
DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 85-88

CHRONOLOGY

- **November 6, 1832** – JS and Whitney return from Eastern mission.
- **circa early November** – Brigham Young, Joseph Young, and Heber C. Kimball arrive in Kirtland. Speak in tongues.
- **November 27, 1832** – JS writes letter to W.W. Phelps; sacred records; D&C 85.
- **November 27, 1832** – JS purchases and starts writing his journal.
- **circa November, 1832** – JS and FG Williams start copying documents into the JS Letterbook and Minute Book 1.
- **December 6, 1832** – Revelation, D&C 86; wheat and the tares.
- **December 25, 1832** – Revelation, D&C 87; prophecy on war.
- **December 27-28, 1832** – Conference of 10 high priests; Revelation, D&C 88:1-126.
- **January 3, 1833** – Revelation, D&C 88:127-137.
- **January 5, 1833** – Revelation, Unpublished; Frederick G. Williams called to be a counselor to JS.
- **January 23, 1833** – First meeting of the School of the Prophets.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 85, LETTER, NOVEMBER 27, 1832

SETTING

Just a few weeks after this letter, John Whitmer recorded that there were 538 (likely baptized) members of the Church in Zion. Very few of these people were local converts. On November 27, 1832 began a letter to W. W. Phelps, who was the editor of the newspaper in Zion. After some initial pleasantries, the letter states: "while I dictate this letter I fancy to myself that you are saying or thinking something simmler to these words[:] [']my God great and mighty art thou therefore shew unto thy servant what shall becom[e] of all these who are assaying to come up unto Zion in order to keep the commandments of God and yet receive not there inher[i]tance by consecration by order or deed from the bishop[.]'"¹

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This letter was first published in the January, 1833, *Evening and Morning Star*. Section 85 was added to the Doctrine and Covenants in 1876 by editor Orson Pratt. The earliest manuscript is copied into the JS Letterbook by Joseph Smith and Frederick G. Williams.

¹ Joseph Smith, Letter to William W. Phelps, November 27, 1832, Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith Papers Online, Documents, ID:132.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS

When Orson Pratt edited this text for inclusion in the Doctrine & Covenants, he took a portion of the letter, and corrected it for spelling and punctuation. The quoted portion of the letter is bisected by a portion of the letter (probably a page of the original letter) that was accidentally copied out of order and was subsequently struck out. This text is reproduced in its proper place later in the letter.

The following is the JSPP text of the letter,² with the material contributing to Section 85 in red text:

Kirtland Nov 27th 1832

[p. 1] Brother Wm <W> Phelps I say brother because I feel so from the heart and altho it is not long since I wrote a letter unto you yet I feel as tho<ugh> you would excuse me for writing this as I have many things which I wish to communicate some things which I will mention in this letter which are laying <great> with weight upon my mind I inform you I am well and family God grant that you may enjoy the same and yours and all the brethren and sisters who remember to enquire afte[r] the commandments of the Lord and the welfare of Zion and such a being as me and while I dictate this letter I fancy to myself that you are saying or thinking something simmiler to these words my God great and mighty art thou therefore shew unto thy servant what shall becom[e] of all these who are assaying to come up unto Zion in order to keep the commandments of God and yet receive not there inher[i]tance by consecration by order or deed from the bishop the man that God has appointed in a legal way agreeable to the law given to organize and regulate the church and all the affairs of the same; Bro Wm in the love of God having the most implicit confidence in you as a man of God having obtained this confidence by a vision of heaven therefore I will procede to unfold to you some of the feelings of my heart and procede to answer the questions[.] firstly, **it is the duty of the lord[s] clerk whom he has appointed to keep a hystory and a general church receord of all things that transpire in Zion and of all those who consecrate properties and receive inheritances legally from the bishop and also there manner of life and the faith and works and also of all the apostates who apostatize after receiving ther inher[i]tances** in that day shall not find an inheritance among the saints of the [p. 2] most high therefore it shall be done unto them as unto the Children of the priest as you will find recorded in the second chapter and sixty first and second verses of Ezra now Brother william if what I have said is true how careful then had men aught to be what they do in the last days lest they think they stand should fall because they keep not the <Lo[r]d[s]> commandments whilst you who obey who do the will of the lord and keep his commandments have need to rejoice with unspeakabl Joy for such shall be exalted very high and shall be lifted up in triumph above all the kingdoms of the world but I must drop this subject at the begining, O Lord when will the time come when Bro Wm thy servant and myself behold the day that we may stand together and gaze upon eternal wisdom engraven upon the heavens while the magesty of our God holdeth up the dark curtain until we may read the record of eternity to the fulness of our immortal souls, O Lord God deliver us in thy due time from the little narrow prison almost as it were total darkness of paper pen and Ink and a crooked broken scattered and imperfect Language, I would inform secondly **it is conterary to the will and commandment of God that those who receive not their inheritance by consecration agreeable to his law which he has given that he may tithe his people to prepare them against the day of vengence and burning should have there names enrolled with the people of God, neithe[r] is the[ir] geneology to be kept or to be had where it may be found on any of the reccords or hystory of the church there names shall not be found neithe[r] the names of their fathers or the names of**

² Ibid.

the[ir] children written in the book of the Law of God saith [p. 3] the Lord of hosts yea thus saith the still small voice which whispereth through and pierceth all things and often times it maketh my bones to quake while it maketh manifest saying and it shall come to pass that I the Lord God will send one mighty and strong holding the scepter of power in his hand clothed with light for a covering whose mouth shall utter words Eternal words while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth to set in order the house of God and to arrange by lot the inheritance of the saints whose names are found and the names of their fathers and of their children enrolled in the Book of the Law of God while that man who was called of God and appointed that puteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God shall fall by the shaft of death like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning and all they who are not found written in the book of remembrance shall find none inheritance in that day but they shall be cut assunder and their portion shall be appointed them among unbelievers where is wailing and gnashing of teeth these things I say not of myself therefore as the Lord speaketh he will also fulfill and they who are of the high Priesthood whose names are not found written in the book of the Law or that are found to have apostatized or to have been cut off out of the church as well as the lesser Priesthood or the members in that day shall not find an inheritance among the saints of the most high therefore it shall be done unto them as unto the children of the Priest as you will find recorded in the second chapter and sixty first and second verses of Ezra now Broth- William if what I say have said is true how careful then had men ought to be what they do in the last days lest they are cut ~~assunder~~ short of their expectations and they that think [they] stand should fall because they keep not the Lords commandments whilst you who do the will of the Lord and keep his commandments have need to rejoice with unspeakable Joy for such shall be exalted very high and shall be lifted up in [p. 4] triumph above all the kingdoms of this world but I must drop this subject at the beginning Oh Lord when will the time come when Brothe[r] William thy Servent and myself behold the day that we may stand together and gaze upon Eternal wisdom engraven upon the heavens while the magesty of our God holdeth up the dark curtain <until> we may read the sound of Eternity to the fullness and satisfaction of our immortal souls Oh Lord God deliver us in thy due time from the little narrow prison almost as it were total darkness of paper pen and ink and a crooked broken scattered and imperfect language[.] I would inform you that I have obtained ten subscribers for the Star and received pay their names and place of residence [are] as follows, John McMahan, James McMahan, James White, William Brown, Henry Kingery, Micayer Dillions, Abraham Kingery, John A Fisher, David Houghs, Thomas Singers, the papers and all to be sent to Guyndotte [Guyandotte] ~~the paper are all to be sent to~~ Post office Verginea except David Houghs his is to be sent to Wayne <County> Township Worster County <Township> Ohio, Vienna Jaqis [Jacques] has not r[e]ceived her Papers pleas[e] inform her Sister <Harriet> that Shee is well and give my respects to her tell her that Mrs Angels Brother came after her and the child soon after she went from here all he wanted wanted was the child No more <my> love for all the Brotheren yours in bonds Amen

William W Phelps Joseph Smith Jr-

PS send the evening and morning star to Brothe[r] Joseph Wakefield Watertown Jeffers[on] County New York all to be from first No.

COMMENTS

1-2. **Lord's clerk.** aka, John Whitmer. His job is to record:

- History
- General Church Record
- List of "consecration"
- List of "inheritances"
- The life, faith and words of the members
- List of participants who apostatize

3-5. **tithe.** aka consecrate. Those who do not go through the proper channels will not be recorded on the record of the Church, nor their genealogy, nor their children.

5. **book of the law of God.** See Joshua 24:26 and the "Book of the Law of the Lord" in the Deuteronomistic history. Oliver Cowdery, writing to John Whitmer in January, 1834:

I have just conversed with bro. Joseph concerning the [Church Records and the letter that is now Section 85]...it is necessary to keep the names of the Saints, & when a child is brought forward to be blessed by the Elders, it is then necessary to take their name upon the Church Record. Put down the name of the man, his place of birth, and when, &c. and also of his family....If he apostatizes write opposite his name that he has. If he begets children after that and they do not come into the Church their names are not known with their brethren in the book of remembrance. The names of the Saints are to be kept in a book that contains the law of God, this is what is meant in bro. Joseph's letter...Each family will have its record with the law of the Lord in it; each branch of the Church the same in every city; and each city one general record kept by a general clerk.³

Remember that the "law of the Lord" at this time was what we have as Section 42.

From this point forward the Church records have an increased cosmic valence. Beyond the "Book of John Whitmer," and the Revelation and Minute Books, there are several records which emphasize the cosmic significance.:

- "The book of Patriarchal Blessings" – by the end of 1834. Often referred to in terms similar to the book of life.
- "The Book of the Law of the Lord" – beginning in 1841 this volume was used in part as JS's diary, but also a record for donations for the Temple. JS often made declarations about people he loved in the volume as testaments.
- Nauvoo Temple Records, e.g.:
 - "Book of Adoptions"
 - "Book of Proxey"
 - "Book of Sealings"

6. **it maketh my bones to quake while it maketh manifest.** Cf., the colophon to Oliver Cowdery's "Articles of the Church of Christ," which includes: "Behold I have written the things which he hath

³ Oliver Cowdery, Letter to John Whitmer, January 1, 1834, Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, Huntington Library, quoted in Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 178.

commanded me for behold his word was unto me as a burning fire shut up in my bones & I was weary with forbearing & I could forbear no longer Amen[.]"⁴

7. shift to the voice of the Lord.

7. **one mighty and strong.** This is a figure that has become a sort of promised prophet for Mormon Fundamentalists and was viewed to be Joseph Smith III by many in the RLDS tradition.⁵ This shows the problem of decontextualization. It appears from context that JS considered likely envisioned Partridge or perhaps himself as the "one mighty and strong." The following text was added to the end of Bishop Partridge's diary:

At his [Edward Partridge's] funeral says mother Partridge[,] John E. Page was speaking and referred to the revelation, predicting the raising up of one who should be mighty, who should divide the inheritance as to the saints, and said he did not know but the one should be Bishop Partridge. The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke up and said he was the one referred to.⁶

8 Warning against "that man, who was called of God...that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark." Later in Oliver Cowdery's letter to John Whitmer in 1834: "Brother Joseph says, that the item in his letter that says that the man that is called &C. and puts forth his hand to steady the ark of God, down not mean that any one had at the time, but it was given for a caution to those in high standing to be ware, lest they should fall by the shaft of death."⁷

9. Are church ordinances valid if there is no record? What if you don't know the record exists?

12. Ezra 2:61-62:

And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name: These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

⁴ Scott H. Faulring, "An Examination of the 1829 'Articles of the Church of Christ' in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants," *BYU Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): 79.

⁵ William Shepard, "'To Set in Order the House of God': The Search for the Elusive 'One Mighty and Strong,'" *Journal Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39 (Fall 2006): 18-45.

⁶ Edward Partridge, Journal, Typescript, LDS Church History Library, quoted in Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," 1083.

⁷ Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 179

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 86, REVELATION, DECEMBER 6, 1832

SETTING

From JS's diary, written in his own hand:

December 4th this day I been unwell done but litle been at home all day regulated some of my things this Evening feel better in my mind then I have for a few days back Oh Lord deliver out thy servent out of temtations and fill his heart with wisdom and understanding

December 5th this day wrote leters copying letters and translating and in evening held a council to advise with Brother Solomon Humphry [Humphrey Jr.] it was ordered by the council that he should be a companion with Brothe[r] Noah packard in the work of the ministry

December 6th translating and received a Revelation explaining the Parable the wheat and the tears [tares] &c⁸ [JS doesn't have another journal entry for ten months]

Note that JS translated Matthew 13:24-30, the original source for this parable, sometime between April 7, 1831 and June 19, 1831, but did not include the changes outlined in this revelation. The passage was later revised, perhaps in response to this revelation.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This revelation was first published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The earliest manuscript was copied by Frederick G. Williams into RB2.

COMMENTS

3. **Babylon...her cup..in whose hearts...he soweth.** What is going on here?

5. **angels...to be sent forth to reap down the fields.**

7. Change from Matt. Wheat plucked out first. How might this have been perceived by those listening to the revelation?

8-10. **lawful heirs [of the priesthood], according to the flesh.** More OT restorationism (see vs. 12 of Section 85). This is an introduction of the lineal priesthood, which gets expanded with the patriarchate, then in 1838 and was subsequently amplified to all members of the Church with the Nauvoo temple liturgy.⁹ It figured importantly in the succession crisis after JS's death. It is very difficult to systematize all of this.

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⁹ See the forthcoming, Jonathan A. Stapley, "Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 38 (Summer, 2011).

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 87, REVELATION, DECEMBER 25, 1832

SETTING

During the Fall and early Winter of 1832-1833, there was what is now known as the "Nullification Crisis." In November 1832, a South Carolina state convention passed the "Ordinance of Nullification,"¹⁰ which declared that the protectionist Tariffs of 1828 and 1832 were unconstitutional and therefore void in South Carolina. The South Carolina economy had suffered greatly under the economic policy. By February 1833, the state began a military preparation in anticipation of Federal invasion. However, in late February, a new Tariff was created that was more amenable to South Carolina and the State revoked the Nullification Ordinance. Note that ten years later in 1843, JS was recorded to have said:

I prophecy in the Name of the Lord God that the commencement of bloodshed as preparatory to the coming of the son of man. will commence in South Carolina,—(it probably may come through the slave trade.)—this the voice declared to me. while I was praying earnestly on the subject 25 December 1832.¹¹ (cf., D&C 130:12-13)

Later this revelation was viewed as predicting the United States Civil War. At the outset of the Civil War, the *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* published the revelation stating, "In view of our present troubles, this prediction seems to be in progress of fulfillment, whether Joe Smith was a humbug or not" and concluding with the question, "Have we not had a prophet among us?"¹²

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This revelation was first published in the 1851 Pearl of Great Price, which was not viewed to be cannon at that time. It was included in the 1876 Doctrine and Covenants. The earliest manuscript was copied by Frederick G. Williams into RB2.

COMMENTS

1. ***shortly come to pass.*** Most likely understood by those at the meeting to be any day. This was the first of Joseph Smith's revelations to link political events with the coming of the Lord.¹³

5. ***remnants who are left of the land.*** I.e., the native population.

6-7. compare to Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural.

8. ***stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come.*** What were these holy places?

¹⁰ Fell text is available here: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/ordnull.asp

¹¹ Joseph Smith, Sermon summary, April 2, 1843, Joseph Smith Diary kept by Willard Richards, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 172.

¹² "A Mormon Prophecy," *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* May 5, 1861, facsimile in Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," 1110.

¹³ Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 191-92.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 88

REVELATIONS, DECEMBER 27 AND 28, 1832 AND JANUARY 3, 1833

SETTING

On December 27, a conference of high priests convened. Frederick G. Williams recorded the minutes:

A conference of High Priests assembled in the translating room in Kirtland Ohio on the 27th day of Dec AD 1832.—

Present— Joseph Smith sr. Sidney Rigdon— Orson Hyde— Joseph Smith jr.— Hiram [Hyrum] Smith— Samuel H Smith— N[ewel] K Whitney, F[rederick] G, Williams — Ezra Thayer— & John Murdock commenced by prayer, Then Bro Joseph arose and said, to receive revelation and the blessings of heaven it was necessary to have our minds on god and exercise faith and become of one heart and of one mind. therefore he recommended all present to pray seperatly and vocally to the Lord for to reveal his will unto us concerning the upbuilding of Zion, & for the benifit of the saints and for the duty and employment of the Elders— Accordingly we all bowed down before the lord, after which each one arose and spoke in his turn his feelings, and determination to keep the commandments of God, And thus proceded to receive a revelation concerning the [subject?] of our above stated 9 oclock PM, the revelation not being finished the conference adjourned till tomorrow morning 9 o clock AM—. 28th meet according [to] adjournment and commenced by Prayer thus proceded to receive the residue of the <above> revelation and it being finished and there being no further business before the conference closed the meeting by prayer in harmony with the brethren and gratitude to our heavenly Father for the great manifestation of his holy spirit during the setting of the conference.¹⁴

Doctrine and Covenants 88:1-126 was delivered as part of this two day conference. Later, on January 3, 1833, Joseph Smith received a revelation, which is included as section 88:127-137.

"School of the Prophets" was a term that was first used by Protestant churches in America to refer to ministerial training schools. E.g., both Harvard and Yale Universities were originally termed "school of the prophets."¹⁵ Joseph Smith's School of the Prophets was to follow in this tradition.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

Verses 117-126 were first published in the February, 1833 *Evening and Mormon Star*. Verses 127-137 were first published in the March, 1833 *Evening and Morning Star*. Verses 1-116 were first published as a standalone document in December 1833 or January 1834. The contiguous section was published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The earliest extant manuscripts are in the hand of Frederick G. Williams in RB2.

¹⁴ Meeting Minutes, December 27-28, 1832, Joseph Smith Papers Online, Documents, ID:6583.

¹⁵ Joseph F. Darowski, "Schools of The Prophets: An Early American Tradition," *Mormon Historical Studies* 9 (Spring, 2008): 1-14.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS

There are many slight revisions in the text, however the last portion of the Section is highly edited. Additions to the 1833 text in the 1981 Doctrine and Covenants (which is very close the 1835 edition) are indicated with red text. When the revelation was given, the Kirtland Temple was not yet envisioned to be a temple. It was to be more of a school house.

March, 1833 <i>EMS</i>	1981 D&C
	[134] And he that is found unworthy of this salutation shall not have place among you; for ye shall not suffer that mine house shall be polluted by him.
And he that cometh in, and is a brother or brethren, shall salute the teacher with uplifted hands to heaven, with this same prayer and covenant, or by saying amen, in token of the same.	[135] And he that cometh in and is faithful before me, and is a brother, or if they be brethren, they shall salute the president or teacher with uplifted hands to heaven, with this same prayer and covenant, or by saying Amen, in token of the same.
Behold, verily I say unto you, this is a sample unto you for a salutation to one another in the house of God.	[136] Behold, verily, I say unto you, this is an ensample unto you for a salutation to one another in the house of God, in the school of the prophets.
And to you the called to the ministry of the ordinances of the house of God; and ye are called to do this by prayer and thanksgiving, as the Spirit shall give utterance, in all your doings in the house of the Lord, that it may become a sanctuary, a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, to your edification: Amen.	[137] And ye are called to the ministry of the ordinances of the house of God; and and ye are called to do this by prayer and thanksgiving, as the Spirit shall give utterance in all your doings in the house of the Lord, in the school of the prophets , that it may become a sanctuary, a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit to your edification. Amen
	[138] And ye shall not receive any among you into this school save he is clean from the blood of this generation; [139] And he shall be received by the ordinance of the washing of feet, for unto this end was the ordinance of the washing of feet instituted. [140] And again, the ordinance of washing feet is to be administered by the president, or presiding elder of the church. [141] It is to be commenced with prayer; and after partaking of bread and wine, he is to gird himself according to the pattern given in the thirteenth chapter of John's testimony concerning me. Amen.

COMMENTS

2. **recorded in the book.** Remember the emphasis on records.
3. **Holy Spirit of promise.** This has different meanings over time. Here it means the assurance of celestial glory.
5. **church of the Firstborn.** Cf., D&C 76.
6. **that he comprehended all things.** Cf., Alma 7.
7. **light of Christ.** This is a different usage than the Book of Mormon. Not particularly useful to systematize.
15. **spirit and the body are the soul of man.** This is often used as a proof text for the modern idea that a soul always equals body and spirit together. Note that JS frequently used soul to mean different things.
- 22-24. **abide the law.** What exactly is the law? See vs. 21. What is that law? This does not mean you must be perfect to be exalted.
- 25-26. This is, among other things, a great source for Mormon panpsychism. I generally think that stuff is kooky, but I like it as a metaphore.
28. What does it mean to receive the same body?
32. **because they were not willing.** And there is the rub. Telestial glory is not an extraordinary hurdle of volition. What are they not will to do?
37. My buddy Sam Brown has some forthcoming work on the great chain of being that fits in nicely here. The operative word: plenitude.
- 42-46. The later Book of Abraham uses astronomy as a metaphor to teach principles of Godliness. Is the same thing going on here? It seems like many theophanies start with this sort of creation narrative.
50. **ye have seen me.** Remember there are lots of people at this meeting.
- 51-61. Cryptic parable. What are these various kingdoms? Are we learning truths of cosmological significance?
65. Be careful that you pray for the right stuff!
68. **sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him.** We have seen similar promises before and will see them again. Where do they all point?
69. **idle thoughts.**
70. **solemn assembly.** This is the first mention of this meeting. The first was after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Do we still have these?

INSTRUCTIONS ON THE "SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS"

70. **first laborers.** This first generation of missionaries.
74. **cleanse your hands and your feet.** When did we see something like this before? Gather the first generation of missionaries and purify them accordingly.
75. **clean from the blood of this wicked generation.** How do we do that?
78. What sort of religious instruction was to be taught in the School of the Prophets? Do we live up to this in our instruction?
79. Why would the Lord have his ministers be trained in this stuff? Hint: see vs. 80.
84. **tarry.** Who else was told to "tarry" and what did they wait for?
- 87-116. any wonder why they were premillennialists extraordinaires?
92. As a side note, anyone know who the angel is on the Salt Lake Temple? Hint: it is not who you think it is.
117. **...therefore.** Verses 87-116 are the reason you are to call the solemn assembly.
118. **best books.** Note that there were no Mormon books yet published.
119. At this time the Kirtland Temple (which was not yet envisioned to be a temple) was call the House of the Lord.
120. **uplifted hands.** As we will see, this is ritual greeting.
121. cease wickedness
122. **equal privilege.** How to teach and how to discuss.

ORDER OF THE "SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS"

128-141. Teacher. Greeting and covenant. Ritual. Proto-temple.

On January 11, 1833, JS sent a copy of the revelations to W. W. Phelps, in Zion. The letter begins:

I Send you the Olive leaf which we have plucked from the tree of Paradise, the Lords message of peace to us, for though our Brethren in Zion, indulge in feelings towards us, which are not according to the requirements of the new covenant yet we have the satisfaction of knowing that the Lord approves of us & has accepted us, & established his name in kirtland...you will see that the Lord commanded us in Kirtland to build an house of God, & establish a school for the Prophets, this is the word of the Lord to us, & we must— yea the Lord helping us we will obey, as on conditions of our obedience, he has promised <us> great things, yea <even> a visit from the heavens to honor us with his own presence¹⁶

¹⁶ Joseph Smith, Letter to William W. Phelps, January 11, 1833, Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith Papers Online, Documents, ID:140.

The following are the minutes of the first meeting of the school held on January 23, 1833:

Wednesday Janry 23d Meet agreeable to adjournment, Conference opened with Prayer by the President and after much speaking praying and singing, all done in Tongues proceeded to washing hands faces & feet in the name of the Lord as commanded by of God each one washing his own after which the president guirded himself with a towel and again washed the feet of all the Elders wiping them with the towel, his father presenting himself the President asked of him a blessing before he would wash his feet which he obtained by the laying on of his fathers hands, pronouncing upon his head that he should continue in his Priests office untill Christ come——at the close of which scene Br F G Williams being moved upon by the Holy Ghost washed the feet of the President as a token of his fixed determination to be with him in suffring or in rejoicing, in life or in death and to be continually on his right hand in which thing he was accepted, The President said after he had washed the feet of the Elders, as I have done so do ye wash ye therefore one anothers feet pronouncing at the same time through the power of the Holy Ghost that the Elders were all clean from the blood of this generation but that those who among them who should sin wilfully after they were thus cleansed and sealed up unto eternal life should be given over unto the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption Having continued all day in fasting & prayer before the Lord at the close they partook of the Lords supper which was blessed by the president in the name of the Lord all eat [ate] and drank and were filled then sang an hymn and went out——¹⁷

Fifty years later, Zebedee Coltrin described the events of the meeting. Coltrin is not always the most reliable witness; however, his account is extraordinary and worth considering:

The salutation as written in the Doctrine and Covenants was carried out at that time, and at every meeting, and the washing of feet was attended to, the sacrament was also administered at times when Joseph appointed, after the ancient order; that is, warm bread to break easy was provided and broken into pieces as large as my fist and each person had a glass of wine and sat and ate the bread and drank the wine; and Joseph said that was the way that Jesus and his disciples partook of the bread and wine. And this was the order of the church anciently and until the church went into darkness. Every time we were called together to attend to any business, we came together in the morning about sunrise, fasting and partook of the sacrament each time, and before going to school we washed ourselves and put on clean linen. At one of these meetings after the organization of the school, [the school being organized] on the 23rd January, 1833, when we were all together, Joseph having given instructions, and while engaged in silent prayer, kneeling, with our hands uplifted each one praying in silence, no one whispered above his breath, a personage walked through the room from east to west, and Joseph asked if we saw him. I saw him and suppose the others did and Joseph answered that is Jesus, the Son of God, our elder brother. Afterward Joseph told us to resume our former position in prayer, which we did. Another person came through; he was surrounded as with a flame of fire. He (Brother C) experienced a sensation that it might destroy the tabernacle as it was of consuming fire of great brightness. The Prophet Joseph said this was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I saw Him.¹⁸

¹⁷ Meeting Minutes, January 23, 1833, Joseph Smith Papers Online, Documents, ID:6585.

¹⁸ Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minutes, October 3, 1883 in Merle H. Graffam, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minutes, 1883* (Palm Deseret, CA: ULC Press, 1981), 38.