Record keeping was important in those days and will always be so.

65-67 text note:

These verses were not in the original Articles and Covenants, but were added in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. In 1830, these offices and procedures did not exist in the Church, but by 1835, they did, so Joseph Smith inserted these instructions to bring the Articles and Covenants up to date.

**68 The duty of the members.** Members had responsibilities, too, including being patient about not receiving the Holy Ghost and taking the sacrament until the elders or priests felt like they were sufficiently taught and prepared.

**69 godly walk and conversation.** Conversation does not mean ‘talking’ in this case. Instead, it follows the King James usage of the term, meaning ‘conduct’ (see Galatians 1:13).

**70 lay their hands upon them.** This is the command to bless children, which other churches generally do not do. This echoes Christ’s behavior of calling children to him and blessing them (Matthew 19:13-15).

**71 years of accountability.** This is a Book of Mormon doctrine (Moroni 8:8-22). The determination of what that age is was revealed with the work on the Joseph Smith Translation later in 1830 and then confirmed in D&C 68:25-27.<sup>25</sup>

72 text note:

Verses 72-79 were not in the first publication, but instead it just said, “And the manner of baptism & the manner of administering the sacrament are to be done as is written in the Book of Mormon.”<sup>26</sup> By the time John Whitmer copied it into Revelation Book 1, either he expanded that section to quote the relevant

<sup>25</sup> David A. LeFevre, “The Education of a Prophet: The Role of the New Translation of the Bible in the Life of Joseph Smith,” in Craig James Ostler, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Barbara

Morgan Gardner, *Foundations of the Restoration* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2016), 108-109.

<sup>26</sup> *JSP*, D1:125.

parts of the Book of Mormon or the copy he was working from had already done so and included that text.<sup>27</sup>

**73 *has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize.*** Many churches performed baptism in that day and do so in ours, but this was new doctrine among Protestants, to claim that a person had to have authority from Christ himself to do such an ordinance.

**73 *Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ.*** The original language here was, “Having authority given me of Jesus Christ...” which was a quote from 3 Nephi 11:25. It was changed in 1835 to be the language we use today.

### Sacramental prayers and membership (75-84)

**77 *bless and sanctify this bread.*** The two sacrament prayers are identical to those in Moroni 4-5.

**77 *willing to take upon them the name of thy Son.*** Elder Oaks commented that this phrase expresses our willingness to perform temple ordinances and eventually receive the highest blessings available to us through Jesus’ name.<sup>28</sup>

**80 *as the scriptures direct.*** Information about Church discipline is fairly sparse in the New Testament, with a bit more in the Book of Mormon. Today we have extensive direction from prophets in our handbooks to deal with such matters.

#### 81 *text note:*

Howe’s printed version says that either priests or teachers should go to the conferences with the membership information, but Revelation Book 1 and other early manuscript copies give that responsibility solely to the teachers.<sup>29</sup>

**82 *a list of the names.*** Teachers were asked to attend the conferences of the Church (verse 81) and bring with them lists of names of people who had joined the Church or been “expelled” (excommunicated, verse 83) since the last conference. This allowed Church leaders to track membership and keep the records up to date. Today this method is supplanted by local and stake clerks tracking membership information through a combined Church-wide database that makes it easy to share information and move it between units, as needed.

## Results

Brigham Young reported that writing this document was a difficult experience for Oliver, and it took Joseph about two hours of laboring with him for him to accept it. This

was perhaps due to the fact that the Articles and Covenants replaced Oliver’s Articles from the previous year, and that the new one was dictated by Joseph with little or no input from Oliver, though a study of the two shows that the Articles of the Church had influence on what became D&C 20.

The Articles and Covenants were evidently read for the first time on 9 June 1830 in Fayette, at the first Church conference. They were presented to the elders in attendance, who were asked for their sustaining vote, which was given unanimously. Since there are no contemporary records of the 6 April 1830 organization of the Church, and since no one who attended the meeting and commented on it ever mentioned the Articles and Covenants being read, including Joseph Smith, and since the historical record appears to push us toward a date after 6 April for its final form, it is unlikely that it was part of that first meeting.

Much of what we do in the Church today still follows the patterns of D&C 20. Some things have changed, based on the growth of the Church, how priesthood offices have continued to change in nature and responsibility, and due to technological advances. But many parts of this revelation are foundational and will continue to guide the Church for decades, if not its entire existence.

On a more personal note for Oliver Cowdery, he was with Joseph in June 1830 in Harmony, where they began the translation work on the Bible. Later, in July or August 1830, Oliver went to Fayette and with the Whitmers became quite upset about some language in the Articles and Covenants. The verse in question (verse 37 today) talks about the qualification for baptism, declaring that a person must “truly manifest by their works that they have received the spirit of Christ unto the ~~remission~~ ~~<conviction>~~ ~~<remission>~~ of their sins”<sup>30</sup> before they can be baptized. Oliver wrote to Joseph saying that it was “priestcraft” and commanded Joseph to remove it. Oliver’s status and continued leadership role seems to have caused him to see himself as co-equal with Joseph. Joseph returned to the Palmyra area shortly after Oliver’s letter, and laboring with him and the Whitmers, he was with difficulty able to convince them that the language should be retained as is. Oliver humbled himself, and on 26 September 1830, at the second Church conference, he read and sustained the Articles and Covenants. The Articles and Covenants were thereafter read as part of Church conferences for many years.

<sup>27</sup> JSP, D1:125n70 reports John Whitmer’s copy in Zebedee Coltrin’s journal was phrased like Howe’s printed version, but other early copies include the Book of Mormon quotations.

<sup>28</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, General Conference, April 1985, quoted in McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 171.

<sup>29</sup> JSP, D1:126n73; JSP, R1:67.

<sup>30</sup> JSP, MRB:81.

## Setting

On Tuesday, 6 April 1830, according to revelation,<sup>31</sup> a group of people gathered in the Peter Whitmer, Sr., home in Fayette, NY (near Waterloo, which is the location Lucy Smith gives in her history). Following the laws of the state of New York, six men—Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., and Samuel Smith—signed the formal documentation, voting to form the “Church of Christ” and accept Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as the presiding elders. Joseph and Oliver then ordained each other elders, the sacrament was passed, and a few others were ordained to various priesthood offices. The exact number attending is uncertain, but as many as fifty-six people may have been crammed into that small house. After the sacrament, Joseph and Oliver took several people who had been previously baptized, and confirmed them members of the Church and bestowed the gift of the Holy Ghost on them.

Following the ending of the formal meeting but while the crowd was still present, Joseph was moved upon by the Spirit, and Oliver grabbed paper, ink, and quill and wrote while Joseph dictated the revelation now called D&C 21. That means that D&C 21 is ahead of D&C 20, chronologically.

The Church had three names: In April 1830, The Church of Christ. On 3 May 1834, it was “The Church of the Latter Day Saints.” And on 26 April 1838, it was changed to “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,” which was later hyphenated to “Latter-day Saints.”

## Documents and Publication

The oldest known copy of this revelation is in Revelation Book 1, copied by John Whitmer. It was first published as Chapter 22 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and as Section 46 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

## Outline

1. Joseph Smith’s calling (1-3)
2. A prophet guides Zion (4-12)

## Commentary

### Joseph Smith’s calling (1-3)

1 ***there shall be a record kept.*** Though no record of the 6 April 1830 meeting has ever been found, except this revelation, the Saints became fastidious record keepers from this time on. This motivated Joseph to keep personal histories and journals, and started a succession of Church historians and recorders who keep detailed records of all Church events, activities, decisions, and more.

1 ***a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder.*** Referring to Joseph Smith, the Lord gave him several titles, which still apply to Church leaders today, except for “translator.” Joseph Smith is the only man in this dispensation so far to receive that title from the Lord.

2 ***inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof.*** Joseph Smith did not perform these efforts of his own volition, but rather acted under the direction of the Holy Spirit through revelations that instructed him how to proceed.

3 ***Which church was organized and established.*** Written in the past tense because it was done (though just concluded), the Church was formed on the day given by the Lord.

### A prophet guides Zion (4-12)

4 ***give heed unto all his words.*** Joseph was not just a visionary man and a translator of ancient records, but the Lord clarified his authoritative position in the Church. Members were to “give heed” to his teachings and be obedient to the commandments he gave, since they came from the Lord (verse 5).

5 ***in all patience and faith.*** Sometimes a prophet’s teachings are not obviously true in the short-term, but are always proved correct in the long run. Patience and faith are required to be obedient and trust that the blessings will come.

6 ***disperse the powers of darkness.*** What a great promise, that the light of God would disperse the darkness of the world and the persecution all around them.

7 ***to move the cause of Zion.*** Zion was a developing concept in this stage of the Church, but appears to have the meaning of God’s kingdom.

<sup>31</sup> JSP, H1:336 (Draft 2).

8 *his weeping for Zion*. Joseph had already shed many tears for the cause of Zion, even on this first day of the formal Church’s existence.

9 *Jesus was crucified by sinful men*. The core doctrine is always about Christ.

10 *ordained by you, Oliver Cowdery*. Joseph was already an apostle but to have all things done in order, needed to be ordained to his new Church office by one with authority. Oliver was the only one, other than Joseph, with apostolic authority at this time, so the Lord commissioned him to ordain Joseph Smith to the roles listed in verse 1. This pattern of apostles having authority to ordain the one that presides over them continues today each time a new president of the Church is ordained.

11 *he being the first unto you*. Joseph is the first elder, and Oliver the second. Oliver will perhaps forget that order over the next few months, but will repent and play his correct role until 1838.

12 *the first preacher of this church*. Oliver might be second elder, but the Lord called him as first preacher, much

like how Aaron was Moses’ spokesman. Oliver did, in fact, deliver the first sermon in the new Church, the following Sunday.<sup>32</sup> As Harper explained it, “Joseph will preside over Oliver, and Oliver over the Church of Christ. Oliver will be the primary preacher to the restored Church and on behalf of the Church to all mankind.”<sup>33</sup>

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## Results

After D&C 21, Joseph was no longer just the translator of the Book of Mormon or even the first elder of the Church—he was alone as the prophet, seer, and translator. The Church was again on the earth, for the first time in hundreds of years.

The evening of this meeting, Joseph Knight reported that Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray. He poured out his heart to the Lord and received a fulfillment of verse 8 in this revelation. “His joy seemed to be full. I think he saw the grate work he had Begun and was Desirus to Carry it out.”<sup>34</sup>

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# D&C 22

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## Setting

Ten days after the Church was organized, on 16 April 1830, a group of people from the Manchester/Palmyra area came to Joseph Smith, seeking his guidance.<sup>35</sup> They confessed belief in the Book of Mormon and sought to join the Church, but they were Baptists and had already been baptized, so saw no reason to be baptized again. Having never been asked about this particular scenario, Joseph Smith took it to the Lord and received D&C 22 in response.<sup>36</sup>

Some commentaries try to make D&C 22 an extension of D&C 20 and thus part of the Articles and Covenants of the Church. While it does clarify a question about baptism, which is discussed in D&C 20, the later date and the fact that in the official recording of it in Revelation Book 1, it remains a separate revelation, indicates that it should be treated independently.

Note: Based on the date, D&C 23 was received before D&C 22.

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## Documents and Publication

First published by E.D. Howe in his paper, the *Painseville Telegraph*, on 19 April 1831, and recorded in Revelation Book 1, it was Chapter 23 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 47 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

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## Commentary

1 *old covenants*. Covenant making is not typically part of most Protestant theologies. Where baptisms were performed, most churches freely accepted one done by another church. It was seen as an expression of faith, not an ordinance essential to salvation. Tying it to covenant in the new Church and requiring proper authority was a somewhat radical idea for the time.

1 *new and everlasting covenant*. This is the first mention of this phrase in the Doctrine and Covenants. The full understanding of that phrase as we now know it does not come about for some time (D&C 66:2; 131:2; 132:19), but here the Lord is using it in relation to the covenant of baptism. Since marriage is the ultimate expression of the new

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<sup>32</sup> McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 178.

<sup>33</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 77.

<sup>34</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 78.

<sup>35</sup> William McLellin recorded a copy of this revelation in his journal and dated it 16 April 1830, which is the date followed by the Joseph Smith Papers team; see *JSP*, D1:137.

<sup>36</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:154.

and everlasting covenant, and baptism precedes that, the name can easily apply to both.<sup>37</sup>

**2 cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses.**

The Lord is not saying that other baptisms were under the Mosaic Law, but treats them metaphorically, comparing those baptisms previously performed with the ancient law that was superseded by the new law when Christ came.

**3 because of your dead works that I have caused this.** The Church had to be restored because the authority to perform essential ordinances was gone from the earth, making all such efforts “dead works.”

**4 enter ye in at the gate.** Compare 2 Nephi 31:17, where the gate into the kingdom of God is baptism.

## Results

Though this revelation was an important clarification for church practice, it also became a point of contention with different faiths. Alexander Campbell thought it wrong to require people to be “re-immersed.”<sup>38</sup> However, some churches agreed with this concept. This revelation affirmed the need to be baptized by the proper authority and in the correct manner, for it to be efficacious.

# D&C 23

## Setting

Shortly after the 6 April 1830 organization of the Church and probably before the 11 June 1830 first Church meeting, several brethren—Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel Smith, Joseph Smith, Sr., and Joseph Knight, Sr.—sought to know God’s will for them. (The 1833 Book of Commandments puts the date as 6 April 1830, but that is not supported by Revelation Book 1 or historical sources.) Joseph Smith recorded five short revelations, likely one after the other, one for each of them. All but Samuel had received revelations previously. The five revelations were first published separately in the 1833 Book of Commandments, then combined into a single section in 1835.

## Documents and Publication

The oldest version of these revelations are in Revelation Book 1. This was first published as Chapters 17 through 21 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 45 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

## Outline

1. For Oliver Cowdery (1-2)
2. For Hyrum Smith (3)
3. For Samuel Smith (4)
4. For Joseph Smith, Sr. (5)
5. For Joseph Knight, Sr. (6-7)

## Commentary

### For Oliver Cowdery (1-2)

**1 under no condemnation.** The first four revelations consistently delivered the message that the recipient was “under no condemnation,” but Joseph Knight did not receive that wording in his revelation. That does not mean he had sinned but rather that the focus of his message was different.

**1 beware of pride.** Oliver’s challenge was predicted here as he was cautioned to keep his pride in check. In the coming weeks, he will with great pride challenge Joseph, and in the end, left the Church over an issue of pride.

**2 preach the truth.** Oliver will shortly lead a mission that will have a dramatic impact on the Church, bringing in hundreds of new converts and giving the Church a new headquarters for nearly the next decade.

### For Hyrum Smith (3)

**3 thy tongue loosed.** About a year earlier, Hyrum was told to hold his peace and prepare for a future mission by studying the scriptures (D&C 11). If he did that, he was promised “then shall your tongues be loosed.”<sup>39</sup> He evidently did that very well, because now the Lord turned him loose, even commanding him to exhort and strengthen the Church.

### For Samuel Smith (4)

**4 not as yet called to preach.** Samuel, the third person baptized in our dispensation, was not called yet in early April, but it was only a few weeks before he was out being the Church’s first called missionary, leaving on 30 June.

<sup>37</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:156.

<sup>38</sup> *JSP*, D1:138.

<sup>39</sup> *JSP*, D1:54.

## For Joseph Smith, Sr. (5)

**5 exhortation, and to strengthen the church.** Joseph Smith, Sr., had held himself aloof from all churches prior to 6 April 1830. On that day, however, he was baptized into the new Church organized by his son. At that time, Joseph exclaimed his happiness: “Oh! my God I have lived to see my father baptized into the true church of Jesus Christ and he covered his face in his father’s bosom and wept aloud for joy.”<sup>40</sup> Father Smith receives a calling here to serve in that Church, which he faithfully does until the end of his life in Nauvoo.

## For Joseph Knight, Sr. (6-7)

**6 take up your cross, in the which you must pray vocally.** The only one not specifically called as a ‘not under condemnation,’ Joseph Knight had not yet been baptized or joined the Church. He also resisted praying out loud. Here the Lord counseled him to do both, to lead his family in prayer, and to exhort others to also join the Church once he had done so himself.

**7 unite with the true church.** Joseph Knight had not yet been baptized or thus joined the Church, even though he was present for many events such as the organization of the Church, and had been with Joseph and Oliver several times since they received the priesthood.

## Results

The Sunday following the organization of the Church, Oliver Cowdery preached the first public sermon of the new group, delivered on 11 April 1830, in the Whitmer home.<sup>41</sup>

Between 1830 and 1832, Samuel Smith travelled over four thousand miles, teaching the gospel at both ends of the United States at that time (New England to the western frontier of Missouri). He was faithful to Joseph and to the Church until his death on 30 July 1844, about one month after his brothers Joseph and Hyrum were both martyred.

Joseph Smith, Sr., was a staunch supporter of his son to the end of his life. He served in many capacities, including Church patriarch. An investigator, Lorenzo Snow, attended one of his blessing meetings and heard several of them, declaring, “I was convinced that an influence, superior to human presence, dictated his words.”<sup>42</sup> Joseph served a mission when he was sixty-four years old where he traveled 2,400 miles, sharing the gospel and giving patriarchal blessings to members along the way.<sup>43</sup> After falling ill in Nauvoo, he gave final blessings to his family, then declared that he saw Alvin, his deceased son, and died a few minutes later.<sup>44</sup>

Joseph Knight followed the counsel in his revelation, being baptized on 28 June 1830 at the hands of Oliver Cowdery. Thereafter, he remained totally faithful to his covenants, giving up his nice farm in Colesville to gather with the Saints first in Ohio and then in Missouri. He suffered from great poverty as a result of these moves. He later settled in Nauvoo, but by then was too weak to work, and was supported by his son, Newel. The high council voted to give him a house, and Joseph Smith gave him his own cane, telling him to pass it on to anyone in his family named Joseph. Joseph praised him highly in Nauvoo, calling him “exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating.”<sup>45</sup> He left Nauvoo with the Saints but died in February 1847 at Mount Pisgah, Iowa, being seventy-four years old.

# D&C 24

## Setting

On Wednesday, 9 June 1830, the Church held its first conference. The minutes are recorded in Minute Book 2.<sup>46</sup> It was held in Fayette (probably the Whitmer home). Church elders in attendance were Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and Ziba Peterson, who had been baptized on 18 April 1830. The meeting began with Joseph reading Ezekiel 14 and giving prayer, then reading the Articles and Covenants (D&C 20). It was the first time it had been read. He invited everyone present to sustain the revelation,

which was done unanimously by “most of the male members of the Church.” Samuel Smith was ordained an elder, and Joseph Smith, Sr., and Hyrum were ordained priests. Others were given their licenses, listed as follows: Elders: David Whitmer, John Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Ziba Peterson, and Samuel Smith; Priests: Martin Harris, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith, Sr.; Teachers: Hiram Page; Christian Whitmer. Joseph and Oliver both taught, then there was a group prayer (Oliver was voice and everyone appears to have either repeated what he said, or offered their own individual prayer), and the conference was dismissed.

<sup>40</sup> JSP, D1:134.

<sup>41</sup> JSP, D1:131n109.

<sup>42</sup> Black, *Who’s Who*, 290.

<sup>43</sup> Black, *Who’s Who*, 290.

<sup>44</sup> Black, *Who’s Who*, 291.

<sup>45</sup> Black, *Who’s Who*, 167.

<sup>46</sup> JSP, D1:139-142.

After the conference, Joseph returned to his home in Harmony with Emma and Oliver. Sometime after their return and in the month of June, Joseph received a revelation that he called a “precious morsel,” which was later called Moses 1, the first chapter of Joseph’s next great translation project—the Bible.

On Saturday, 26 June 1830, Joseph, Emma, Oliver, and John and David Whitmer went to the Knight home in Colesville, about twenty miles north of Harmony, to arrange for some baptisms. Local ministers, including John Sherer, a Presbyterian who had been losing members of his congregation, had been stirring up the population, and when they built a dam on the Knight farm that evening to pool enough water for the baptisms the next day, people tore it down during the night. They rebuilt the dam on Monday, 28 June, and thirteen people were baptized, including Emma Smith and Father Knight.

A mob of fifty gathered and confronted Joseph, but nothing immediately happened. However, before they could confirm the new members, Joseph was arrested on charges of being a disorderly person. He was tried in Chenango County, being defended by James Davidson and John Reid, local attorney/farmers, both hired by Joseph Knight, with Josiah Stowell and his daughters as witnesses. He was acquitted due to a lack evidence against him. He was immediately arrested again, based on a warrant in Broome County this time. He was taken to a tavern by the arresting officer where men were gathered who mocked and insulted him, spit on him, and challenged him to prophesy for them. At this trial, he was defended by the same men, and Newel Knight testified, embarrassing the prosecution with his strong testimony. Joseph was again acquitted because of a lack of any evidence to support the charges. Threatened with being tarred and feathered, the constable helped Joseph escape unharmed, where he found Emma waiting at the nearby home of her sister, Elizabeth Hale Wasson, in Harpursville. He and Oliver then returned to the Knight farm to confirm some of the members they had baptized, but after doing so, quickly left to avoid any further harassment.

One of Joseph’s attorneys, John Reid, later said that when Joseph Knight came to him, he said he was far too busy to take the case, but then had a compelling thought come to him that he was to go and defend ‘the Lord’s anointed.’ During the trial, he felt directed and lifted up, speaking by the power of God in ‘an eloquence which was altogether new to me.’<sup>47</sup>

Arriving back in Harmony probably on Saturday, 3 July, Joseph soon received D&C 24, 25, and 26, before Oliver left for Fayette in mid-July.<sup>48</sup>

## Documents and Publication

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The oldest known copy is in Revelation Book 1. The first published version was Chapter 25 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 9 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

## Outline

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1. To Joseph (1-9)
2. To Oliver (10-12)
3. To both (13-19)

## Commentary

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### To Joseph (1-9)

1 ***I have lifted thee up out of thine afflictions.*** This was referring to perhaps many things but certainly the recent legal activity where Joseph was accused, tried, and acquitted in back-to-back court cases, where he was “delivered from all thine enemies.”

1 ***delivered from the powers of Satan and from darkness.*** Compare this language to the just-received Moses 1, where Moses was delivered from his encounter with Satan only when Moses called upon “the name of the Only Begotten” (Moses 1:20-21). As soon as Satan was gone, the light of revelation returned (Moses 1:24).

2 ***go thy way and sin no more.*** As Joseph published his early revelations, his mistakes were made bare, but also the Lord’s great mercy in forgiving him and others. He did not attempt to hide his sins from the Church, but rather gloried in the power of the Atonement to help him overcome them.

3 ***Magnify thine office.*** This phrase appears in the Doctrine and Covenants here for the first time. It is found also in Romans 11:13 and in Jacob 1:19 and 2:2. The Greek work Paul uses in Romans, *doxazō*, means to glorify or make glorious and to honor.

3 ***sowed thy fields.*** It was July, very late to be planting crops. But Joseph had 13 acres of land in Harmony that have been neglected while he had run the affairs of the Church. Emma’s family there in Harmony was critical of his activities, especially after his recent arrests. Staying home for a little while and tending to his farm was both important to them and to his own temporal needs.

3 ***Colesville, Fayette, and Manchester.*** There were three ‘churches’ at this time, with groups of members in each. The Colesville church was anchored by the Knight family, Fayette by the Whitmers, and Manchester by the Smiths. Others were joining in these areas, based on the sharing going on with each.

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<sup>47</sup> McConkie and Ostler, *Revelations*, 187-188.

<sup>48</sup> JSP, D1:156-157; Harper, *Making Sense*, 83-84.



3 **they shall support thee.** The Lord instructed Joseph and the Church that in order for him to function in his office, the Church members need to support him. Some have asked how this differs from a paid clergy, and we proclaim it is because they are called of God, not of man or self, and because they are not supported based on their popularity but upon the diligence of their service. The support is not for a regular salary but sustenance to allow the Prophet to perform his labors. Like Benjamin in the Book of Mormon, he still labored all his life to provide for his family. The Church was promised blessings if they would support the Prophet and a cursing if they did not (verse 4).

5 **writing the things which shall be given thee.** This is the first scriptural mention of the work on the New Translation of the Bible which had just begun a few days previous. The JST work will be integral to many of the revelations recorded throughout the Doctrine and Covenants, which we will note as we go.<sup>49</sup>

6 **what thou shalt speak and write.** Joseph calling was to expound all scriptures (verse 5) with the promise that as he both taught and translated, God would give him “in the very moment” what he needed to say and write.

7 **devote all thy service in Zion.** Joseph’s strength from the Lord came as he was committed to building up the Lord’s kingdom on earth.

8 **Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many.** Joseph had already relocated twice, been taken to court twice, been shot at, chased, harassed, mocked, and more. The Lord confirmed that he was just getting started, but that if he endured these trials, God would be with him to the end.

9 **in temporal labors thou shalt not have strength.** It’s as if the Lord said, ‘Joseph, here’s the deal. You’ll never make much money, because you’re not good at that. You’ll have to endure much affliction and persecution, because that will always be your life. You’ll have to give up any of your own plans, because I need you to serve my cause only. But don’t worry about any of that, because I’ll be with you.’

9 **laying on of hands and confirming the churches.** Many of the early Saints noted that Oliver Cowdery baptized them and Joseph confirmed them.

### To Oliver (10-12)

10 **bearing my name before the world.** Though they were together at this time doing the Bible translation, Oliver’s calling differs from Joseph’s, which will be manifest shortly when he leads the first major missionary effort to

the west. Much of the counsel in the rest of this section applies to such missionary efforts.

11 **not of himself.** The Lord continued to remind Oliver to beware of pride.

12 **open his mouth and declare my gospel.** If Oliver will give himself to declaring the gospel message, he will be blessed with “strength such as it not known among men.”

### To both (13-19)

13 **Require not miracles.** Miracles are not good missionary work, in general. They do not build testimony but are a blessing to those with faith.

14 **that the scriptures might be fulfilled.** The miracles of the previous verse are encouraged but only as they are performed according to the scriptures—by faith, upon request by the person, using priesthood authority, in the name of Christ.

15 **casting off the dust of your feet.** Compare these verses with Matthew 10:7-15, Mark 16:15-18, and Luke 9:1-5, where Jesus commissioned his disciples in the New Testament similarly. Dusting off the feet was a strong symbol of the cessation of fellowship and a testimony of utter rejection. Enthusiastic missionaries today sometimes want to do this after tracting a building or neighborhood and getting no positive responses, but that is not the Lord’s intent.

The rejection described here was unusual for that day, where travelers were commonly welcomed by strangers and offered food and a place to sleep. For someone to refuse to offer such common courtesy just because the person was preaching the gospel would be justification for dusting the feet.

16 **I will smite them...in mine own due time.** The Lord promises to confirm the words of his servants when they curse their enemies, but in a timeframe of his own choosing.

17 **whosoever shall go to law with thee shall be cursed.** Joseph had just been tried twice, had experienced other courtroom drama in the past, and would yet see many more such encounters. The promise from the Lord was that those who falsely dragged him into legal proceedings would be cursed (remembering as in v. 16, in the Lord’s own time).

18 **no purse nor scrip.** In the New Testament pattern, the early missionaries went out relying on the kindness of strangers, with a purse (coin-pouch) or scrip (knapsack or backpack).<sup>50</sup> Today we no longer do that. With visa requirements for many countries that demand a person have means of support and with the large number of missionaries in all parts of the world, the Church’s system of self-

<sup>49</sup> See David A. LeFevre, “The Education of a Prophet” for several examples.

<sup>50</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:166.

supporting missionaries, revealed by modern prophets, is correct for our time.

19 *prune my vineyard with a mighty pruning*. Drawing on the imagery of Jacob 5 and Isaiah 5, the Lord framed their commission as a mighty effort, and “for the last time.”

## Results

Joseph was worried about providing for his family, after having been gone most of the spring and devoting so much time to the work the Lord had given him. This revelation

did not promise him wealth, but it did promise that God would take care of him.

Like the apostolic commission in Matthew 10 and the assurances to the disciples in 3 Nephi 12-14, Joseph and Oliver were charged to give their full energy to the work. The printing of the Book of Mormon and the organization of the Church were just the beginning of their responsibilities. In return, God will see to their needs, typically through other members of the Church who had time to make money and earn a living, a luxury a prophet or full-time Church leader does not have.

# D&C 25

## Setting

See D&C 24 above for date and setting. This is the only revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants directed to a specific woman. Joseph and Emma had been married about three and a half years at this time, during which Emma had suffered much and seen Joseph suffer much. She had just been baptized on 28 June 1830 by Oliver Cowdery, but because of persecution, had not yet been confirmed (see D&C 27 setting for that event).

After hearing the message of D&C 24 where Joseph was told that he would never prosper temporally but need to rely on the Church for support, we would understand if Emma was perhaps troubled. Her family was already encouraging her to leave Joseph, seeing him as someone who could not take care of her and who was overly caught up in this religious business. The Lord not only reassured her in that situation but raised her sights to help her see her own calling in the great work of the Restoration.

Though the date is not known, this revelation may have been received before D&C 26, as John Whitmer (who was there and was a recipient in D&C 26) so ordered them in Revelation Book 1.<sup>51</sup>

## Documents and Publication

The oldest version is in Revelation Book 1. Emma’s revelation was first published as Chapter 26 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 48 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

## Outline

1. Emma Smith called to comfort her husband (1-6)
2. Write, teach, and select hymns (7-11)
3. Song, prayer, and obedience (12-16)

## Commentary

### Emma Smith called to comfort her husband (1-6)

#### 1 *text note*:

The first verse as we have it today was not in the original revelation, as recorded in Revelation Book 1 by John Whitmer. In the 1833 Book of Commandments, it began: “Emma, my daughter in Zion, a revelation I give unto you...” The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants opens with the same text as our current edition.

1 *Emma Smith, my daughter*. This personal language is enhanced by the teaching in the rest of the verse, that “all those who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom.” In other words, Emma is among those who faithfully believe and are recognized as part of Christ’s adopted family in his kingdom, thus an inheritor of all his blessings.

#### 2 *text note*:

**RB1** A Revelation I give unto you concerning my will

**1833** a revelation I give unto you, concerning my will

**1835** A revelation I give unto you concerning my will, and if thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me, I will preserve thy life, and thou shalt receive an inheritance in Zion.

The substantial change in 1835 adds greater blessings to the beginning of the revelation but also adds greater responsibility; Emma has to be faithful and virtuous, then she is promised preservation of life and an inheritance in Zion (which in 1835 probably meant to Emma a place to call her own in Missouri, something she had rarely enjoyed in her life with Joseph).

<sup>51</sup> JSP, D1:161.

**2 *I will preserve thy life.*** Emma survived many challenging experiences that could have taken her life, whether mobs attacking her house, persecutions in Missouri, crossing the frozen plains of Missouri and the Mississippi River in mid-winter, or threats to her family in Nauvoo. Through it all she was preserved, even when her husband was not. She lived to be 74 years old, passing away on 30 April 1879 in Nauvoo.

**3 *thy sins are forgiven thee.*** Like Joseph, Emma sought to have a good standing before God.

**3 *an elect lady.*** Joseph Smith taught in Nauvoo that this phrase meant that Emma was chosen to serve as the first general Relief Society president of the Church. The phrase “elect” denotes not superiority but chosen with a responsibility.

**4 *Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen.*** Emma had never seen the plates. The Smith family men had. Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery had. Several Whitmers, including Mary, had. Perhaps she felt like this was something she deserved? The Lord counseled her that there was wisdom in this. I have never seen a record where Emma complained about this, so it seems more likely that the Lord was forewarning her.

**5 *thy calling shall be for a comfort.*** Today in the Church we often shift back and forth, with the husband taking on a more demanding calling, then the wife, each supporting in turn. But Joseph’s life was to be wholly given to the service of God. Emma would thus always play a supporting role to him, and her calling was to comfort and support him in that burden.

**6 *go with him at the time of his going.*** Pressure from Emma’s family, led by her uncle, Nathaniel Lewis, a local preacher, was for her to leave Joseph. They promised to take care of her if she abandoned what they considered a foolish marriage. The Lord here confirmed that she is to stay with Joseph. She did so for the rest of his life, in spite of numerous challenges.

**6 *be unto him for a scribe.*** Emma had already been a scribe for about two-thirds of the lost manuscript of the Book of Lehi. Now the Lord was about to call Oliver, who had been scribe to Joseph for over a year, on a mission. Emma was directed to fill that role, at least for a time. John Whitmer would soon take Oliver’s place as scribe and an even larger role as Church historian, relieving Emma of that duty, but part of the Joseph Smith Translation manuscripts are written in Emma’s hand.

### Write, teach, and select hymns (7-11)

**7 *thou shalt be ordained.*** The term ‘ordained’ was used for both priesthood and leadership positions, what we would

today call being set apart. Emma’s other calling was to teach the scriptures to the Church, which she did.

**8 *he shall lay his hands upon thee.*** Emma had been baptized but not yet confirmed. That would happen later in August (see D&C 27).

**9 *thy husband shall support thee in the church.*** The original record says “from the church,” meaning that Joseph could give his time to the church and Emma could expect support from it as a result.

**10 *lay aside the things of this world.*** Emma was being called to consecration before the law of consecration was even revealed. With assurances that she would be cared for, she was asked to not put emphasis on anything the world had to offer. For much of her life with Joseph Smith, they lived at the mercy of others—in people’s homes, receiving food and clothing from them, rarely having a place of their own or, for that matter, much privacy. Emma’s actions showed that she accepted this command.

**11 *a selection of sacred hymns.*** The Church had no hymnal at this early stage, and would not until 1836 (though her work was scheduled to be printed in Missouri in 1833 before the press was destroyed). Emma worked with William W. Phelps and selected ninety hymns, thirty-four of which were written by members of the Church. There was no music in the hymnal, just words, the standard tunes being familiar to all and noted with each song. Later, in 1841 in Nauvoo, a much expanded edition was printed with three hundred and forty hymns.<sup>52</sup>

### Song, prayer, and obedience (12-16)

**12 *the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me.*** Music can move us in unique ways, stirring our souls and magnifying the Spirit. The messages of the hymns are sermons to our hearts, and our voices unite in conjoined prayer as we sing praises to God.

**13 *cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made.*** Emma had made two covenants at this point—baptism and marriage. Both were essential for her to keep. Later she will lead many women through temple covenants in Nauvoo, teaching them to keep these new covenants in the same way.

**14 *beware of pride.*** How challenging would it be to be the wife of the Prophet of the Restoration and not have some sense of pride and probably entitlement? The Lord anticipated this and warned Emma. Emma heeded this counsel as well and is reported as a humble, caring woman throughout her life.

**14 *Let thy soul delight in thy husband.*** Not just good advice for Emma, but for all spouses to take delight in their

<sup>52</sup> Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:172.

companion. Staying meek and pushing out pride in marriage can indeed bring “glory” upon us.

15 *a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive*. Emma was promised the greatest of blessings, to be crowned by God with righteousness, referring to justification and forgiveness of sins, being made right with God.

15 *except thou do this, where I am you cannot come*. Emma promises were not without warning; unless she kept the commandments in this revelation, she would not be able to be with the Savior in his kingdom.

16 *this is my voice unto all*. Though the revelation was directed at Emma, many of the messages, especially at the end, are universal and valuable for the whole Church.

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## Results

It was about a month after this revelation that Joseph and Emma left their Harmony home, and did not return to that

area again. Emma departed, following the Lord’s injunction, pregnant with twins, and never saw her parents again in this life.

But this revelation was also a call to action for Emma. She prepared a short hymnal for printing in Missouri in 1833, but that work never got started when the press was destroyed. In 1835, she again worked with William W. Phelps to compile a hymnal for the Church, which had a significant impact on worship. She did another version later that was greatly expanded.

In 1842 in Nauvoo, when Joseph called Emma to be the first leader of the Female Relief Society, he read this revelation, declaring that this was a fulfillment of Emma’s call in 1830. That same year he wrote of her, “Again she is here, even in the seventh trouble, undaunted, firm and unwavering, unchangeable, affectionate Emma.”

Just before Carthage jail and martyrdom, Joseph invited Emma to write her own blessing. She thought back to D&C 25 and wrote that she wanted to live up to its expectations and receive its blessings.<sup>53</sup>

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# D&C 26

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## Setting

See D&C 24 and 25 above. This revelation was directed to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer, who had come to Harmony to help. This brief revelation provided their marching orders until the next Church conference in September.

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## Documents and Publication

The oldest copy is in Revelation Book 1. It was first published as Chapter 27 in the 1833 Book of Commandments and Section 49 in the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

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## Commentary

1 *let your time be devoted to studying the scriptures*. This is another reference to the work of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, though scripture study in general is clearly an important responsibility.

1 *to preaching*. These brethren were not to sit home idle but to carry the message out to the world. Oliver Cowdery was especially called upon to carry this load, though all three did their share of preaching.

1 *confirming the church at Colesville*. Not all the members who had been baptized at the end of June had yet been confirmed, including Emma Smith, due to the persecution Joseph faced. They were reminded to complete that task.

1 *your labors on the land*. Joseph is reminded to keep working his farm for now, and the other two men are commanded to help with that task.

1 *the next conference*. This was already scheduled for 26 September 1830.

2 *common consent*. The first mention of this critical doctrine was given with little fanfare, but played a key role in Church government from the beginning. Unlike other churches around them, the Church of Christ did not elect preachers, officers, or leaders. They were called of God. But common consent required that all such leaders be presented to the congregation for a sustaining vote. It also applied to scripture being added to the canon. The vote does not change the calling, because only the presiding officer can do that, but it does give members the opportunity to declare their support for the newly called person, or, on rare occasions, to bring something to the attention of those leaders about the person being sustained. We are given the opportunity to sustain our leaders to covenant our own support in their behalf, to agree that we follow the Lord’s direction as given by his ordained leaders.

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<sup>53</sup> Harper, *Making Sense*, 88-89; *JSP*, D1:162.

## Results

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The men were instructed how to prioritize and spend their time for the next few weeks, which included working on the Translation of the Bible, preaching the gospel, wrapping up the ordinance work at Colesville, and working Joseph's property to try and make it provide support and perhaps income.

The more important result, from a long-term perspective, is the confirmation of the principle of common consent. This established the practice that we do each week in chapels and halls around the world, sustaining everything from the

humblest ward callings to those serving in the highest councils of the Church. Said President Joseph Fielding Smith, "I take it that no man has the right to raise his hand in opposition, or with contrary vote, unless he has a reason for doing so that would be valid if presented before those who stand at the head. In other words, I have no right to raise my hand in opposition to a man who is appointed to any position in the Church, simply because I may not like him, or because of some personal disagreement or feeling I may have, but only on the grounds that he is guilty of wrong doing, of transgression of the laws of the Church which would disqualify him for the position which he is called to hold."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:123-124, quoted in Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 175-176.

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